

Masterclass for IELTS Trainers

This is the ideal course for anyone who wants to start out in delivering IELTS preparation courses, teachers currently working in an educational context or CELTA graduates. As prior knowledge of the IELTS exam is not mandatory, the course is also suitable for those who have a background in soft skills or who wish to make a career change.

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1.1. Introduction

Welcome to the Masterclass for IELTS Trainers course.

Content and course duration

This is a 20-hour course which is run over 10 days.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
• Introduction to course • IELTS overview • Grading system	• Teaching exam classes • Anticipating problems and solutions • Case studies • Teaching exam classes – DOs and DON'Ts • Overview of IELTS writing	• Developing writing skills • Writing subskills (micro and macro skills) • Students' difficulties with writing • How to help Ss overcome these problems?
Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
• IELTS assessment • Writing task 1 and 2 • Assessing sample Writing Task • Activities and tips for better writing	• Developing reading skills • Overview of IELTS reading • Subskills in reading	• Developing students' skills • Anticipating problems and solutions • Difficult question types
Day 7	Day 8	Day 9
• What the IELTS listening exam entails • Students' problems and how to deal with them	• The key sub skills tested for General and Academic listening. • Activities to develop some of these skills	• Developing Speaking skills • Assessment criteria • Anticipating problems and solutions
Day 10		
• Top tips for Speaking • Evaluating resources • Q and A round up and course evaluation		

Benefits

On this workshop **you will**:

- ☐ develop your skills in teaching speaking, listening, writing and reading.
- ☐ find out the latest teaching materials and activities for preparing students for the IELTS examination.
- ☐ learn how to effectively prepare students for the exam using a variety of different strategies.

- ☐ have the opportunity to share your knowledge and skills with other professionals in your field.
- ☐ familiarise yourself with the public IELTS bands descriptors and explore how these can inform your training.
- ☐ be provided with professionally developed materials which cater to your needs.

On this workshop **you will not:**

- ☐ find out or discuss the IELTS marking criteria as this information is strictly confidential.
- ☐ discuss the merits of the IELTS exam – the exam has been written by experts and we have no remit to change the exam.

Methodology

Your trainer has been trained in the latest ELT methodology and has a wealth of experience in teacher/trainer training and teaching IELTS preparation courses. The course will be very practical, with the emphasis on developing your ability to choose suitable activities and materials to develop your students' skills and exam strategies.

As many of you may not come from an ELT background, it is important for us to take time to consider the techniques and methods your trainer will be using on this course, so you can get the most from the next three days.

Read through these definitions of some of the techniques and discuss the reasons why you think each technique is useful.

- ☐ **Demonstration lessons**
Your trainer will teach you parts of lessons or even whole lessons as if you are your own students.
- ☐ **Loop Input**
Your trainer will introduce useful ideas and theory in the same way that you should introduce or practice these kinds of materials or ideas in class. For example, in a session about reading skills, you will read a text about how to teach reading skills, but you will experience a method or activity for teaching reading at the same time. You will then be asked to reflect on the activity you did and consider how you can use it or adapt it in your own classrooms.
- ☐ **Brainstorm**
You will be asked to share your ideas and knowledge in small groups by brainstorming on several different issues, student problems or areas of the exam.

☐ **Micro-teaching**

You may be asked to teach a very short part of a lesson to your colleagues.

☐ **Variety of activities**

You will be exposed to a **variety** of different tasks and activities which you can use to teach and develop your students' skills.

So, remember to **watch your trainer very carefully** as you will be able to use many of the activity types and tasks in your own teaching. We are not only giving you ideas for WHAT to teach but also developing your ability to decide HOW to teach your students more effectively.

Getting to Know You

Let's find out more about each other!

- ☐ You are going to introduce yourself to your partner for between 1 – 2 minutes.
- ☐ You will have a minute to prepare what you would like to say, and you can make some notes in the space below.
- ☐ Your partner will time you and will remain silent while you are introducing yourself but may stop you when the time is up by asking you a follow up question.

Partner A

Your one-minute preparation time starts now.

Introduce yourself to your partner and tell them about the place that you come from.

You should say:

- ☐ Where the place is
- ☐ What it is famous for or known for
- ☐ Your most vivid memory of that place

Partner B

Your one-minute preparation time starts now.

Introduce yourself to your partner and tell them about your job.

You should say:

- ☐ What you do
- ☐ How long you have been working
- ☐ What you like most and least about your job

1.2. IELTS FAQs

Here is a selection of questions that we are often asked about the IELTS exam. We have tried to answer them as clearly as possible, but do bear in mind that we strictly adhere to UCLES guidelines and so we may not be able to answer all questions or give as much detail as you would like. Read them in your own time and if you have any further questions to add, please do so and you will be given an opportunity to ask them on the last day of the course.

1. When are exams held all over India?

Tests are held on global dates – 4 dates a month in India – 3 Saturdays and 1 Thursday. A list of dates and centres are available in the information pack and on the website.

2. How do you become an examiner?

To be an examiner you must:

- have a first degree or equivalent in English
- have a recognised and specific English Language Teaching qualification
- have at least 3 years, relevant, full-time teaching experience since obtaining an ELT qualification
- have a customer friendly approach
- have excellent written and oral communication skills

NB: Non-native speakers must be a minimum IELTS band 9 for writing and speaking and must submit an IELTS result form (TRF) with their application.

They then get trained and have to go through a process of certification which is valid for 2 years. **In April 1, 2006** a professional support network (PSN) for examiners was implemented globally which will standardise recruitment, training, monitoring and assessment

of examiners to ensure they are marking to standard. As a result, examiners will be required to examine regularly to keep their status (approximately once a month).

3. Can examiners trained in India work abroad?

Yes, examiners once trained and certified are eligible to examine anywhere in the world for as long as the certification is valid.

4. How are speaking tests monitored?

There are various levels of monitoring – by examiner monitors, monitor-monitors and by BC London and Cambridge, UK.

5. Can an examiner change a speaking task card?

No.

6. Is there any difference between BC and IDP exams?

The test is the same. The delivery (venue, equipment etc) varies.

7. How do you register for BC exams and how is it different from IDP?

Process for BC is in info pack and on website.

8. Do you have copies of an IELTS band score requirements booklet?

The information is on the website and in the information for candidate's booklet.

9. What do I do if I have a candidate with special needs?

Depending on the nature of the special needs, special arrangements are made – extra time, scribe, special listening cassette, Braille version etc.

10. What can candidates take into the exam hall?

Stationery, hall ticket and passport.

11. Should candidates write in pen or pencil?

Pencil for the listening and reading modules. Pen or pencil for writing.

12. Are there any IELTS resources in the ESOL IELTS TTT online program?

Yes.

Task

With your partner, discuss any questions you frequently get asked by candidates or questions that you have yourselves. You will have 5 minutes for this. Once you have brainstormed some questions, see if your partner can answer your questions. If not, write the questions on the flip chart paper around the room. We will come back to these questions on the last day of the course when any unanswered questions will be dealt with.

Find Someone Who

In your group and in the time, you are given, ask a different person a question about the IELTS exam.

1. What does IELTS stand for?
2. What skills does it test?
3. Which countries is it valid in?
4. What is the difference between the GT and AC modules?
5. Who conducts the IELTS exam?
6. How long is the speaking test?
7. What is the sequence of sections in the test?
8. Can anyone take the exam?
9. How long is a test score valid?
10. How long do you have to wait before taking the test again?
11. Which component of the test can be held on a different day to the rest of the exam?
12. How long do candidates have to wait for their results?
13. What information is kept confidential by the British Council, IDP and Cambridge ESOL?

1.3. Teaching Exam Classes

Session Aims

By the end of this session, you will:

- ☐ be aware of the differences between teaching exam classes and regular language classes.
- ☐ have discussed the problems that teachers and students encounter when teaching / taking exam classes and considered the possible solutions to these problems.
- ☐ have considered what approach is appropriate for a teacher to take when conducting an exam preparation course.

Before we start

Think about the exam preparation classes that you teach and discuss these questions in small groups.

- ☐ How are exam preparation courses different from teaching regular courses?

- ☐ What is the teacher's main objective when teaching exam courses?

- ☐ What are the main problems **you face as a trainer** when preparing or teaching exam courses? Make a list here and then compare it with the list on the following page.

- ☐ What are the main problems that **students face**? Make a list and then compare it with the list on the following page.

Student and Trainer Problems

Compare these lists with your own.

Problems facing students when taking exam preparation classes:

- Confidence
- Lack of dedication
- Time
- Poor English / lack of language skills
- Lack of familiarity with testing style
- Lack of ideas
- Lack of vocabulary
-
-
-
-

Problems facing trainers when teaching exam preparation classes:

- Time
- Motivating the students
- Dealing with mixed levels
- Overly high expectations of students
- Teaching unfamiliar techniques
- Individualizing the programme
- Assessing students' levels
- Upgrading own skills
- Increasing own motivation
- Where to go for help?
-
-
-
-

Can you add anything to the list?

Brainstorm some possible solutions to the specific problem(s) your trainer allocates your group. Then check in the appendices to see if you came up with all the same solutions.

Case Studies

As we have seen, an exam class has clearer objectives than many regular courses, and all the students have one common aim, 'I want to pass the exam!' However, as we are all trained language teachers, it is easy to get distracted from this common objective and to focus more on teaching grammar or skills. Teaching exam classes is a very different skill and we are now going to concentrate on how our approach changes when we are teaching exam preparation courses.

Task 1

Look at the following situations. In small groups discuss whether they are good or bad examples of how to teach on an exam preparation course.

Situation A

The teacher gives the student a model essay and asks her to learn it and then reproduce it in the next lesson. He gives her a bank of 20 essays in total to learn and tells her that she can pick and choose the best one to use when she reads the exam paper.

Situation B

The teacher asks the students to practice the speaking test interview with each other and listens and gives detailed feedback at the end. They are then asked to do it again.

Situation C

The teacher tells the student not to waste too much time on reading the question, but to get started as soon as possible.

Situation D

When preparing students for the listening exam, the teacher plays lots of tapes over and over again as she thinks more exposure and practice will help the students in this part of the exam.

Situation E

The teacher asks the students to read a text very quickly and work out the general meaning of it before tackling the exam questions.

Situation F

The teacher spends a long time correcting her students' grammar and pronunciation but doesn't refer to the exam at all.

Task 2

Using your discussions about teaching situations and about your students' needs to help inform your decisions, make a list of all the DOs and DON'Ts when teaching exam preparation courses.

DOs ✓	DON'Ts ✗

Now compare your list with the answer key on the next page.

- ☐ Did you forget anything?
- ☐ Is there anything you strongly disagree with?

DOs ✓	DON'Ts ✗
<i>Teach the students HOW to answer the exam questions.</i> <i>Expose the students to practice activities and exam strategies.</i> <i>Expose students to realistic exam tasks.</i> <i>Prepare your sessions carefully focusing on the students' needs.</i> <i>Familiarise all students with the exam procedure and admin to ensure they know what to expect and are not thrown off guard on the day.</i> <i>Give the students as much practice as possible – with each other!</i> <i>Encourage Ss to read about unfamiliar topics.</i> <i>Educate your students about where they can access more study material – encourage them to use the ESOL student dashboard and websites.</i> <i>Encourage Ss to develop habit of reading outside of class.</i> <i>Make Ss 'unlearn' some bad habits.</i>	<i>Teach students to memorise or regurgitate information.</i> <i>Conduct teacher led training sessions.</i> <i>Tell students, elicit the ideas and techniques from them as much as possible.</i> <i>Give students band scores, even if they are an estimate.</i> <i>Focus too much on grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary as independent elements.</i> <i>Give them unrealistic time frames.</i> <i>Worry, be happy!!!</i>

Teaching Exam Classes - Session Action Plan

I learned

When I get back to work I am going to

I would like to know more about

I am going to find out this by