

IELTS GENERAL TRAINING

Exam Day

What to bring, what to expect, and the avoidable mistakes

Ronacker Solutions · LaunchPad Career Toolkit

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1. The week before

- **Confirm your test format.** Paper-based and computer-delivered differ in timing, particularly the Listening transfer time. Know which you are sitting.
- **Check your ID.** You must bring the **same** identity document you registered with — usually a passport, and it must be valid, not expired.
- **Locate the venue.** Travel there once if you can. Test centres in Johannesburg are not always where you assume.
- **Confirm your Speaking slot.** It may be a different day from the other three papers.
- **Stop taking full practice tests two days before.** Light review only. Cramming the day before reliably lowers scores.

The name on your ID is the name on your certificate

It must match exactly what your visa application, skills assessment and employer documents show. If your passport reads differently from your qualifications — a middle name included or omitted, a surname spelled two ways — sort that out before test day, not after.

2. What to bring

Bring	Leave at home
Your passport or registered ID	Phone (must be surrendered or left outside)
Pencils, an eraser and a pen	Smartwatch or any watch in some centres
A clear bottle of water, label removed	Notes, dictionaries, papers
Your booking confirmation	Bags in the exam room — they are stored

Pencil is required for Listening and Reading answer sheets. Writing may be done in pen or pencil — pencil is usually the better choice, since you can erase cleanly rather than crossing out.

3. On the day

The order and the timing

Paper	Time	Note
Listening	30 min + transfer	Played once only. 10 min transfer on paper, 2 min on computer
Reading	60 min	No transfer time — write straight onto the answer sheet
Writing	60 min	Task 1 in 20 min, Task 2 in 40 min
Speaking	11–14 min	May be the same day or up to a week apart

The three written papers run back to back with no break between them. Eat beforehand — you will be in the room for close to three hours.

Section reminders

Listening

- Read ahead during every pause.
- If you miss one, mark it and move on immediately.
- Listen for corrections: *actually*, *sorry*, *in fact*.
- Write in capitals. Check spelling and plurals in transfer time.

Reading

- Write directly onto the answer sheet as you go.
- Keep to 15 / 20 / 25 minutes across the three sections.
- For True/False/Not Given, use only what is on the page.
- Obey word limits exactly.

Writing

- Task 1 first, and stop at 20 minutes whatever state it is in.
- Plan Task 2 for five minutes before writing.
- Leave the last three minutes for checking word endings and articles.
- Both tasks must be attempted — an unattempted task scores zero.

Speaking

- Two sentences minimum for every Part 1 answer.
- Use the full preparation minute in Part 2, in keywords not sentences.

- Keep talking until the examiner stops you.
- Ask for a repeat if you did not hear — it is not penalised.

4. Do's and don'ts

DO	DON'T
• Arrive at least 45 minutes early • Bring the exact ID you registered with • Eat properly before the written papers • Guess every question you cannot answer • Write in capitals for Listening answers • Keep to the time limits per section • Attempt both Writing tasks, even briefly • Ask the invigilator if something is unclear	• Do not arrive with an expired passport • Do not bring a phone into the room • Do not leave any answer blank — guessing is free • Do not memorise essays or Speaking answers • Do not spend five minutes on one stubborn question • Do not skip Task 1 to give Task 2 more time • Do not panic if you miss a Listening answer • Do not discuss the test content afterwards online

5. After the test

- **Results:** computer-delivered in three to five days, paper-based after thirteen days.
- **Validity:** two years from the test date. For skilled migration, check that it will still be valid when your visa is lodged, not just when you apply for assessment.
- **Remarking:** you can request an Enquiry on Results within six weeks. It costs a fee, refunded if your score changes. It is most often worth it for Writing and Speaking, since those are examiner-judged.
- **Retaking:** there is no waiting period. You can rebook immediately.

If you are half a band short

Do not simply rebook and repeat the same preparation — that usually produces the same result. Work out which single criterion is holding you back, spend three to four weeks on that alone, then sit again. One targeted skill moves faster than four general ones.

Ready to practise properly?

Reading a guide tells you what to do. Marked practice tells you whether you are doing it. The Ronacker LaunchPad gives you full timed IELTS practice with band feedback on every answer — Writing marked against all four criteria, Speaking with a live examiner-style roleplay, and Reading and Listening scored instantly.

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