



Student: When I saw-- whoever gave me the feedback, I think Daphne gave me the feedback. She gave it on a YouTube video and she highlighted, she graded it. Hey, this sentence could have been better. This could have been arranged different, that could have been arranged different and it really helped me. She used real-life examples and that was a life changer for me because that type of a service you can't get it anywhere else.

Ben: That's interesting.

Student: Yes, that's interesting for me.

INTRODUCTION

Ben: Yes, Daphne is an absolute star. Hello there, IELTS students. Welcome to IELTS podcast. You no longer have to worry, fret or panic about IELTS because we are here to guide you through this test jungle. Enjoy these IELTS tutorials and if you need more help or want to access the famous online course, you can visit us at ieltspodcast.com.



[Music]

Daphne: Hello there, IELTS students. Thank you for choosing to listen to this tutorial from ieltspodcast.com. My name is Daphne. In this podcast tutorial, I'm going to be looking at some of the official IELTS websites around the world and helping you work out which are the most useful parts of them so you can really help yourself practice and work effectively towards achieving your IELTS goals.

I'm sure many of you have done IELTS before, many of you are all over the website looking for different resources and this will hopefully guide you a little bit. So, as you will discover, there are many, many IELTS websites out there. You will have your favorites that you use and that you trust and I want to look really today at the official websites and try and assess what you can get out of them, how they can help you.

So, in all your IELTS preparation, you're looking for three main things. When you're looking on these websites, we're looking for information, we're looking for advice, and we're looking for



practice materials too. These are three really important elements to getting through this exam and looking forward to your IELTS exam success.

I know many of you are studying on your own without teachers and you need support, but also you need to be able to learn effectively on your own. Therefore, these official websites are really important and can be a key to kind of guide you through the exam preparation and the process. The process we're going to talk about first, I think this is really important.

IELTS AUSTRALIA WEBSITE

I've been looking on the official IELTS Australia website. So, the website for this is ielts.com.au and this is a really good website. Some of you may be familiar with this, but if you're not, then I would suggest do have a look on it. I'll give you a link at the bottom of this too so you can find it.



This website is very keen on the computer-based test. I know that students who are working with us a lot of you do the computer-based test. The essay correction service that we use here you're writing to us on computer, so your essays are typed. It makes it much quicker, obviously, for us to read and give you feedback on. I think it's becoming more and more popular the IELTS test. You get the results quicker, there's more flexibility when you can take it.

The Australia test-- I'm looking at this website here-- there's a section called **Discover Computer-Based IELTS** and there's a lot of detail here. I'm just looking on this screen. It says computer delivered IELTS is available three times a day seven days a week. That is a lot better than the paper test which I know is just not really so easy to access for some of you.

You also, I think, have the speaking on the same day which I think makes a big difference. So, the listening test is slightly shorter. You don't have the ten minutes to transcribe your answers because obviously, you're answering immediately onto your computer. So, the ielts.com.au website explains the differences very carefully between the two essentially. You know that



you'll be typing your essay and your answers although you do have a pen and paper to write notes and plan and I think that is useful obviously as well.

Then, as I said, your test is usually on the same day which is more convenient obviously than having the speaking on another day and I know that does sometimes happen here in the UK. So, the listening test is shorter. You don't have that ten minutes to transcribe.

There is a really good section on this website, the Australian one, and I would suggest that all of you try this. It says see how the computer test works. You can immediately access a practice listening paper, also practice writing and reading papers.

I really like this idea on this website as you can see right then and there if this is going to suit you or not. It's a very good way to test yourself. Am I happy reading on screen like this? Am I happy writing and typing like this? I think nowadays many of us are for work; we're used to being screen-based rather than having to write. Sometimes physically writing is very tiring if



you're not used to it and I think people find their handwriting is not as good as it used to be when they were at school and it gets tiring writing like that.

So, you can start the listening test I registered. You don't have to pay. You just put your name in and you can start doing the test. So, you can do the listening test. You can download the answers and immediately, you can just get an indication on how you're doing.

You can do a reading test on there as well and you can do a writing test. You can feel what it would be like. So, if you need to do some practice or even if you've done the paper test, but now you want to go to a computer one, this is a really good idea.

The website practice makes you feel like you're in the exam. It's quite scary, but on the other hand, it gives you real time and live practice on the paper. There's like a timer at the top. 60 minutes, press the button, off you go. So, it's quite a realistic sort of practice. So, I think working on the writing section is a great way to see how fast you can type under pressure. Don't forget



to check your work, obviously, but it also gives you the question on the left hand side of the screen and you can type on the right hand side.

What I also like is that all the time you can see the question. Now, I think this is really useful as far as getting a good score on task achievement is concerned because quite often-- it's probably happened to you and I know it happens to some of the essays that I look at-- students start off absolutely on track. They're answering the question, fantastic, then they get really excited about an argument they're making or writing about and disappear down another path without kind of checking back to the essay title. Am I still answering the right question?

Sometimes the end of the essay ends up quite different from the beginning of the essay. So, I think it's really helpful on this website, this practice IELTS Australia website. So, you can see the question on the left while you're writing on the right. You can keep on checking. Am I answering the right question? It's really, really important.



So, when you download the answers, you're shown two responses to the Task 1 and Task 2 essays with the examiner's comments and bands given. This, for me, is the most interesting part of all these official websites. This is the same for the ielts.org UK website which I'm going to talk about in a minute and obviously this Australian one.

You are getting sample student responses and official examiner's comments. Now, there are not that many official examiner's comments around on official websites, so when you do have them, it is really important to make the most of them and know how to use them. So, the great thing about the Australia website is that you can read typed essays and comments which is a lot quicker than reading someone's handwriting.

This Australian site includes those practice mock exam questions and then it gives you examiner's comments and then later in the site, it just gives you more practice, but without examiner comments.



The only thing I was disappointed by when I downloaded the practice papers is that the Task 2 question hasn't been updated for a long time. Both the Task 1 and the Task 2 question you probably would have seen before. I think it's a shame they don't regularly update them. I think that would be much more useful for all of us.

The Task 2 question talks about the number of cars on the road. It predicts how many cars will be on the road in the year 2000 and now we're nearly in 2020 and so for me, to have a question on there which is 20 years old is really not very professional. I will contact them about that one.

So, yes, there's lots of stuff that's really useful. Check the examiner's comments that are available and the UK website I'm going to talk about in a minute has just got a little bit better information on it, but to finish just on this Aussie site, it also offers you advice. Do you remember we were talking about getting information, getting advice, and getting practice?



They've got a good grammar section-- a grammar advice section called Grammar 101. It's a really good little section with articles and help on common mistakes, the confusion between belief and believe, who and whom, all sorts of frequently mixed up or wrongly used English words. A nice section on using verb tenses as well and there are some good tutorials on this site as well.

I've just been looking at a helpful analysis of a student essay which matches the paragraphs of a Task 2 essay by animals in zoos to relevant band descriptor details. So, why would a sentence or a paragraph be graded 6.5 and what it would need to get to a band 7. For me, that is really, really good. It's nicely done, very clear. So, there's a lot of useful stuff on that website; that's the Australian website.

So, another website I'm sure you would have looked up before is the UK one. This is ielts.org website. This also has some good sample essays, but it probably has the best range of sample essays and sample questions academic writing and general training. So, on the academic, you're



getting three Task 1s. You're getting one bar, one line, and one process chart and two Task 2 essays.

So, I think that is nice and really good. You may have seen them before, but it's always good just to keep on writing these essays. Test yourself on timing, test yourself on vocab and for this, you can really see what you need to get a band 7 because you're looking at the examiner's comments, okay?

So, we're going to look in a minute what you can learn from studying the comments and this is really important. The answer is lots. I really recommend you spend some time on this. It's a little bit harder on the UK site because the sample essays they give you are hand written and it is quite boring and it is quite hard to read some of these essays, but do try.

Even if you don't look at the band five essays, just look at the ones with a higher band and see why you think they got that score and see why the examiner thought they did. So, before you



look at the examiner comments-- really important-- if you're not familiar with how the exam is scored, it's a really good time to get yourself happy with this.

So, the UK site includes a page called How IELTS Is Scored. It gives you how the results are recorded or how the results are calculated rather on a nine-band scale and it explains the detailed public band descriptors. This is really useful, really helpful when you're preparing the exam to understand exactly what a band 6 is in terms of the lexical resource, in terms of the grammar, in terms of the kind of mistakes you're making.

Equally, what a band 7 is and then obviously aspirational, we're looking at what a band 9 is; what you have to do to get a magic band 9, how you're writing has to be natural and sophisticated which is a really hard combination to get exactly right, but it's giving you the details of what the examiner isn't looking at and that is really, really important.



So, check out those IELTS marking band guidelines descriptors and then look at the sample essay that is on one of these official websites and then really important look at the examiner's comments. So, they will be mentioning task achievement; whether the student answered the question correctly. They'll be looking at cohesion and coherence; how the essay flows, the use of connecting words, the use of pronouns; so just how the essay kind of glues together.

They'll be looking at the grammatical range and accuracy; how many sophisticated grammar structures are in there, are you using relative clauses, are they using conditional sentences for example, what sort of tenses are being used and then also lexical range and accuracy. So, that would be all the great vocab, use of synonyms, use of words in the lexical field. So, all the words relevant to climate change, for example, relevant to education.

Then write your essay and then look at your essay. Is your essay better than the student's essay? Can you pick up any interesting expressions or phrases from the students' essays? There's always some really useful stuff in there or some quite clever grammar they've used. You



think hey, I could do that. Take it. Write it down. It's a really, really good way to teach yourself some new little expressions and things. Make a note of them.

Be interested to get your feedback on this because I'm quite surprised. One of the Task 2 grading is a band 8. I was surprised at that. I didn't think that was a band 8. So, there goes a challenge for you. Find the one that says band 8 on the UK website and let me know if you think that is a band 8.

Okay. So, also on this British Council website, it has good resources for listening. Also good practices for listening showing you in quite a lot of detail each kind of task and the same for reading. So, it will go into a matching task, a summary completion, headings, true false not given and so on. So, a really nice way to look at and familiarize yourself with different reading or listening questions.



So, I think that's a really, really good thing for you to look at as well especially if you're not happy with some of the listenings, you know that you struggle with one part of it or another part. So, going into that and thinking okay, I really need to practice headings. That is quite precise and quite helpful for you and obviously gives you the answer as well.

I was also going to say-- yes, so that's the British one. Going back to the Australia one, if you are working on a computer-based, if you know you're going to do computer, practice that one because the layout for that on the listening and reading is just like the computer would be.

So, rather than the UK one where you're putting your answers on a piece of paper and then checking-- that's more sort of paper-based-- the Australian one you're reading and you're clicking like you would be doing on a clicking multiple choice. It mirrors-- mimics rather the actual computer-based test better than the UK site. So, again, check out that Australian site.



So, that's two of the sites; that's the Australian one and the UK ielts.org one. There's a couple more that I want to just mention here, but they do connect to each other. I mean the British Council and Cambridge have this exam. It is their exam and so obviously, there's going to be quite a lot of overlap between these sites. The cambridgeenglish.org/examsandtests/IELTS-- I give you the link for that one-- so the Cambridge English site essentially links back to the britishcouncil.org one that I was talking about before.

Again, rather disappointingly, it has the same essay titles which I think is a shame. I think it would have been really nice to have more official examiner comments, two different essays. That one links back to the very old essay about cars in the year 2000 which I think is a shame as I say, but again, it's providing you the same useful information about where you can do the tests, how you can do it, the differences between the computer and the paper, all these things which I think is really important for you to be happy with and be familiar with.



Another one to have a look at is the takeielts.britishcouncil.org. That's a similar official website which you may find comes up when you type official websites. That links back also into the ielts.org thus not offering you anything terribly exciting or anything new.

Okay. What I would like to do at this point since we're talking about websites is just draw your attention to our website here at ieltspodcast.com in terms of the range and depth of material which we offer on our site. Now, many of you have enrolled on the courses, which are amazing. Thank you for doing that and I really hope you found those helpful; a great way to help you prepare for your exam, to get some really positive feedback, the writing course especially.

So, there's a full writing course which gives you little tutorials on how to really, really crack this Task 1 Task 2 writing, really helps you on the Task 2 particularly. Great algorithm, great sentence guides literally take you through sentence by sentence getting the perfect essay. So, you get lots of personalized essay corrections and advice to help you improve. Even if you're



not on the course, you're just enjoying our podcasts, do look at the website and see what else is there which can help you.

On the vocab section, there is a big list of collocations-- not really like a list, but it guides you on collocations. So, collocations are the words which go together naturally on vocab. For example, climate change-- since we were talking about that-- global warming, sustainable energy. So, there are articles for you on how to use collocations. There's work on topic-specific vocabulary which links to TED Talks and again collocations.

For example, thinking about TED Talks; there is a TED Talk on sport, there's one on employment equal pay, there's one on immigration, on global warming, on the law. There's lots of TED Talks which are really good. If you don't know that website, ted.com gives you like little lectures and some of them are five minutes long, some of them are 20 minutes long on all sorts of incredible topics and these are really good speakers.



It is a great website. It's not an IELTS website. It's just a good general knowledge website and these talks you can get subtitles in your own language. So, you could listen to it in English, but you can also really understand what they're talking about. So, that's a really, really great way of improving your general knowledge, so your ideas generation. If ever you look at the title and you think I know nothing about this, quite a good way to prepare if you feel that's a problem for you, look at these TED Talks. I think they can be really good. It also widens your lexical resource. So, on our website, we've linked the TED Talk to some specific vocabulary which is a really, really good way to help you. Just be confident about this-- about your use of vocab just so you can show the examiner you have a nice lexical range.

In the writing section, there is a lot of information there; key useful phrases to use in your Task 2 writing, tips on how to think about ideas, how to add examples, how to write letters for general training. Also, there are specific tutorials for each type of Task 2 essay. So, opinion



essays, problem-solution, and advantage-disadvantage as well as sample essays and some model band 8, 9 essays for you to look at.

So, again, like we were saying with the official IELTS websites, also on our website we're going to offer you model essays, sample essays to look at and to critique. Please, please critique them yourself. Do you agree with our assessment? Do you think that's a band 7 or band 8 or do you think that's really not good or do you think it's better than we do? It's really, really interesting for you to challenge yourself. How would you grade that going back to using those band criteria, which is also really important.

Also, on the Task 1 sometimes I feel Task 1 is a bit neglected. The Academic Task 1 is really hard and the letter writing also takes a lot of skill and control in writing. So, have a look at the Task 1 tutorials and practice on the academic exam. There are really detailed tutorials including some key expressions on how to make comparisons, really useful advice on all those; on the pie charts, on the bar charts, on the line graphs, and lots of examples and lots of practice material.



So, I suggest you have a look at that. Get really, really happy with what's on the website. That will really help you.

So, what we've done today is look at some official websites as you know particularly at the Australian one, see what information and advice and practice they can offer you, how you can maximize your use of those by looking at the examiner comments, getting really happy with the band descriptors, and really with the computer test, look at the Australian one so you can be happy and relaxed about what happens on your actual test day. Really, really important to be as familiar as possible with what's going to happen on that day so you're not panicking about where to write your answer or how long you have for each question. You want to be totally in control of all that.

We've also looked at our website just so I can draw your attention to some of the things that are there that you may not have seen before and that also you may find useful. If you would like to get one of your essays checked by one of our ex-IELTS examiners and tutors, then send it



in to us. You'll find a link on the website. We'll get back to you in 24 hours with your personalized correction; a really, really good way to get some feedback and that can help you improve.

If you are struggling with your IELTS preparation and you want to get some super friendly help, don't forget sign up for the podcasts and emails which are full of tutorials and guidance and advice and help. Also, get involved in the course or essay feedbacks and I think if you want to practice writing and you feel you need a tutor, then we can really help you. If you have a friend who's working towards IELTS, please share this with them.

Good luck to all of you with your preparation. This is Daphne. Thank you very much for listening and talk to you soon.

[Music]

Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com

