



Let me tell something funny. Two things I give you example. Simple things. One of my misspelling was “juice” and one of them was “egg.”

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## INTRODUCTION

Ben: So you're living in Perth? Yeah?

Jolan: Yeah. I live in Perth. I was a student here. I have done my master in Architecture. So with the immigration process, I need to get IELTS 7 each, in order to be able to get my permanent residency.

Ben: What was your score last time? The last time you did it?



Jolan: Last time was 6.5. 7.5 for my speaking, 7 writing, 6 listening, 5.5 reading.

Ben: Wow, 5.5. Okay then.

Jolan: Yeah, I got all sort of scores like 6.5 for reading, 6.5 for listening... I've got like... I have sat for the exam 5 times so I got all sort of score. But it was my first time to get luck. I received 7 for writing. So all my score used to be 6 for writing and suddenly jumped to 7. Exactly, the way I looked at the title for your book: Jump from 6 to 7. I was like "Yeah, that's it." And that's what I want. So Yeah, I listened to your instructions and I was confused at the first place, like how to write down my essay. I've read lots of things to different websites. So then I realized that I have to focus on something which are more useful. So I found your instruction more useful than other tutors/website that I searched through. So that's why... I followed that and then suddenly jumped from 6 to 7.



Ben: Awesome. And that is good. I'm really happy, actually, because you were a perfect student. You did every single task that was sent to you, and you did it fast, and you were like... Usually you got your emails back to me within 24 hours which is what I like. And then straight on to the next one.

What was the biggest challenge you had with the writing before you looked to the Sentence Guide? Before we started working together?

Jolan: I was confused. I wasn't exactly sure how to organize my essay. Because different tutors and different guides might say different things. So I was confused how to structure that right. 4 paragraph, 5 paragraph, where to write my opinions, how to start my opinions, and so I was confused. Then I read this Sentence Guide and realize that yeah, that's it. It's more specific, it's what I was looking for. It says "You need to structure your essay. Then after that it gives you an example. Then it says "Okay, you need to write your introduction in this way, you need to support your argument, your



example should be like this, this is poor example, this is good example, this is a great example...” So I went through it, I realized, yeah this is a specific way needed for a student because most of the websites and lots of the books talks general about how to write an essay. But they don’t specifically talk about how to organize it paragraph by paragraph, and how to support your argument, how to write your topic sentence.

Ben: Exactly. Exactly. I noticed the same thing. Because before when I was just a normal teacher and I had to do the first IELTS class, I went online and did exactly what the other students did, and I was like “Okay, how do we write this IELTS Task 2 essay?” and it’s exactly like you said. They said “Use a structure, structure your writing, use these words... however, nevertheless... and give an example,” stuff like that. But the thing is, if there’s 250 words that just through experience, I realize that okay that’s maybe about 13, 14, 15 sentences roughly. So each one of these sentences has a specific task. So if you break it down like that, and then if you have an instruction for



each sentence then it just makes it 10 times easier. You know? And that's for the IELTS side of it. And then for the language side of it, buying a book is okay and they can give you advice and stuff. But still, it's good to have someone looking over your work and correcting it.

Could you tell us just how that helps you? Having somebody looking at the language side of it?

Jolan: At first has been on writing. I didn't know what my problem is because I kept writing different topics. And then after that I realize that there is something wrong, why I can't improve. Then I realize that I should get somebody check my essay. Then after I have you help me, you had my essay checked, I realized what my problem are and then I followed your instruction, and I tried to fix that. So that's amazing help into improve my writing. And one more thing was, previously, I used to write mainly 5 paragraph a set. But before I'm talking to you, I have now realized what the point is. Because when you



write 4 paragraph a set, you can get a better mark for task response. Because you are able to support your argument better. And if you are able to support your argument better, it means that you get better mark for task response. So then, yeah. So I realized that.

Ben: Yeah. I mean 5 paragraph? This is like exactly what you're saying before. Lots of different websites, and lots of different tutors all have a different version of what to teach and stuff. And the problem is unless you go deep into one method, learning a little bit from all the different sources, it's going to be very time-consuming. Then you're going to have to check out and evaluate, and the rest of it. One thing that I learned with the 5-paragraph model is that it means that each paragraph is going to be about 2 or 3 sentences. So you cannot really fully develop your argument. Whereas if we do the 4-paragraph form like we were doing in the Sentence Guide, it's just you got maybe 2



points and you just hammer home each point very clearly and coherently, and it makes it a lot easier.

Jolan: Absolutely. And another point, I realize that when I was working with you. I never bothered to check my essay after I finished. So I mean when I'm finished writing, I'm like "Okay, that's it." And then my essay's okay. Then you emphasize on that, it is very important, for example, spelling is very important, article are very important, plural and singular are very important. So I tried to focus on those things. So all those instructions together help me to raise up my mark.

Ben: Exactly. Yeah. There's so many things like that which I try to put all of them that I know. But just at the top of my head, during the essay check after you finish writing is an easy... It's one of the easiest ways to pick up the points. When you finish your exam, just go back through it from the last sentence right through to the first. Go through, looking for those simple mistakes that you've made in previous essays. That's right.



Now, Jolan, tell me. What are the next topics that you've got some challenges with? Did you say it was the reading?

Jolan: Yes, the reading was the most challenging for me because sometimes you need to focus on different topics, and sometimes it's confusing. Another thing that's like a challenge for me was stress management and time management during the exam. If I miss one question, I get stressed and I cannot focus. I'm like I get distracted. So I think it's another problem that I face with. I don't think it's about the English knowledge. It's more about how to learn the technique and how to tackle that.

Ben: That's absolutely right. I was talking to one student and they said that they researched different techniques. Like one, reading through the text as fast as possible and then looking at the questions. Another technique was to look at the questions then read the text. And another technique was just to read like the first sentence of each paragraph in the reading text, and then look at the questions. And then the point that...



The very bright student and I have made, he said that what he would do would be first, do lots of practice test and isolate the area where he was falling down. Maybe it was multiple choice, or maybe it was true or false, or something like that. And isolate that area... First, identify it then isolate it. And then try different techniques... I mean measure which one got him the best results. You know? And this is very time-consuming but it helps you determine which is the best technique for you. You know?

Jolan: 100% I agree.

Ben: Yeah. Because it's true. This isn't... We're talking about reading 3,000 – 4,000 words in 40 or in an hour. This isn't a natural thing. And it's not really testing your English ability. Like you said, it's an exam skill. And to get these exam skills you've got to try on different techniques and find out which one is the best one for you.



Jolan: Exactly. It's like a formula. When you go for mathematics exam or physics, you need to land a formula then after that you need to put that formula. Use that formula and make the equation solved.

Ben: Exactly. And tell me, what did you practice for the other areas? For the listening and for the speaking?

Jolan: My speaking, I've been living in Australia for 4 years. I have to study my masters so living and speaking with native speaking country. So it helps you to improve my English. And improve my... It's like naturally without any effort, it helped me to improve my speaking skill. And about the listening, it's the same. My main thing either writing or listening, is spelling. Easily, like in listening exam, I miss 6 or 7 question just because of spelling. I understand, I write it down, but because of misspelling I lose the mark.



The last time I counted. I missed 7 just because of the spelling. It means that I got 6, easily I would have scored 7. It's because during my masters, I went all the time writing my essay on everything in Microsoft Word, so that's why... Microsoft Word fixes everything for me. So that's why whenever I... Let me tell you something funny. One of the things... Two things I'll give you an example. Simple things. One of my misspelling was "juice" for last listening, one of them was "egg." I just misspelled these two things. And you laugh at it because it's like a joke. Like "How could you do that?"

So it's not about the English now, it's more about I have to sit for 1 month or 2 months just practice my spelling. That's it. Maybe next time I go for writing I'll get 7.5 or 8 because I get less spelling mistakes.

Ben: So how are you going to improve your spelling then? Are you just going to use...  
Yeah, I guess you can just use Microsoft Word and just start writing.



Jolan: No. It's going to make it worse. I think I need to go through the books. One of the teachers suggested me to read Reader's Digest. It's like a magazine. So she said that it's very useful if I do that. To read it for one or more a day so it might be useful. So I don't know how the spelling of any word is like. So I just go through it and learn it. Write each word 10 times.

Ben: I'll send you a PDF that I have which is just full of spelling rules. It should definitely help you because it's like going down to what you've said before about the formula. Unfortunately English is a bit of a disaster regarding setting the rules and breaking the rules, but it's like 80% of the time the rules can be followed, and you can get good spelling just by knowing the rules. So I'll send you that. It's one good way to improve.

Jolan: Thank you.



Ben: You're welcome. And the second one is when you... Hopefully... That's another thing. Continue writing your essays because you don't want to lose that skill. And you might think "Oh, it's easy. I got 7 now." But if you don't... I would recommend you to write at least 1 essay a week just to maintain it. Just to keep your skill going, and turn off the essay check, and then switch it back on again, and then copy-paste all those words that you spelled wrong. And maybe just keep them in the diary and keep that diary with you. Keep them in Evernote on your phone and just make a note of them, send them to the app afterwards. And then just... And another thing, just do a spelling check spell tests. Like at school. You know? When I was a kid just write 10 words and I'm going to learn these today. I'm going to write them out a hundred times, each one. Job's done.

Jolan: Definitely. Definitely it will help.



Ben: Okay. Well, Jolan that was awesome. Thanks very much and thanks for telling me about your results. About you jumping from 6 to 7 using the Sentence Guide. I was really happy when you sent me that email. It was awesome. It made my day.

Jolan: Not a problem. It's the reality so... You have done a lot and it's really valuable what you have done. Because... definitely I can say... It's the only website and Sentence Guide I found the most useful. Because it's very straight to the point. It's really what the students are looking for to jump from Band 6 to 7.

Ben: Exactly. Exactly. Thank you, Jolan.

Jolan: No problem at all.

Ben: Yeah. You should be working with me here in Spain.

Jolan: I would love to. Maybe in the future I'll come to Madrid and meet you some time.



Ben: Yeah.

Jolan: After I finish with English and IELTS I get time to travel.

Ben: Yeah. Yeah. You could come here and learn Spanish. We'll set up an IELTS academy because you'll have learned everything.

Jolan: Exactly. Exactly. That's awesome.

Ben: Okay. Right. I'll let you go now. Thank you very much.

Remember to leave your email for updates.