

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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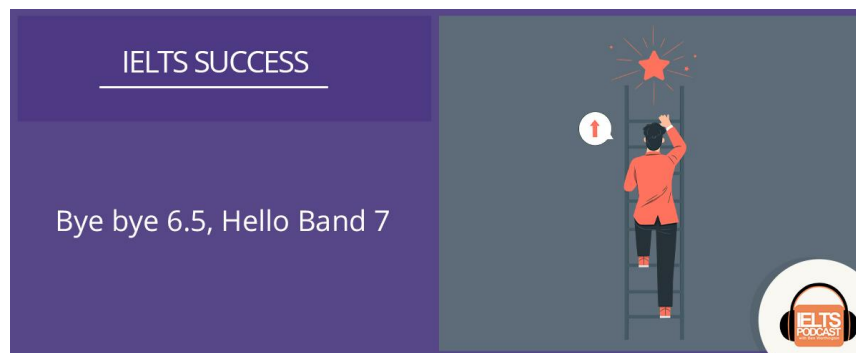
Mega: As long as you don't ask me how many times I already taken IELTS. We don't want [unintelligible 00:00:24.25].

Ben: Okay. Okay. We won't talk about that. I won't ask you. I won't ask you. If I do, remind me that you asked me not to. So, don't worry. I won't do that. I had a similar situation with my driving test, so it's okay. Don't ask me about the driving test. I won't ask you about how many times, all right?

Mega: If you forget and then you ask me, I'll say I just like took three times instead of thirteen.

Ben: Okay.

Mega: Yeah? Yeah.



Ben: So it was 13 times.

Mega: Yeah, 13. Can you imagine?

Ben: Wow! Wow! Sorry. Sorry I didn't know. You didn't want to speak about it. 13 times and \$200 each time so that's--

Mega: No, \$330.

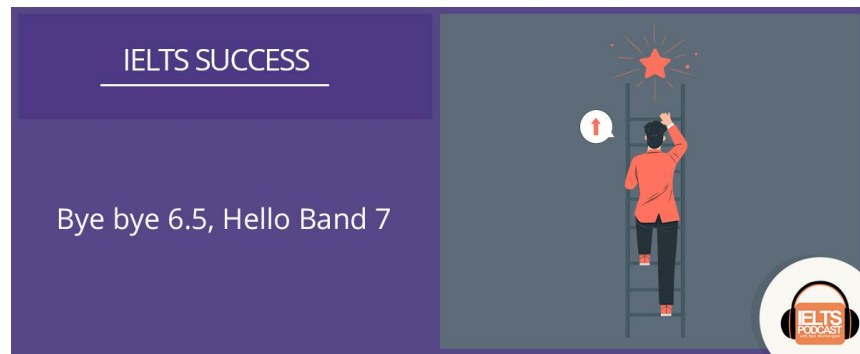
Ben: \$330. Oh my word. So that's almost like \$4,000.

Mega: Yes, \$4,000 and then all those test course and then getting my paper--

Ben: Corrected.

Mega: Corrected with you is okay. You're very nice with Ryan like saying that I'm like a middle school English level something like that.

Ben: That's a bit harsh, isn't it? That's not very nice.



Mega: All this abusive vocabulary well.

Ben: Wow! Yeah, that's not very encouraging, is it? That's a shame. Anyway I just want to know a little bit more about you and your situation. So, you're from Indonesia, but you're living in Australia now. Is that correct?

Mega: Yes. Correct. Correct.

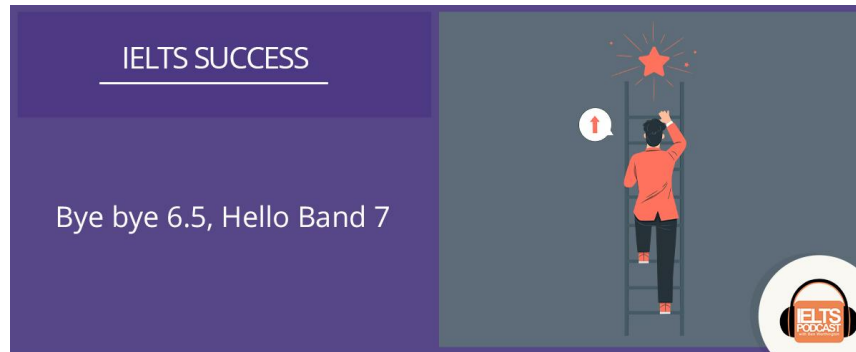
Ben: Right.

Mega: So it's been six and a half years.

Ben: And you're taking the IELTS for permanent residency. Is that correct?

Mega: Yeah, permanent residency to get those points like a skill migration point.

Ben: Ah okay. I see. And how's that process going have you got PR yet?



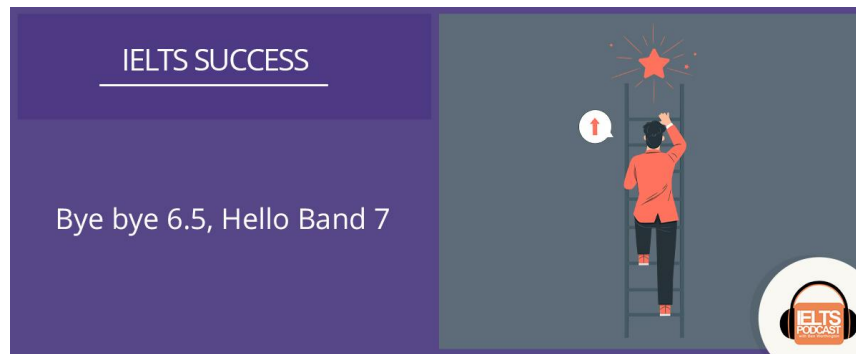
Mega: Not yet because they have many stages before that. After you got the IELTS, you need to wait for the invitation. So, you need to submit-- how do you say-- EOI expression of interest and then you wait. You wait for your like there are two rounds each month, but with my skill is accounting, so there are a lot of people submit expression of interest through accountancy skill. So, I have to wait quite a while to get the invitation. And after you get the invitation then you can lodge the PR. So, I still need to get the invitation, yes.

Ben: I see. So, it's quite a long process.

Mega: Yeah, it's very long.

Ben: How did you prepare, for example, for the reading? How did you prepare for that one?

Mega: With reading I've been reading English like journal and everything and books since I was a child, so reading is no problem for me-- with no problems. I always got 8, 8.5, 9 with listening as well. So, the only problem is always writing because in Indonesia, we don't really do a lot of

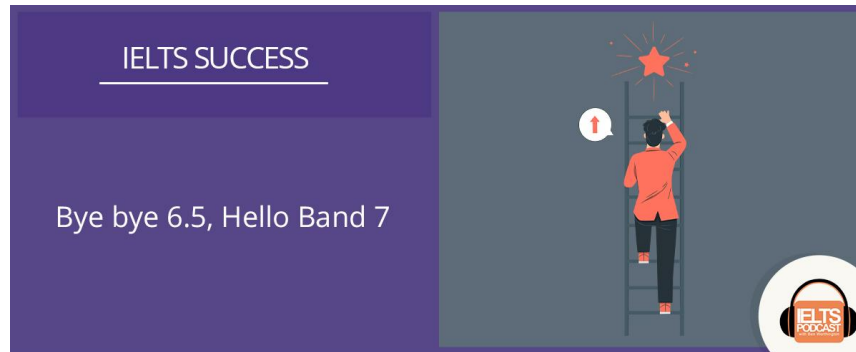


essay writing exercise. So, even in my own language I don't write that much and then suddenly, I have to write in other people's language. So, it's quite demanding for me.

Ben: Yeah. You did quite a lot of writing preparation and just for IELTS or writing in general?

Mega: Just for IELTS and then-- so I took the test for 13 times. During those 12 times, I didn't do a lot of practice. Like I did practice, but not as intense. When I started my journey with you, you told me to practice and then-- so like every two days I always wrote essay and those kind of thing. So, it's really helpful; very, very helpful. Like you assure me to write every day almost every day. So, I think that really helps a lot and then you told me to hedge your sentence like those structure sentence. Like that's very helpful. Like the template what should I say if I see these kind of questions? I think that really helped me a lot. So, to be honest the 12th time after that I follow your course and then after that I got 7 straight away.

Ben: Awesome.



Mega: I follow your course two months, so from May until July. I took the test and then straight away I get 7.

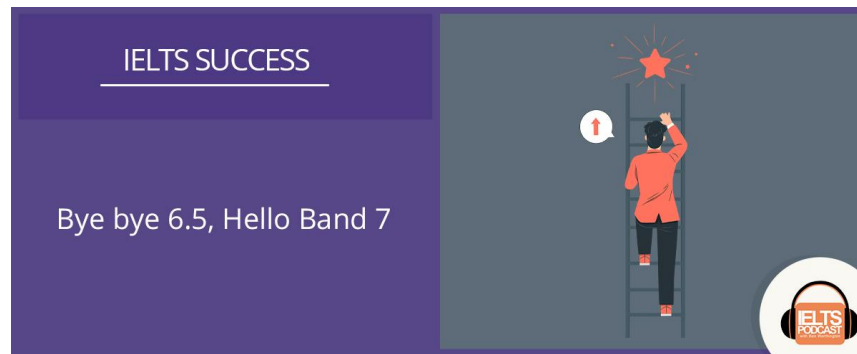
Ben: Yeah. I was so pleased that you sent me your email with the big smiley face and

that really made my day. I was like wow! Mega is insanely happy. I'm so happy too.

Mega: Yeah, yeah. So, it was your course who helped me a lot.

Ben: Thank you. Thank you. And what grades were you getting beforehand in the writing?

Mega: 6.5 6.5 6.5 always 6.5. I didn't know what was missing. So, I guess at that time I was lucky as well because the question was quite easy. It was about problem and solution. It's about noise. Yeah. So yeah, it wasn't really that difficult, but one of my friends she took the exam exactly the same day as me, she got 6.5. So, I think that I'm not only lucky but I'm pretty good at it so.

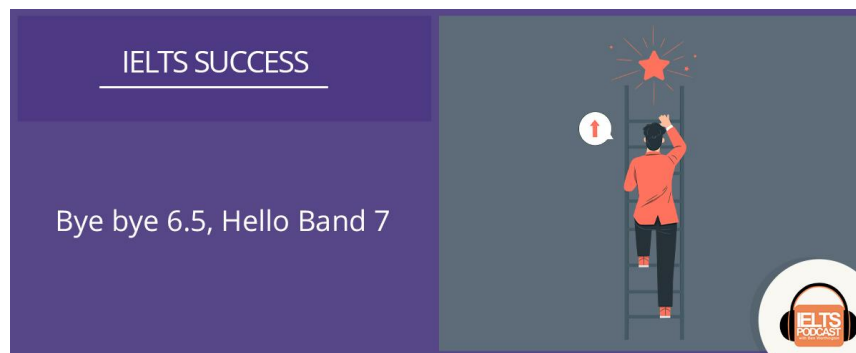


Ben: Well Mega, I wouldn't personally say that you were lucky. I think you made your own luck because between you and me, we did essay after essay after essay, so therefore you're just increasing the number of different types of essays that you can receive and you got one that you recognized, but you only recognized it was problem solution because you had done absolutely loads with me and you knew exactly how to attack it.

Mega: True, true. Thank you anyway.

Ben: You're welcome. You're welcome. And so the question was about noise pollution or something like that, yeah?

Mega: Yeah, yeah and then why is it so and then what's the solution to tackle this problem. So, for me it was very straightforward. So, it's not like two stages questions and then agree or disagree. If the question is about disagree or agree, I hate those kind of questions. That is very straightforward like why and then how. I like those kind of questions. I wrote it like quickly. It took me around 35 minutes I think, so five minutes checking. And then the letter was not that



difficult as well. It's about working at certain department at the big company and you want to transfer or something like that. So, I think that one is quite easy too because I'm currently working, so I know how to write email with those kind of like content. So, it was quite easy.

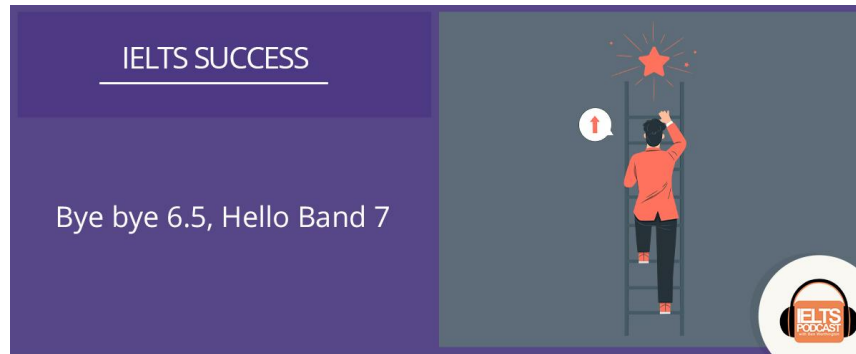
Ben: Yeah. And for the Task 1 did it say write a-- sorry. Was the task a formal letter or was it write an email just out of curiosity?

Mega: Formal letter.

Ben: Formal letter.

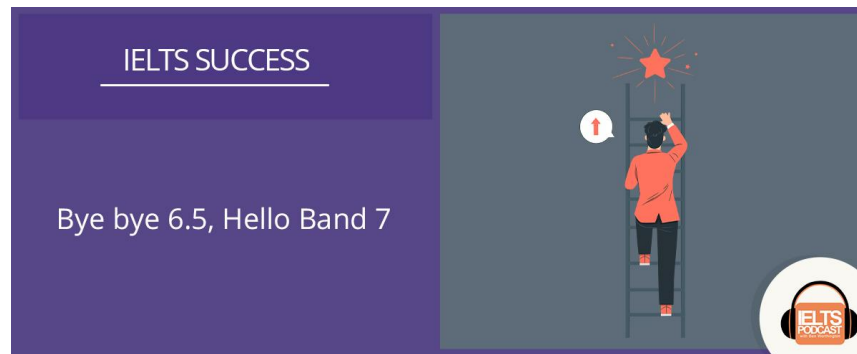
Mega: To other department telling that you want to move and then you want to get certain training or something like that. I couldn't remember, but it was about-- it was formal letter. I wrote many emails like that during my work. I know like what to write, how is the structure.

Ben: That's the good thing with Task 1 that once you've learned about a handful maybe ten different phrases, it's just a case of adapting those phrases to the actual content of the letter and



especially if you're doing it all day every day during work, then it's not difficult at all. You said with the writing with Task 2 before you mentioned hedging. Can you just give us a brief explanation-- yeah, give us a brief explanation afterwards, but first, I want you to explain how you attacked the problem and solution essay and just go through the process just so we can help the other students. And I want to see how you did it. I'm pretty certain I know how you did it, but just curious.

Mega: I got this exercise from IELTS teacher here. She told me to write introduction only in three sentences and then-- only in three sentences: the general truth and then leading to the questions and then the last one, I follow your template. This essay will discuss this, this, this and then you told me to elaborate. Yeah. This essay will discuss this, this, this using this as an example. I follow very strictly on that one. And then after that, the thing about hedge I usually talk in general like people claim that, but you told me to hedge like it is claimed and sometimes people-- how do you say when you hedge like you need to give like a doubtful something?



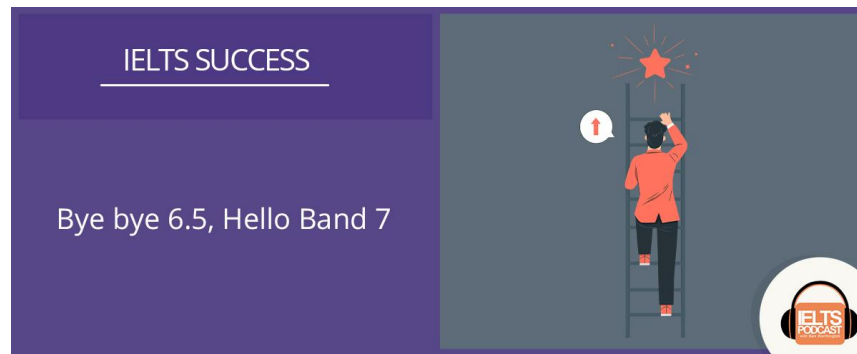
Ben: Yes. You have to like create a bit of an element of doubt because it's common.

Mega: Yeah.

Ben: Exactly. Just to make sure that you're not giving an absolute fact because it's quite easy to write it and then it comes across as though it's a fact even though it's not what you wanted to write down.

Mega: I follow the paragraph according to the introduction. So, I wrote two main course. Actually, I wanted to write three main course, but I wrote only two main course with a very long explanation and example and then at the last sentence, I wrote the review. So, I wrote the topic sentence, explanation, and then example, and then I wrote the conclusion. So, around 4-5-- four sentences I think. 4-5. So, I'm really [unintelligible 00:11:09.16].

Ben: For each paragraph.

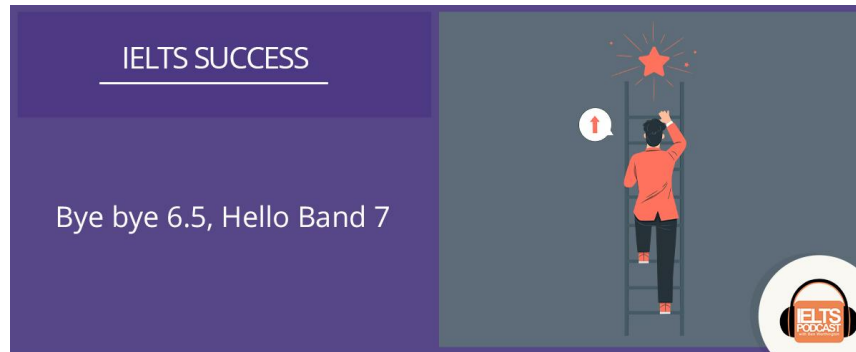


Mega: And at the end, I wrote the conclusion. So, really I follow the introduction, but put backwards. So, the first one is my opinion and then-- not my opinion-- the solution and then after that general truth, I think I just wrote two sentences.

Ben: I see. I see. Just to close and just to finish the essay. I see. And then afterwards you spent five minutes checking it.

Mega: Yeah. Checking everything and then added if I think that oh, okay. I need this one more specific vocabulary. So, for example, the city people you know usually when they drive they're honking or they break abruptly, so I wrote this kind of very specific language.

Ben: I see. Not only did you do a check for mistakes, but you also did like an improvement check looking where you can interchange vocabulary for more specific vocabulary so as to pick up points. Genius.



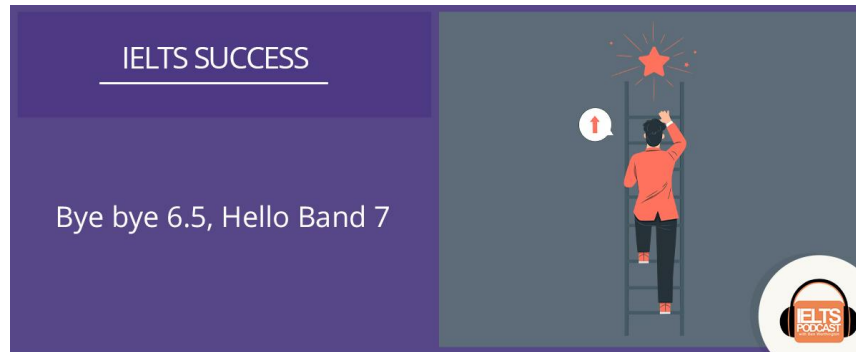
Mega: And then I really follow those templates like really very strictly like where is the topic sentence? Where is the explanation? Where is the example? Where is the review? I really follow that.

Ben: Awesome. And for the examples did you put a real world example in your essay?

Mega: Yeah. I put the real world example. For example, to illustrate this time [unintelligible 00:12:42.15] or like I told about the construction it could cause noise pollution and then it could cause mild deafness. I wrote that and then-- which is very unhealthy and then this kind of thing and then I wrote I think that the construction company should follow strict regulation according to this, this, this and then if they don't follow this they should be penalized. They have to be fined; those kind of things. Like that's what you read in the council or anything. The council like booklet or something like that.

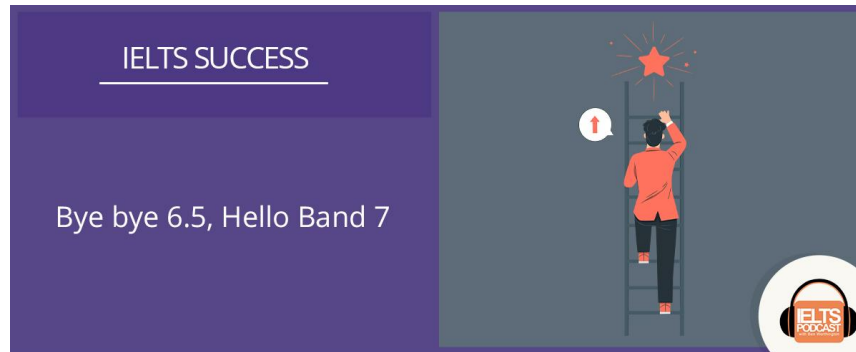
Ben: So, this was your solution, yeah? That was what you presented as a solution.

Mega: Yes, yes, yes.



Ben: Ah okay and that was your second paragraph-- no, third. Third paragraph. Second body paragraph. When we were working together, where did you get the most value or what was the most helpful for you?

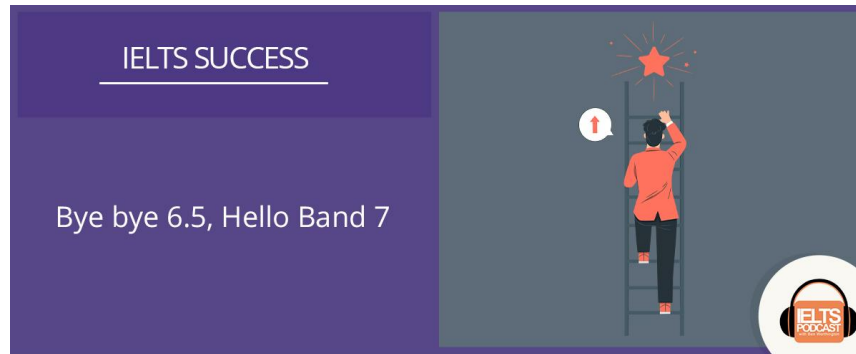
Mega: Encouragement, yes. And you always encourage like student to keep on going; being persistent and stick with it. I think that's the most important. And then you told me to write, write, write, write. So, that's really important. Even though if I have good grammar or sentence or anything, it won't help if I don't write and practice. So, I think what you did it was very good. You encouraged me and then you never put me down like some of the teachers. They always put me down and said you think you're so good, but you're not. But you're not like that. You're totally like very kind and very helpful and then very encouraging. Yeah. It cannot be-- it's priceless. Yeah. Sometimes students like me who already took so many times, so it kind of really help, really help a lot instead of just you know examining my grammar or vocabulary. Of course, I know my grammar is not perfect. I'm not native or anything. Of course, I know my vocabulary is not perfect, but it's just that sometimes we already know, but we don't need to hear it again. We



just need someone to encourage us to keep on going. You're doing good. You're doing a good job. You're getting better. You just need to practice. Try more. Don't give up. We just sometimes want to hear that. That's it.

Ben: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I totally know what you mean. Yeah. Yeah. I had the same-- I was lucky to have a really good Spanish teacher and they always encouraged me because when I was doing my first Spanish classes, it can be so tough, you know and it seems like everything is going against you and then something in the real world comes and knocks you off like I don't know maybe you break your ankle and you still got to carry on studying or maybe your friend loses the job or something like that and you know what I mean or maybe even your own job is threatened and then you've got to keep on pushing, but yeah. So, yeah I totally understand what you mean. Yeah, it's important. It's important. So-- sorry. Go on.

Mega: Yeah, because some examiner they just put themselves on the high level and then they will come on. You can you know you're not that good and I don't like this kind of you know like

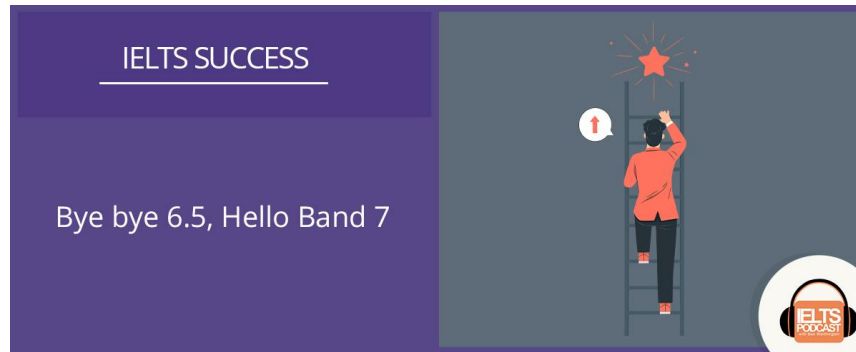


teacher, but there are so many in the internet. So, I told you in the email like you are the best tutor. That's it. For me. Maybe for other people they don't-- I need to hedge.

Ben: You are possibly the best. No, no, no. I prefer the first one. That was fine. That one didn't need hedging at all. That was fine what you said. It was all good. It was all good. All right then. Okay Mega. So, now your plans are to get the permanent residency, get the invitation, and all of that and then you're going to finally rest and stay in Australia. That's the master plan, yeah.

Mega: Not rest but work and-- yeah. Just work and stay here.

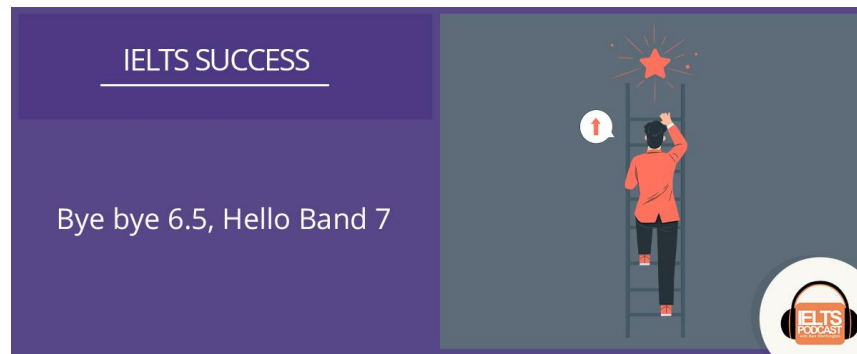
Ben: Awesome and do you have anything else to say to the IELTS students who are taking their exam at the moment and who are having a bit of a tough time or who are just starting their prep or anything like that? What would you say to a student now who's having a tough time?



Mega: Having a tough time; sometimes for us maybe don't be as smart as like you think like you're so good and then you keep on getting like every week you're just going through the tests and tests and tests without studying. Really you definitely need to sit down and work out and do the writing or reading or whatever you need to practice. And it's like if it's really urgent, you need to practice at least four to five hours every day, but if like if it's not urgent, then you might two hours every day. But don't just take exam like that. It's waste money really wasteful.

Ben: Yeah, absolutely.

Mega: Yeah. So, I think it's better if you just sit down and observe what's your weakness, what's your biggest challenge and then work that one out, attack that, not just giving the IELTS center \$230 every week just like that. Like thinking you're so good, maybe you're lucky this time you get it. No. Suddenly, you will get 7 right away. No way. I've tried that way. No way. So, you need to know yourself better and then get your writing or speaking checked. That's the most important.



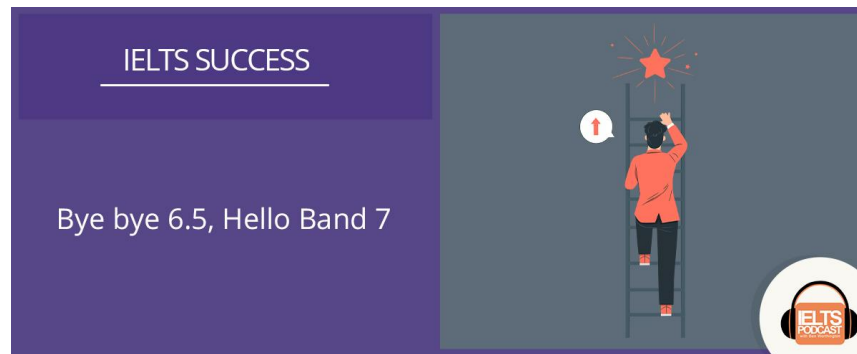
Ben: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. That's solid advice. That's great advice that, Mega. And what would you say to a student who's just started now-- who's just started the IELTS preparation?

Mega: Maybe they need to get their score checked to see what level they are in right now and then from then they need to work out how they're going to increase. Like for example one of my teachers suggest me in order to increase 0.5 point in writing, you need to study at least 220 hours. I don't know whether that's correct or not, but I did follow her a little bit. Yeah. 220 hours. Can you imagine? Just 0.5.

Ben: That's very interesting.

Mega: Yeah, yeah. So, they need to check themselves where are they right now and then what's their goal. What did you get; 6 or 7? And then after that work from there.

Ben: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's very interesting that so about the IELTS tutor. The one tutor you had in Australia they said for every half point improvement you need about 220 hours.



Mega: Yes.

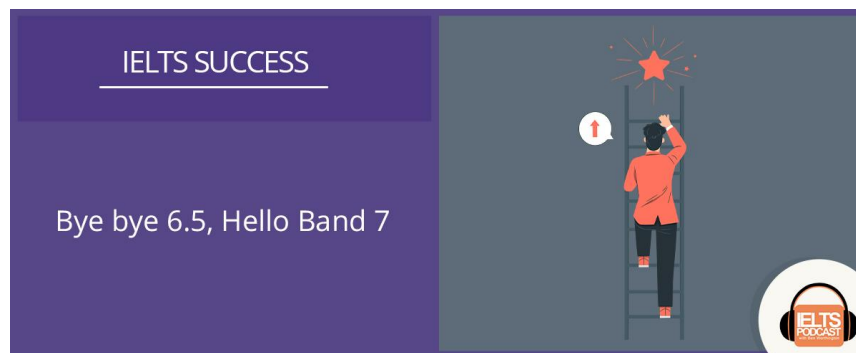
Ben: Wow!

Mega: Yes, of studying. Yeah. She told me that and then I was like put a note on my hours. I had a log book. I put okay, today I already wrote like 40 minutes, 40 minutes. I think I already reached that 200 hours then I get 7. I think what she might say is quite correct I think.

Ben: Wow! That's interesting. Yeah. Yeah. That's good. And I also like the idea that you made a log book and you logged down everything; the hours that you did. That's a very, very smart idea because to improve in something, the first step is to start measuring it and just by the fact of measuring it, you will improve. Absolutely.

Mega: Yeah. To be honest with you, I'm being honest with myself. Where am I? Like what level I'm in like 5.5 or 6 or whatever. I need to be honest with myself otherwise I cannot improve.

Ben: Yeah. Exactly.



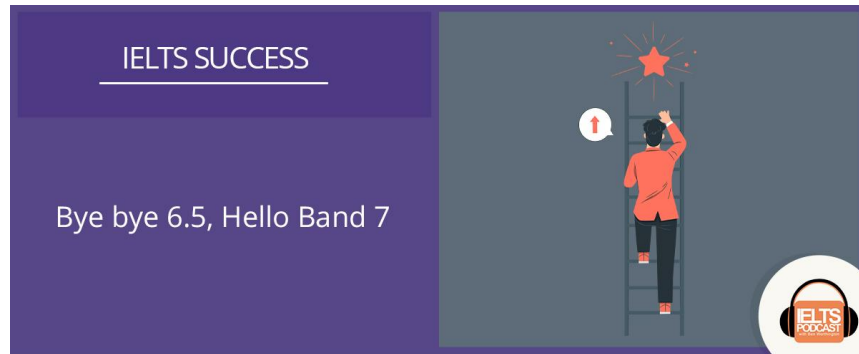
Mega: So, I always be honest with myself like I get my writing checked and everything. Okay, you're already in 6.5. To get 7 you need to have like this, this, this and then I'll follow all that plan.

Ben: Exactly, yeah. Absolutely. Right then. Okay. Well Mega, thank you so much for doing this and yeah, I really appreciate you taking the time out of your agenda, out of your week to do the call and to help all the other students and yeah. And I hope everybody who's listening if you are listening that follow Mega and do exactly what she said because she scored it and she's well underway now to get permanent residency and then have a rest. No, not have a rest. Get permanent residency and then carry on working.

Mega: Yeah and create some achievement. Yeah.

Ben: Yeah, not just get IELTS and then sit at home for the rest of the year. Okay then. All right. Thank you very much, Mega.

Mega: Thank you.



[Music]

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