

All you need for IELTS success podcast
Episode 5: Top tips for IELTS Writing

Speakers:

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IELTS teacher: Liz Marqueiro (LM)

EC: Hi, I'm Emma Cosgrave and I'm here with Liz Marqueiro, and today we're going to talk to you and give you some of our tips for IELTS Writing. These tips are good for both the academic and the general training paper.

LM: Yes, they apply to both.

EC: So, tip number one, before you start writing, always plan what you're going to say. This will help you to answer the question and stay focused on answering the question and not go off on a random tangent, talking about irrelevant information or being too general. You don't have time, or the word count, to do this in the IELTS test.

LM: So, when you say plan, do you mean like make notes, like do a plan on paper?

EC: Yes, I always advise my students to actually make a plan before they start writing.

LM: I do the same because it helps you structure your thoughts because you could get lost.

EC: Exactly, and you can refer back to it and go, okay, right, I know where I am again.

LM: My suggestions would be that while you're actually writing to make sure that you're using a variety of linking words or linking expressions to link your ideas together, and also to link your paragraphs to each other. Because remember, the examiner is going to be looking for cohesion and coherence. So, make sure that what you're saying makes sense and links to each other, and that the paragraphs follow on clearly from one another.

And also, in relation to that, also is to make sure you use a range of vocabulary and grammar structures. Make sure that you're using not just the present tense for example, but maybe throw in a conditional if you can, like the second or the third conditional depending on what the question is. So, use a range of vocabulary and range of grammar structures.

EC: And then in your writing be sure to support what you say with appropriate examples. So, if you're giving an opinion or you're making a claim about something, you need to justify it and back it up with examples always.

LM: The last point for me is to when you've actually finished your writing is to check your work. Like you know yourself quite well. Are there particular mistakes that you always make? Do you always spell a particular word incorrectly? Or do you always miss out an article like a, an or the? If you know that those are your particular mistakes or problem areas, go back, check your writing, see if you've made those mistakes and correct them.

EC: And then finally, make sure you have plenty of practice of writing to the word count so that you know what your writing looks like to 150 words or 250 words so that you don't have to spend any time counting. Do not waste time counting, you won't have time in the test. So you just need to know what 250 or 150 words looks like in your handwriting or typed if you're taking the computer delivered.

LM: Correct. Okay, well, we hope you found that useful. See you next time. Bye

