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Female Voice: You are now listening to the IELTS Podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

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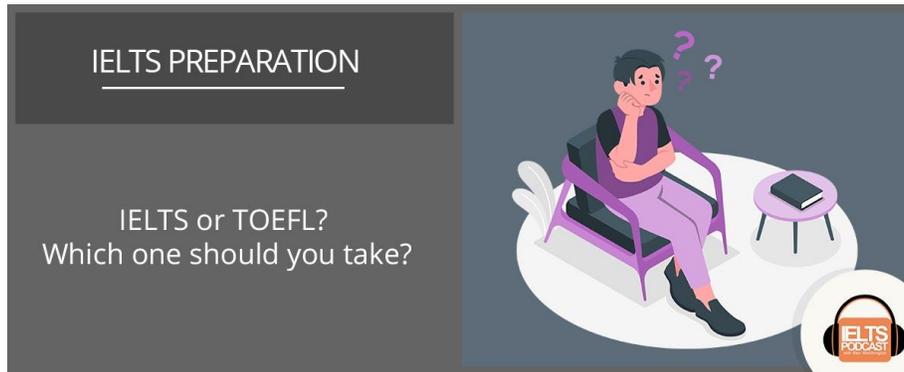
Ben: Well, I think that's everything-- oh you don't have a copy of your IELTS certificate with you.

Student: Yes.

Ben: Oh, superstar!

Student: I've got... so which one do you want to see? Like I've got a collection here, yes?

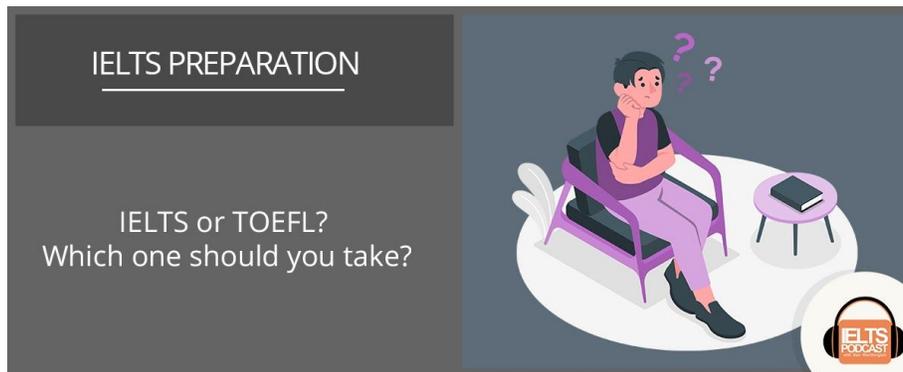
Ben: IELTS or TOEFL. Hello there. My name is Ben Worthington. In this tutorial, we are going to take a deep dive into both exams. We're going to compare them and we're going to look at



when you need each exam. I'm going to start off with the summary though because I think if you've got the summary, it'll just help you all the way through the tutorial.

And the second thing I want to mention before we jump into the tutorial is take some notes. Recently, I've been doing sample Part 3 answers and what kept on coming up was that because I've been filling my head with a lot of information maybe about famous artists in the past or YouTube videos about Elon Musk or whatever, but I've been filling my head in and taking notes with that and then when it came to the exam or when it came to producing the answers, I had a fresh batch of information and it was quite specific to the topic.

And this will help you-- by taking notes about this tutorial it'll help you have that fresh batch of information you can pull on. Rather than just casually passively listening, you can transform this into an active listening exercise. Take notes and it'll help you record and recall and reproduce the information when necessary.



So, as promised, let's jump into the summary. So, the biggest difference between these very respected and very reliable tests are first of all, you need to take the one that depends on your circumstances. If your university or immigration organization is saying take IELTS, take IELTS or vice versa. If they're saying take TOEFL, take TOEFL. So, it largely depends. You need to do your research first.

Second regarding the test itself, the biggest difference is the human element. The human element. So, if this makes you-- if you've got the choice and you get nervous in front of humans-- in front of exam situations then maybe the TOEFL is better. Some people feel a little bit more relaxed and feel more natural speaking with a human there. I think if you've got a human there, they can read non-verbal cues which definitely help with communication.

I'll repeat that. The examiner will be able to read your non-verbal cues which basically increase the effectiveness of your communication and that's totally taken away in the TOEFL to a large



extent anyway, but also that can work against you. I'm not going to go into it now, but it could work against you.

And also I think traditionally as well if you felt more comfortable with a keyboard and a screen then perhaps a TOEFL was the way to go. However, since-- well nowadays, you can take the IELTS computer-based as well so it kind of negates that advantage that the TOEFL did have in the past.

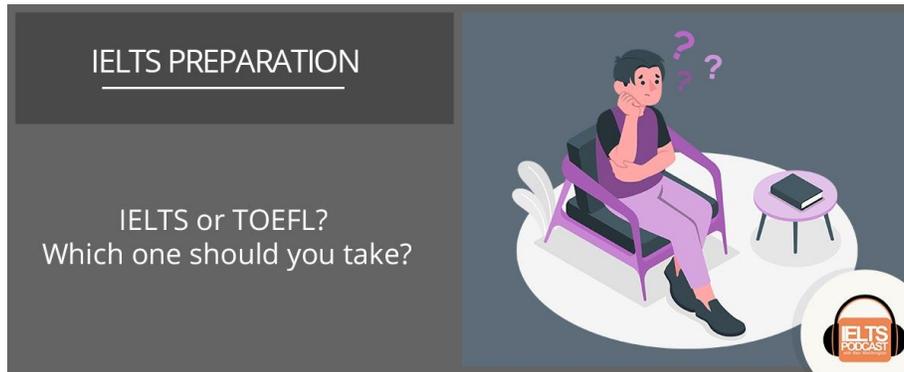
Right. Let's dive into this. Before we dive into it, if you're wondering who is this talking, well my name is Ben Worthington. I should have done this at the beginning and I'm from the UK. I'm from a small town called Huddersfield. I'll usually say Manchester because people have usually no idea where Huddersfield is and if I say I'm from Huddersfield, people from the UK will usually laugh because a lot of towns in the north are not considered that glamorous especially compared to the elegant cities such as Cambridge, Bath, Oxford and whatnot, London.



However, I'm from the north from Yorkshire. I've lost my accent nowadays because I've been out of the UK for more than 15 years possibly even near 20 years, but I left the UK to study in Spain. I stayed in Spain. I started teaching English.

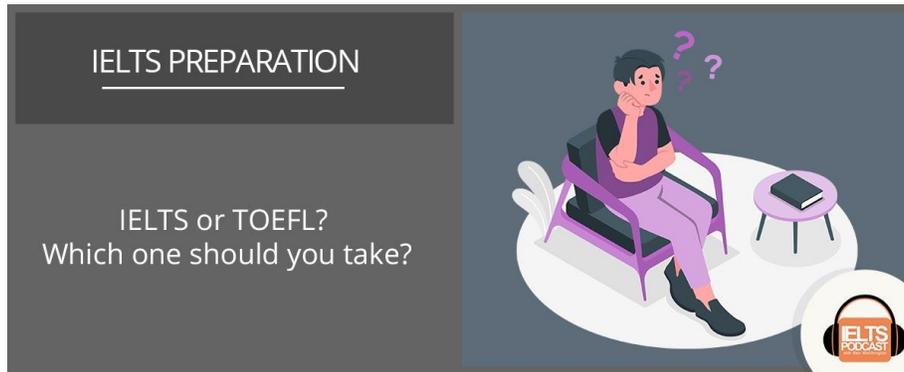
I needed to improve fast. I quickly specialized in IELTS and I needed to improve fast because I've got a tendency to go for results. That's what motivates me and I wanted my students to pass. I wanted them to improve and preparing them for IELTS was a quick measure for myself. It's like okay, is what I'm doing is it working?

And to get better, I started interviewing all the experts; linguistic experts, accent experts, pronunciation experts, test taking experts, ex-examiners and the like and I recorded the information. I put it into podcasts. That's how we got started with IELTS Podcast. And I tested what worked and I threw out what didn't work and eventually, I had all the best knowledge which I could put into my online course of Jump to Band 7 or It's Free.



So, if you're just struggling and you need to pass fast then have a look at that course. We're getting excellent results day in day out. Ellen and Daphne are absolutely crushing it with the essay corrections. I sometimes do the essay corrections as well. It's great. We're just moving forward. We're getting lots of essays. We're helping students day in day out and it's just a great moment to join us right now especially if you're in lockdown like I am at the moment. Then preparing for the exam while you're in lockdown is probably the best use of your time, so make use of it. Even if you're not in lockdown still send us an essay and we can help you improve faster.

So, let's have a look. This tutorial will help you decide which exam you need for your educational or vocational needs. So, as I said before, if you're taking notes you can vastly improve your vocabulary and I just wanted to mention that because vocational is not the most common of words, but it basically relates to career and work. So, if you can drop that into your



speaking, happy days. You're on your way to a band 9. No, maybe not so much, but it will definitely help you.

Also, if you've got the choice, if your institution is going to accept IELTS or TOEFL, hopefully after this tutorial you can decide which you think would be better for you, but I think the biggest factor is what your institutions are requiring.

So, even though TOEFL is from the USA, in the USA they also accept IELTS. So, traditionally it was basically just TOEFL that dominated in the U.S. and if you wanted to go to a U.S. institution, you had to take the TOEFL, but about-- I think it's about seven or eight years ago, IDP which is the Australian organization-- a private organization-- they basically turned themselves into a private organization if I remember correctly and IELTS became a private company partly owned by quangos.



Quangos is this lovely English expression which means quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization quango which basically is the British Council and maybe to a lesser extent the Cambridge English Exam Board or the Cambridge Exam Board and together, all of those partners and IDP produce and market the IELTS exam.

So, anyway that's a long way of saying that because IELTS became a private company or IDP became a private company, they became a little bit more aggressive and started expanding into the United States. So, now this is why IELTS is now available in the U.S.

Anyway, so it is-- IELTS is the more common one that's accepted especially in the Commonwealth countries or the former Commonwealth countries-- I've got to correct myself there, very important-- such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. I think Canada is a bit 50/50 nowadays because it's a former UK country, but also next to its big brother the United States. So, it's kind of a bit of both there.



Also, across Asia I think IELTS is the most popular one. Now, this is interesting. TOEFL is accepted in all countries except the UK. They are not having any of it in the UK. I'd love to know the reason behind that. I guess they've got a perfectly adequate one with IELTS and with the British Council having such a large percentage of IELTS, it's not logical.

Anyway, institutions in the U.S. as I said before will sometimes prefer the TOEFL and in some cases IELTS is also accepted largely due to the large basically investment in expanding the acceptability of the test from ILC IDP.

Now, for immigration purposes, General Training-- the IELTS General Training is a prerequisite. What a beautiful word that is. What does it mean? It just means something that's necessary before you start. So, it's a prerequisite for applying for residency in the UK, Ireland, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.



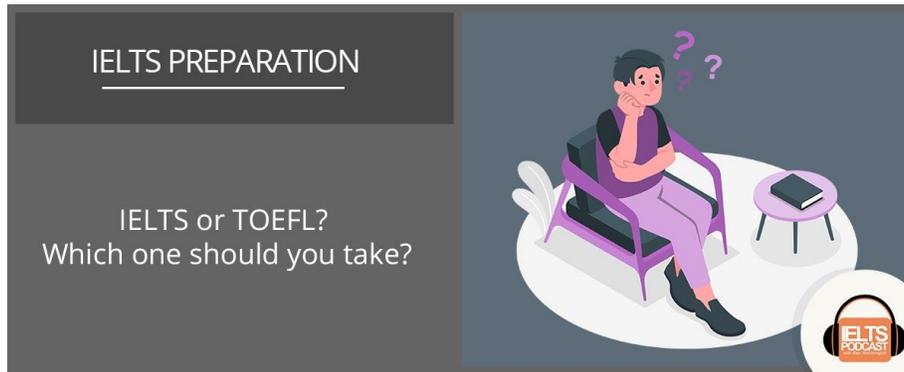
Now, I guess with Brexit that General Training is probably going to increase because there might be a lot of people living in the UK especially EU residents and now because of Brexit they might need to get their house in order or they might need to start applying for residency because it might be taken away after Brexit. Quite precarious.

Now, to work, study, or gain a residence visa in the UK then you'll probably be told to take IELTS UK VI which I will go into later. Now, both of these exams, IELTS and TOEFL are valid for two years. Now, the cynic in me believes that maybe this is a little bit unfair because if you're in an immigration process or an academic process, you might have to take the exam numerous times over the space of three or four years which is expensive, not only having to take the exam itself but also the cost of your time in preparing and then the cost of going to the place and whatnot. And some people-- the cynics-- say it's just a money grabbing opportunity because you're not going to lose your ability.



However, look at it from the other side. You might study like crazy for a month, get your grades and then never touch or speak English again. So, obviously in that situation, your language skills are going to become worse. So, I guess there's an argument for both sides. Maybe a halfway point might be a top-up where it's not as expensive and you could do it online. It's quicker and it's easier and you just basically get to maintain your existing grade. Anyway, off topic. We're going off topic.

Let's have a look at the practical details. Obviously, the costs are around the same. If there's only two options IELTS or TOEFL, they are not going to compete on price. They're both going to increase their prices together. No, I'm joking. Costs are around the same. IELTS is offered at about 1,100 locations in about 140 countries and TOEFL because it could be taken online can be taken anywhere in the world. This is a big factor. IELTS has 48 test dates per year, TOEFL has 50 and both of the results are usually published within two weeks after taking the test.



Let's jump into the format. Both of these tests obviously have four sections: listening, reading, writing, and dancing-- just joking. This is why you have to be an active listener. Obviously, the final section is speaking. Now, there are differences in the exam length and the versions and the content sources for each test. However, the most noticeable difference is that there is no face-to-face contact in the TOEFL whereas in the IELTS there is. You are sat with a human examiner in front of you. It's human for the time being. Maybe they're going to replace it with an AI microphone later. We don't know.

However, as I said before, I guess it depends on your situation. There's lots of advantages and disadvantages for each one.

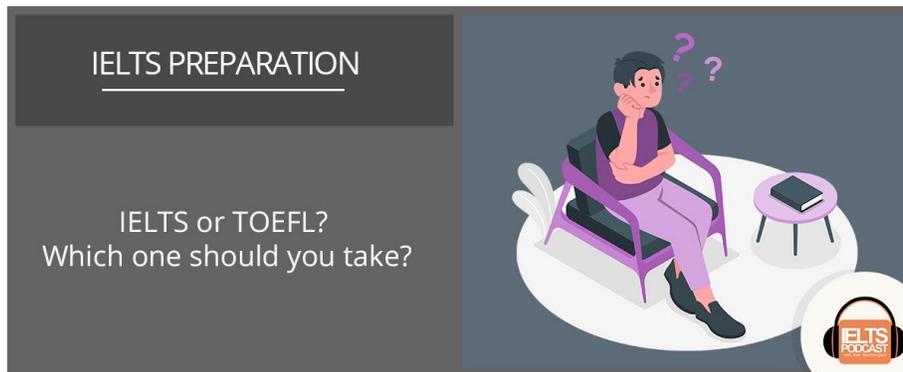
Now in the computer or paper versions with the IELTS-- sorry with the IELTS either computer or based you still have your exam-- your speaking exam face to face with the examiner. However, the TOEFL everything including the speaking part is done online. There is a paper version of the TOEFL which I didn't know about actually where internet connections are



unavailable, but it's not that common and it's just held like four times a year and it doesn't cover the speaking part. I didn't know that actually, but I can understand the logic.

Anyway, let's have a look at the exam versions and the lengths. So, as we just said, there are two versions. There's the IELTS Academic, IELTS General. Now, the General as we said is more suited for those going for immigration or for work. Now, in both of these exams, the first three sections-- listening, reading, and writing-- they are usually taken on the same day-- always sorry-- taken on the same day.

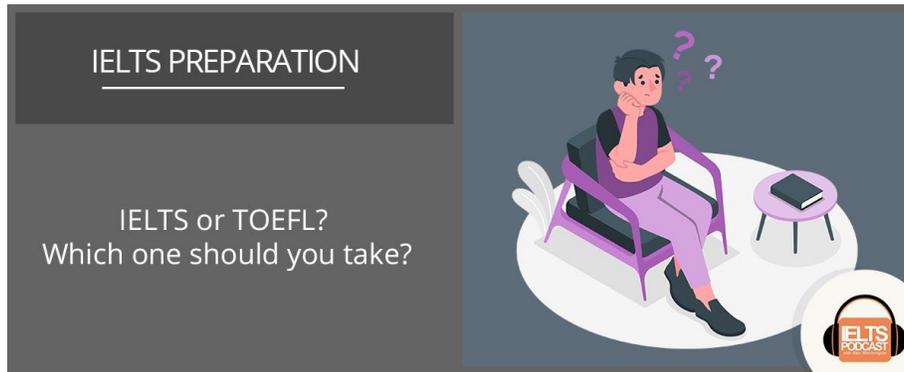
Now, the test lasts about 2 hours 30 minutes. 30 minutes for the listening, 60 minutes each for the other parts. So, 60 for the reading and 60 for the writing and the speaking test takes around 15 minutes and is probably taken-- usually taken one or two days before the main part of the exam. So, total time 2 hours 45 minutes.



However, bear in mind that you've got to get to the test center. Here's a pro tip actually. Do the route beforehand. If you've got the ability, go to the exam center and do the exact route before your test day. This way you can make provisions for any unexpected events and you can also go through the motions and you don't have to waste mental energy on figuring it out on the test day because you've pretty much done it beforehand.

Also another pro tip. Do not go in there cold. This is especially useful for the speaking. Warm up. Speak to as many people as possible in English obviously before your speaking exam. Likewise with your listening, reading, and writing exam. The day you do that, try to go in warm as well. What does that mean? Well, it means immersing yourself in the language and not just passively, but try and get to use the language before you sit down in the test center.

Now, TOEFL follows a reading listening speaking writing sequence. Now, the exam length may vary because in both the reading and listening, the number of tasks and questions is not always



the same. So, reading can last a minimum of 54 minutes and a maximum of 72. That is brutal. Well, mind you it's only about 18 minutes different.

Listening can last from between 41 to 57 minutes and then you get a 10-minute break and then the speaking happens which is usually--Then you've got your writing which usually takes 17 minutes-- sorry, no. 50 minutes for the writing and 17 for the speaking and then in total it's between 2 hours 42 minutes to 3 hours 16 minutes.

So, I guess it would be a little bit harder. It's only 30 minutes difference, isn't it, between the shortest and the longest. So, it's not the end of the world and it's quite interesting that all done in one day showing the American efficiency. Well, I've worked with Americans and they are the most efficient and some of the best workers around and it's no surprise that they get the whole thing done in one day. In and out. Get your results. Boom! Not so much get your results, but it's no surprise that it's all done pretty effectively in one day.



Now then, let's have a look at the content of the exam and the question types. Now, we all know these are very rigorous exams. Rigorous means quite thorough like they test you in and out, back to front, inside out. They really are designed to determine your ability with the English language. Now then, let's have a look at the sections. So, IELTS listening has four parts. The first part follows two speakers; native English speakers probably with different accents. The second recording-- sorry.

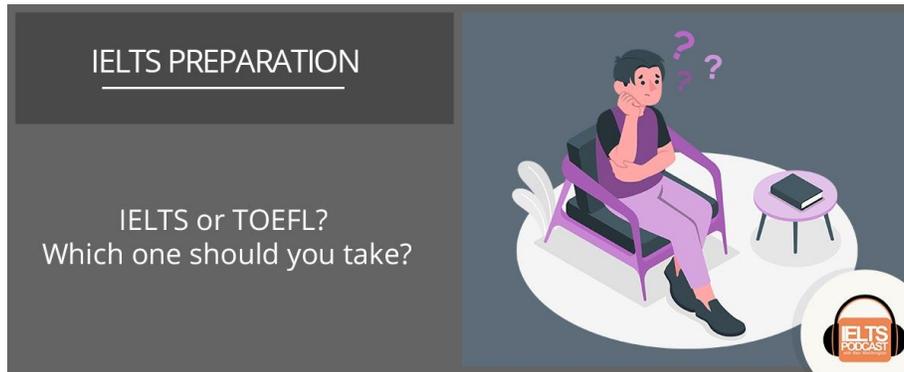
The recordings in these ones are usually every day social context in the first two and then the next two recordings are academic topics. Recording 1 is between two speakers. The third recording can have as many as four. Recordings 2 and 4 are always monologues, so it's just one person talking and with the reading, it can consist of three passages with a total of 40 questions. Texts are taken from a variety of sources including textbooks, journals, and magazines and are of general interest and non-specialist.



Now, the TOEFL test are all based and the-- sorry. For the TOEFL test, the listening and reading tests are all based on academic type context. In listening, candidates can hear three or four short university lecture style talks followed by two or three conversations on academic topics. These conversations have a maximum of two speakers. For the reading, there's either three or four passages each with around 700 words and these are usually taken from university textbooks and then 10 questions are set on each part.

Now, the question types here for both exams are quite different because TOEFL only uses multiple choice questions whereas IELTS offers a very broad range. We might have summary completion, sentence completion, true-false-not given, multiple choice, and a few others as well. This is why doing practice exams is vital because you get to know what to expect and doing practice exams for both TOEFL and IELTS is obviously advantageous.

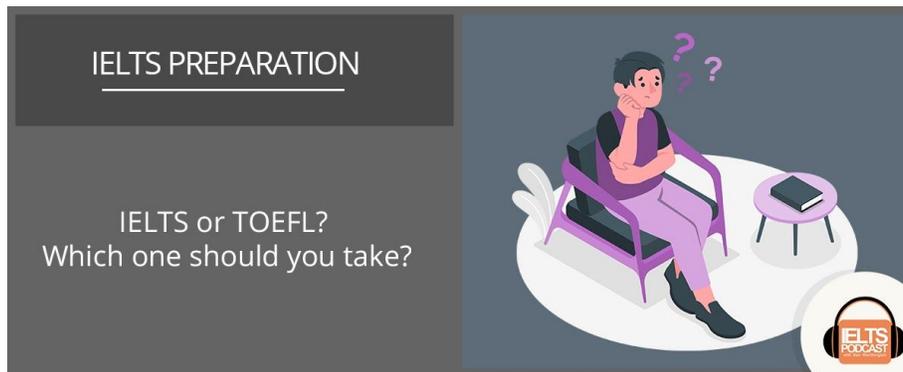
Let's move on to writing and speaking. So, IELTS Writing Task 2 as you probably know, we've got two tasks; the lovely Task 2 and Task 1. So, Task 1 if you're doing the Academic is probably



going to be a graphic form; pie chart, line graph, flow chart, plan on map. General is going to be a letter and both of those-- this is such a prickly subject because in some practice papers you can get from the official IELTS website it says write a minimum of 150 words or a minimum of 250 words. However, in the actual criteria, it does not mention that at all.

However, if we use our brains, we do know that if we're going for a band 7 we want to be writing between 300, 350 words because there just is not enough sentences to fulfill the criteria if we're just doing 250. So, that's an important point to bear in mind.

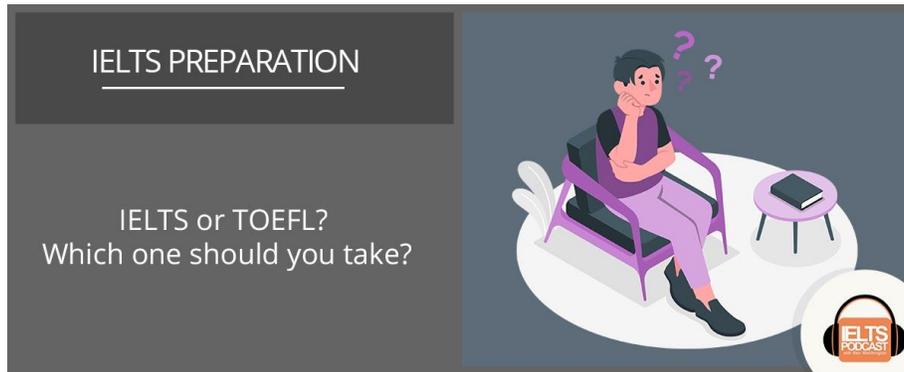
Now then, roughly speaking we spend about 20 minutes on Part 1 and about 40 minutes on Part 2 because we're going to get 60% of our points from Task 2. So, let's dedicate 60% of the time to those 60% of the points. Now, some students may find that they only need 15 minutes for Task 1, but they definitely need 45 for Task 2 because they find it borderline impossible, for example. So, it's best to do your practice exams, get feedback, find out where your weak spots are-- weak areas are and then work around those.



Now, as you know for Task 2, you are going to be writing an argumentative essay; discuss the advantages disadvantages, both sides, to what extent, all of these lovely types of questions. And we've got the grading in response to four criteria: cohesion and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and lexical resource. So, for-- sorry. Task response or task achievement. So, bear that in mind.

And by the way as a side note and this goes for TOEFL students too, if you can get hold of that criteria go through it. Read it. See what the examiners want. Compare it with your essay. Can you find examples of advanced grammatical structures? Can you find examples of accurate use of language? It's a really valuable exercise to do this. I strongly recommend it and ideally, if you can do it with a tutor, it's even better.

Now, speaking in IELTS is also graded by a qualified examiner. In the speaking case, it's a certified oral examiner and they are using guidelines also broken into four criteria. So, we've got fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and finally,

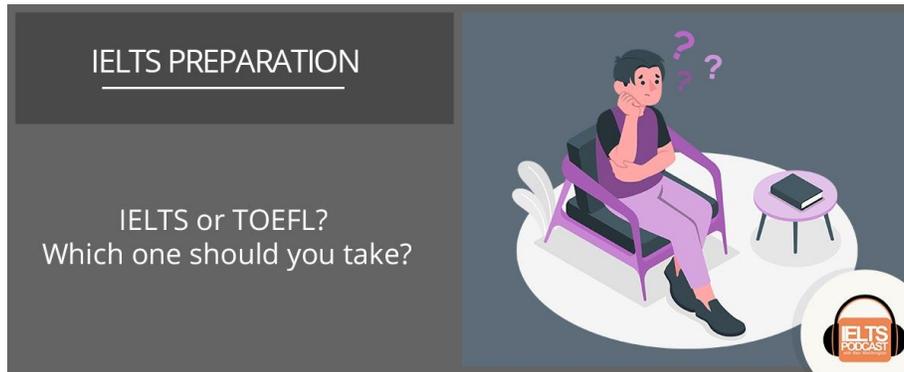


pronunciation and intonation. Again, if you can get your hands-- it's easy to get your hands on the criteria. It's criteria PDF. Go to Google IELTS speaking criteria PDF official. Put that in. Get that PDF and work through it.

You can find tutorials that break it down and we've got tutorials that break it down and explain it with examples. Ellen is really good at this actually. She's got some amazing podcasts on this about the speaking criteria.

Now, as you know, we've got three parts to the speaking exam. The first one you're going to be just asked soft questions. The aim is to relax you, to get you feeling comfortable so you can give the most honest-- you can give the most accurate presentation of your skills if you're more relaxed. Part 2 you're going to be doing a cue card. We don't need to go into that.

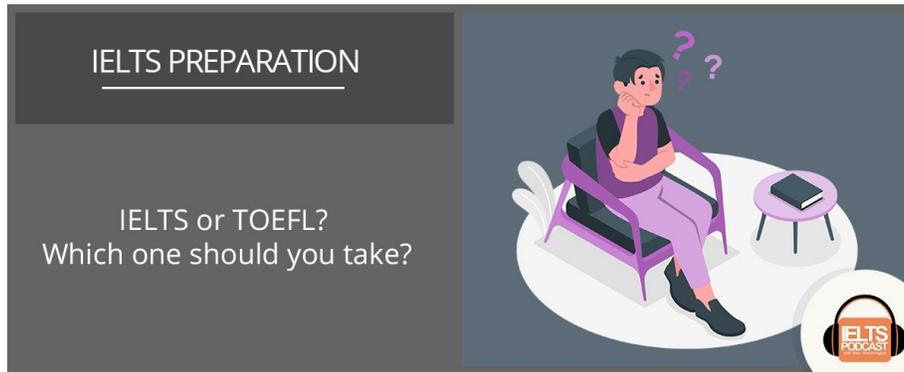
Part 3 you're going to be asked more challenging questions, more abstract questions and it's going to seem like you're repeating yourself and this is only the examiner probing and testing to



see if you've got the ability to say the same thing maybe from a different angle, from a different viewpoint, from a more abstract viewpoint, from a hypothetical. It's basically just testing those upper ranges of your speaking ability i.e. to describe more abstract concepts. So, just bear that in mind.

Now, the TOEFL writing is also divided up into two parts. The first is 20 minutes and this is where you're reading and then you write a summary of what you've heard. The second task is 30 minutes and this is an essay in response to a question. So, you cannot memorize an essay and reproduce it in the exam. No. You'll have to write an essay depending on the question.

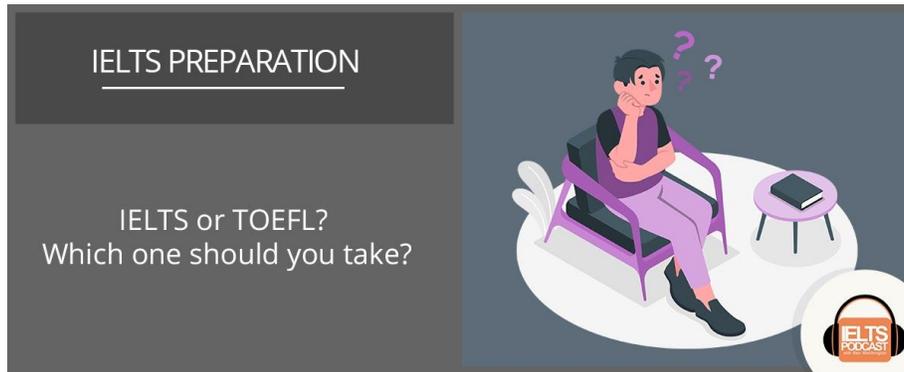
Unfortunately, I can't speak as much about how to structure this essay, about how to prepare for it. My specialty is IELTS. I do like the idea of giving a summary though because if you're writing a summary, it's not reliant on your ideas. All you're doing is re-packaging or reforming, reproducing the information you've already read, but in your own words. That's why I like the



idea of a summary because it's more focused on the language and you don't have to think that much of ideas which is as we know a big pain point for a lot of IELTS students.

Incidentally, this pain point is quite easily solved in one of the modules we have on our course. So, if that is a big pain point for you then you will probably benefit from looking at our IELTS online writing course where we specifically give you solutions on how to get ideas and then drop them into the essay writing structure which helps you to pass, which helps you to write a strong coherent exam almost effortlessly. My pronunciation; I need to work on it also.

Okay. So, let's move on to TOEFL speaking. There's four parts and these involve listening or reading something and then you are asked to speak for up to a minute on the topic. You're given about 15 to 30 seconds to prepare. The fourth part is independent and follows the same time frame guidelines. So, you'll be given a question like which of the following technological developments has made the greatest impact on students' lives? 1) Electronic books 2) online



classes or 3) smartphones. And then I guess you'll be given a few seconds 15-30 seconds and then you can answer.

I'm not too keen on that. I don't know if it would really test your ability to speak spontaneously. I think this is probably where IELTS could be a little bit more accurate. In Part 3, for example, you're not given that time frame to prepare your answer which makes it a little bit more fluid, a little bit more natural, but also incredibly more nerve-wracking if you're a student that does struggle speaking spontaneously and in a fluent manner.

But don't worry. There are skills you can develop to overcome this challenge. You can do paraphrase, reflective listening and we have covered all of these in previous tutorials.

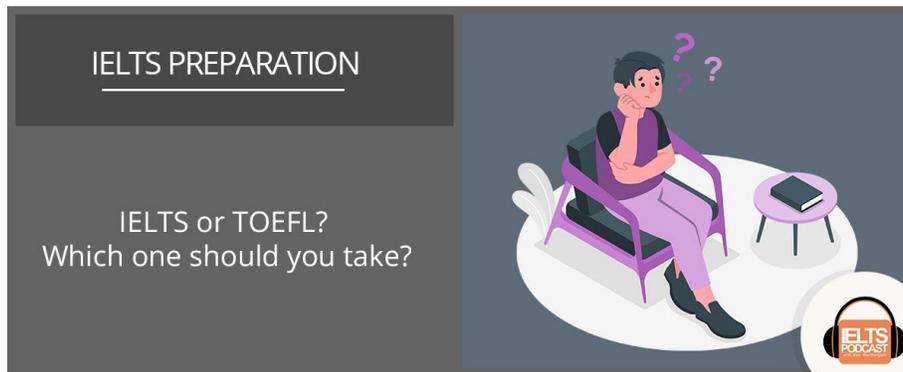
Now, as you know, IELTS is graded between 0 and 9 and it's the same for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. With the listening and reading though, you are graded with the amount of



answers out of 40 and then these correlate to either band 6, band 7, band 8, or band 8.5 or whatever and that's how you get your grade for the listening and reading.

Now generally speaking, most universities will require an overall score at least 6 and obviously if you're applying to more demanding places such as Oxford-- I read the other day Oxford is the number one university in the world and has been since something like 2016 which is interesting. I think Cambridge was number four. I might have mixed that up actually.

Anyway, if you are going for more demanding institutions, obviously they're going to demand a higher overall band score, but do not take that as gospel especially nowadays in times of corona where some institutions might be struggling from a lack of international students. Ring them up and tell them your situation and try and negotiate or bargain with them and say hey, look. I've only got 5.5, but I'm willing to do a foundation course or I'm willing to take the test again the next year with the target of band 7 or at least band 6. Something like that. These rules are not set in stone and they're especially not set in stone at the moment with corona going on.



TOEFL is scored with a maximum of 30 points per exam section, so I guess the maximum you can score is 240. Now, the total-- no. I messed that up. 120. Sorry. So, it's 30 points per exam section total of 120. Now, the TOEFL equivalent of an IELTS score band 7 is 95 or basically it's probably better to talk about ranges. So, if you get between 7 and 8 in IELTS, that's equates to between 95 and 120 for the TOEFL and both of those scores are rated C1. So, around a C1 on the Common European Framework scale.

Now, a band IELTS score of 8.5 to 9 would be considered about a C2 on the CEFR scale. I think the best way to get these-- well, if you want to go into this in more detail, in our site we've got a link to the International Journal of English Linguistics and they've published a report there which goes into it in much more detail.

Now to summarize, I'm going to basically repeat what I said at the beginning. It largely depends on your situation which one you're going to take. I'm guessing in most cases you probably don't have the choice. You're just going to have to take the exam that the institution you're working



with tells you to take and the biggest difference would be the human element that you get with the IELTS speaking.

Now, that is everything from me today. I hope you've enjoyed this. If you've got any suggestions or questions as to what you would like me to review in these tutorials, then send us an email to ben@ieltspodcast.com. You can also get in touch with any specific questions; exam questions, for example that you're struggling with. We always reply. That's ben@ieltspodcast.com.

And remember as well if you're struggling with the writing or the speaking, the fastest way to improve is to get expert feedback. When you sign up for our newsletter where we send you tutorials and special offers, you'll also get a very attractive offer for getting your essay corrected and that's only available when you sign up to the newsletter.

The second thing I want to mention is that if you want to improve your listening or your speaking skills then get our app. Just search for IELTS Ben Worthington in the App Store or the



Google Play Store and in the app, you get all our podcasts and you get the transcripts as well so you can listen while reading and this helps you considerably especially if you're taking active notes because you can immediately check the spelling of the word that you've just heard.

So, you're not alone in this. We can help. This is why I set up IELTS Podcast to help students like you; to help them pass and you can do this, okay? If you failed before, don't worry. We are here to help you and we're going to help you get the band score you deserve be it a band 7, 8, 9 or maybe you're just going for a 6. We can get you there. We can help you improve fast.

So, thank you for listening. Have a great day and good luck in your exam preparation.

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