

# Wham Media's 6 Secrets to IELTS\* Academic Writing Success

Fact-Action Tips

Write to Impress

Manage Time Wisely

by: H. E. COLBY

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# Wham Media's 6 Secrets to IELTS Academic Writing Success

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WHAM MEDIA'S 6 SECRETS TO IELTS ACADEMIC WRITING  
SUCCESS

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Written by H.E. Colby.

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To Noel, Alex, Heather, Melissa, and Winfield with Love

# PREFACE

Is your IELTS exam date quickly approaching?

I have prepared hundreds of students for success on the IELTS.

Collecting the relevant study material for a preparation course can take days of effort.

*Wham Media's 6 Secrets to IELTS Academic Writing Success* is an essential guide for your IELTS test preparation to deliver results in a short period. I know your time is valuable!

*Wham's Media 6 Secrets to IELTS Academic Writing Success* is written to give you quick and easy tips to attain your optimal score on the IELTS academic written exam.

You don't need another bloated textbook about the IELTS test. You want results in less time.

Start right here or try the [eCourse!](#)

*Wham Media's 6 Secrets to IELTS Academic Writing Success* is precisely what you're looking for: the most comprehensive, accessible, and effective IELTS Academic Writing preparation available today.

By the time you finish reading this book you will have a solid foundation for English writing on the IELTS and beyond.

Writing unfortunately is a weak subject in many English classrooms. Maybe your teacher is not a good writer and/or the emphasis on *speaking* English ignores written expression.

Students like you have dreams and ambitions beyond your home country.

However, that leaves many students ill-prepared to accurately describe trends graph/table/chart/diagram in **Writing Task 1** and express an opinion in the essay in **Writing Task 2**.

That's not fair!

Relax!

*Wham Media's 6 Secrets to IELTS Academic Writing Success* provides you the tools you need to improve your English writing not just for the

exam, but for life!

Use the 6 *secrets* below to improve your writing ability overall.

The book gives you not only the skills, but instills a “test conquer” attitude. A positive mindset is supported by the fact you will have greater knowledge to possibly achieve a high score on the IELTS Academic Writing Exam.

Get started today to conquer your IELTS writing test fear.

Get *Wham Media's 6 Secrets to IELTS Academic Writing Success* now!

***H. E. Colby***

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# INTRODUCTION

*Wham Media's 6 Secrets to IELTS Academic Writing Success* will help you not only increase your IELTS score, but improve your English writing overall.

This book is designed for easy self-study. Each of the six secrets is a self-contained lesson.

Together you receive a potent punch to ease your fears of the IELTS writing section.

Here is a summary of the 6 secrets:

**Secret 1: Task Response** – You need to know *what* the IELTS examiners are looking for when they read your writing samples.

**Secret 2: Build strong [word power](#)**. – A strong vocabulary is *the secret tool* you can develop to boost your score on the entire exam, including [collocations and phrasal verbs](#) and [commonly confused words](#).

**Secret 3: Grow your [grammar](#) and punctuation skills**. – The IELTS examiners may ignore incidental errors, but you need *letter-perfect* skills to produce the best writing samples possible.

**Secret 4: Impress the IELTS grader**. – Writers always keep the reader in mind. Follow our pointers to curry favor with the IELTS grader.

**Secret 5: Show attitude**. – Adopt a “test conquer” attitude to strengthen your mental fortitude.

**Secret 6: Manage your time wisely** – *Maximize your time* with these tips in your race against the clock!

Use these six (6) secrets to avoid making embarrassing mistakes which hurt your score!

Use *Wham Media's 6 Secrets to IELTS Academic Writing Success* to enhance your exam skills which will pay dividends when you achieve the personal and professional success you seek!

## 7 C's of IELTS Writing

Implement the following 7 C's into your two (2) IELTS Academic Writing tasks. These principles of writing are also applicable to any documents, but crucial on the IELTS to demonstrate your writing power to the test examiners.

1. **Clear.** Convey a definite message, with no confusion about what each sentence is trying to communicate. One idea = One paragraph.
2. **Concise.** Write just the proper amount of words to express your meaning. At least 150 words on Task 1. 300-350 words for Task 2.
3. **Concrete.** Use rich vocabulary to produce a vivid and specific narrative rather than using vague, obscure and general words. Building a strong vocabulary is one of the best steps you can take for a high IELTS score.
4. **Cohesive and Coherent.** Communicate logically so all points are connected and relevant to the main topic. See more below.
5. **Correct.** Incorporate precise grammar and punctuation and proofread after finishing your paper.
6. **Complete.** Answer the question by addressing all relevant parts with reasons and examples! See "Know the Criteria" below.
7. **Convincing.** Your overall argument is sound and persuasive so the IELTS reader gives you possibly a high score! Make your case based on the information given in both Task 1 and Task 2.

# SECRET 1: KNOW THE CRITERIA

## Introduction

Do you know how IELTS “markers” (graders) score your two writing tasks?

**Academic Writing Task I** requires you to interpret a graph, line chart, or diagram.

**Academic Writing Task II** requires you to write an essay.

The IELTS Writing Criteria is comprised of four sections: 1) Task Achievement, 2) Coherence and Cohesion, 3) Lexical Resource, and 4) Grammatical Range and Accuracy. The four criteria are equally weighted.

An examination of each of these four criteria follows.

Use these pointers in all of your writing!

## Task Achievement

First and foremost, the graders check to see if you answer the question (Task Achievement) adequately. You must respond to everything that is asked in the question.

If your response does not show a fundamental understanding of the problem, it may reveal your inability to read and interpret the problem (poor English skills).

Graders also want you to communicate the main points about the diagram, graph, or chart.

You must also have a clear position throughout your response to obtain an IELTS band 7 score for both Tasks 1 and 2.

Again, think about the *7 C's of IELTS Writing* above. Clarity is your #1 objective!

**For example, look at this question from Writing Task 1:**

*These graphs give information about computer ownership as a percentage of the population between 2002 and 2010, and by level of education for the years 2002 and 2010.*

*Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*

First, review the graphs. What are the “main features” of each chart? Then, you need to write a summary of the graphs that compares the similarity and dissimilarities by population and ages between 2002 and 2010.

**For example, look at this question from Writing Task 2:**

*A person’s worth nowadays seems to be judged according to social status and material possessions. Old-fashioned values, such as honour, kindness and trust, no longer seem important.*

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?*

*Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.*

You are tasked to state a strong opinion (I agree...disagree..). Defend your position. Give two reasons and two examples that support your opinion.

Read the questions carefully to give the IELTS graders exactly what they ask!

## **Coherence and Cohesion**

Essentially, you need to organize and present your ideas easy to read.

So you will need to know how to organize your summary in Task 1 and essay in Task 2 properly in terms of paragraphing both logically and clearly.

Each paragraph needs clear central topic within each paragraph.

**Coherence** refers to the degree of logic and consistency in your analysis of Task 1 and your argument in Task 2.

**Cohesion** is the flow of sentences and paragraphs from one to another and tying together your ideas to make a central argument. Every text has a structure. It is not just a random collection of sentences.

## **Cohesive Devices**

A critical phrase in the criteria is the following: “**uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately.**”

How can you infuse your paper with “cohesive devices?” Easily!

There are five main **cohesive devices** that graders want to see in your papers: *referencing, substitution and ellipsis, conjunctions, and transitions.*

**Referencing** is the use of pronouns to refer back to an idea mentioned earlier in your writing.

**Substitution** is the replacement of one item by another. **Ellipsis** is the omission of the item. Both substitution and ellipsis help writers to avoid repetition!

**Conjunctions** express meaningful relationships between clauses showing how what follows is connected to what has gone before.

**Transitions** cue readers to relationships between sentences by joining sentences together.

Transitional words can **add information** – moreover, in fact, indeed, besides...

Transitional words can **make comparisons** – in comparison with, similarly, likewise...

Use these **cohesive devices** in your responses to Tasks 1 and 2 and you will maximize your IELTS score.

## Lexical Resource

Candidates are expected to show “a wide range of vocabulary fluently and *flexibility*,” while using uncommon lexical terms ([phrasal verbs](#)) and [collocations](#).

Your lexis is your vocabulary. You need to show that you know some less common words and be able to use them accurately.

A precise vocabulary often eludes IELTS candidates who strive to maximize their exam score.

Don’t worry. We address how you can improve your vocabulary in the following chapter!

Additionally, watch for any spelling errors! Precise English is your major challenge throughout the IELTS exam.

**Flexibility** means that the student can use different words or phrases to describe the same thing (for example, synonyms). Now, you can surely see the importance of a [strong vocabulary](#). [See **Secret #2** below].

Conversely, learn antonyms to show a larger vocabulary.

Candidates are expected to show solid “lexical resources” – good vocabulary, less common terms and collocations, and solid word choice and spelling.

We cover these topics in our next chapter.

## Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Candidates should use “a wide range of structures” and “error-free sentences.” [See Secret #3– Grow Your [Grammar](#) and Punctuation Skills below].

**Finally**, you should use “complex structures” with error-free grammar and few punctuation mistakes.

Thus, use simple, compound, complex, and sentence structures.

A **simple sentence** consists of a single independent clause with no dependent clauses. **EX:** The student ate lunch.

A **complex sentence** consists of at least one independent clause and one dependent clause. **EX:** The student ate lunch in the cafe.

A **compound sentence** consists of multiple independent clauses with no dependent clauses. These clauses are joined together using conjunctions, punctuation, or both. **EX:** The student ate lunch and her friend read a book.

A **complex compound sentence** consists of multiple independent clauses, at least one of which has at least one dependent clause. **EX:** The student, who was late for class, ate lunch while her friend read a book.

Vary your sentences. Add in rich vocabulary words, phrasal verbs, and collocations. Follow the *7 C's for IELTS Writing*. Be organized.

## Conclusion

Now you are very familiar with the IELTS writing criteria for Bands 7 and 8.

Remember these requirements as you write prepare for the exam and on test day.

The upcoming secrets to IELTS Academic Writing will deepen your skill set.

Thus, you will be able to produce the sophisticated level of writing the graders seek so you are better prepared to score the maximum possible on your own exam!

## SECRET 2: INCREASE YOUR VOCABULARY

The reason vocabulary is the **second secret** after knowing the exam format is obvious.

The best move you can make to scoring well on the IELTS is a large vocabulary.

A strong lexicon is the key to boosting your score across the four (4) language skills: writing, reading, speaking, and listening.

You must take advantage of your exam preparation time to increase your vocabulary: sophisticated vocabulary terms, collocations and phrasal verbs.

Also, your word choice is very important demonstrating your strong vocabulary to the IELTS graders.

Given the usual short time you have to prepare for the exam, **directly studying**

vocabulary terms is your best option.

### How to Build a Rich Vocabulary

Use a [vocabulary text](#) which organizes terms around particular topics.

Learn [phrasal verbs and collocations](#) to impress the IELTS graders and demonstrate your wide range of vocabulary terms.

Research shows that it takes from 10 to 20 repetitions to really make a word part of your vocabulary.

For every new word, write both the definition and a sentence you make up using the word - perhaps on an index card that can later be reviewed. Or create online index cards at [Quizlet](#).

Use the testing feature on Quizlet to see how many words you have actually learned.

As soon as you learn a new word, start using it. Review your index cards periodically to see if you have forgotten any of your new words.

Try to group your new vocabulary words by theme. It is easier to remember your new words that way.

## How to Know a Word

In order to communicate well in English, you need a toolbox of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

For every term, try to find at least one synonym (word of the same meaning) and an antonym (a word of the opposite meaning).

While you want to build a broader vocabulary, you also want to strive for a deeper vocabulary at the same time.

## Word Choice

A related topic to using your new vocabulary wisely is **word choice** while writing the IELTS Academic tasks.

Indeed, writing is a non-stop series of choices by the author. Using the right word at the exact moment can help you clearly express your ideas and thoughts.

Clarity is directly linked to word choice.

The biggest error students commit normally is choosing the wrong word.

**Big Word Choice Error – Misused Words.** The words a writer uses do not actually mean what the writer thinks. This could occur with the Commonly Confused Word Pairs or simple misunderstanding of a term.

As you know now, after our review of the criteria for Writing Tasks 1 and 2, IELTS graders evaluate your **word choice**.

Avoid these two common mistakes in your word choice and boost your chances for a higher IELTS score!

## How to Improve Word Choice

Do the following to make great word choice.

**Read voraciously to boost your own vocabulary.** Nothing will improve your writing and your vocabulary as well as the simple act of reading. Pick up new words to use in your own writing! Study the words the author has chosen. Think – what words could the author have chosen?

## **Long-Term Benefits**

A [strong vocabulary](#) is key to success not just on the IELTS.

Whether speaking, writing, reading or listening, a strong vocabulary is your secret tool to get a possibly high score on the IELTS.

Let building your vocabulary be a lifelong adventure.

Turn your vocabulary into an asset that works for you!

# SECRET 3: GROW YOUR GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION SKILLS

Poor grammar and punctuation can seriously lower your IELTS score.

Solid grammar and punctuation are key to demonstrating your English competence to IELTS graders.

Here are some [grammar](#) and punctuation mistakes.

## Common Grammar Mistakes

### *Problem Words*

[Confusing English word pairs](#) often compound the difficulty in dominating the language.

#### *Affect Vs. Effect*

Generally, affect is a verb that means “to influence.” Effect is a noun that means “result.”

The hurricane **affected** power supply on the island.

The hurricane’s **effects** included many power outages.

**Effect** is sometimes used as a verb that means “to cause” and affect used as a noun that means “emotion.”

Example: The CEO **effected** a new policy to save money for the company.

#### *Between Vs. Among*

When you’re talking about two objects or people, use *between*.

There was tension **between** Luis and Hyko.

When you’re talking about more than two, use *among*.

Laughter spread **among** the students when Jerry started to dance.

### *Verb-Subject Agreement*

Getting a verb and subject to agree is one of the most fundamental grammar errors.

Be careful in these situations:

*When a relative clause (a clause that modifies a noun) begins with one of, the verb within the clause should be plural.*

**Example:** Burt is one of those people who are always prepared.

**Example:** Tasha is one of the most gifted students who have graduated.

*Each, either, everyone, everybody, neither, nobody, and someone are singular.*

**Example:** Nobody is perfect.

**Example:** Everybody who attends gets a signed copy of my eBook.

**Example:** Each of the options under discussion requires serious study.

## ***Punctuation***

### ***Comma use after an introductory clause***

Many people do not use a comma after a short (three words or less) introductory clause.

While technically correct, this approach makes your sentences clearer. (Clarity is a top priority in all of your writing in general, but especially on the IELTS!).

**Example:** In Spanish, adjectives often follow the noun.

Without the comma, one might mistakenly read the first part of the sentence as “In Spanish adjectives,…”

However, by inserting a comma after every introductory clause, no matter what the length, can help prevent many misunderstandings.

### ***Comma use in compound sentences***

An independent clause is a clause that can stand alone in a sentence with its own subject and verb.

When a conjunction, such as and, but, or because, is used to connect two independent clauses, a compound sentence is formed.

**You do want to use compound sentences in your IELTS writings!**

In these cases, use a comma before the conjunction.

**Example:** The patient is weak, but there is still hope for improvement.

**Example:** The early historical records of the Maya have mostly disappeared, and the story of their first years can no longer be told.

You may need to improve your grammar skills before the big test day.

[Good grammar](#) and precise punctuation make your writing more understandable – a key goal for success on the IELTS exam!

# **SECRET 4: IMPRESS THE IELTS GRADER**

## **One Chance to Make a Great Impression**

Rightly or wrongly, examiners form an immediate opinion of a candidate from reading their papers.

Indeed they are trained to score your writing quickly and decide roughly what they think about it.

Do the following to make a great impression from the onset.

## **Precise and Specific Language**

Write with strong nouns and verbs for precisely communicating your thoughts.

As a general rule, write with nouns and verbs, not adjectives and adverbs.

Choose strong verbs to replace weak ones such as is and are.

When you replace a weak verb with a strong one, be sure the replacement works in your sentence and with your meaning.

Use vivid verbs to illustrate your points and not linking verbs like seems, appears, feels, or looks.

Instead of writing: "The rate of production fell suddenly in the time period."

Write: "The rate of production plummeted between 1998 and 2005."

Be precise. Be specific.

## **Good Handwriting**

How is your penmanship?

Your handwriting matters.

Given the IELTS is a paper exam, good handwriting is important to your grade.

Ask any teacher and we will admit it - how easy it is easy to read a paper DOES make a difference.

Making your writing easy to understand and easy to read is a top priority on the IELTS.

In sum, make your paper look better and get a better mark.

## **Structure Your Writing For Success**

Organize your writing!

Clear paragraphs means that your writing must not just be organized, but look organized.

IELTS graders frankly do not spend very long scoring your writing.

Structure your responses to Tasks 1 and 2 appropriately.

## **Conclusion**

You have may have about 30 seconds to impress IELTS examiners of your writings.

Appearances trump your substance.

Frankly, the grader is looking to check off the boxes of the criteria (see Secret#1).

Write with strong nouns and verbs in clear paragraphs.

Make the paragraphs look appealing with solid penmanship.

In other words, write to impress.

## **SECRET 5: SHOW ATTITUDE**

Many students fear the IELTS because the consequences of the score are so important.

Relax!

Let's review how you can overcome test anxiety so you can maximize your IELTS Academic Writing score.

### **Aptitude**

The IELTS does not test your knowledge. It tests your ability to use English.

However, you do need to know how the exam is organized.

Become familiar with the four exam sections. Know the directions and types of questions ahead of time. So, when test day arrives, you can immediately get started on answer the tasks. (See Manage Your Time Wisely in the next chapter).

### **Attitude**

As the saying goes, take the test; don't let the test take yoU!

We tend to create either positive or negative feelings about ourselves through the things we think about.

So, think positive about obtaining the optimal score you need on the IELTS!

The power of a positive attitude is paramount to succeed on the IELTS Academic Writing section in particular and the entire test in general.

The maximum score you want and need is within your reach. You simply have to make a choice to obtain it.

Visualize success on the IELTS and you will achieve it!

# Motivation

Why are you taking the IELTS?

Do you need a scholarship to attend university?

Are you going to study an MBA in an English-speaking country?

In the end, you know that obtaining an optimal score on the exam gets you closer to your goal.

Again, see yourself sitting in the classroom soaking up the knowledge you need to advance your career.

You want to score the highest score possible the first time. You are busy. You have many more things to do to prepare for your bright career. Do the IELTS once and move on!

## Prepare, Organize, and Practice

Take action today to strengthen your positive mental attitude.

### *Prepare*

Learn about each section of the test and what is required. For example, we began this eBook with the writing criteria for the IELTS.

Once you know the criteria and expectations, you can design a plan to fulfill - no- surpass them!

### *Organize*

Follow a steady study plan to prepare for the exam.

I suggest that my students begin three months ahead of the test date!

Advanced preparation also reduces your test anxiety.

You have more time to sharpen your skills, work with a native English professor, and instill in yourself the confidence you need to succeed on the exam.

### *Practice*

Take the IELTS exam at least three times before test day.

Have an English professor review your writing.

Have a good idea of the speaking topics.

Listen to English at least five minutes a day to begin and increase your exposure to English steadily.

Pacing yourself makes you feel more comfortable when you actually sit down to take the test!

## **Conclusion**

You must ignite a burning desire inside of you to adopt a "test conquer" attitude.

You have big plans for the future.

Start today and adopt a winning attitude for the IELTS and for life!

# SECRET 6: MANAGE YOUR TIME WISELY

## Setup

Most students fall short of their optimal score because they simply run out of time!

Time is an important factor that has to be managed properly to succeed across the IELTS, not just the writing section.

Good time-management is a learned behavior through essential practice months before the big test day.

## What To Do

You have 60 minutes to complete the IELTS Academic Writing section.

You have 20 minutes to complete Task 1. You should write a response of about 200 words with “just the facts.” You do not inject any opinion into Task 1.

Spend 5 minutes to plan your response, 10 minutes to write, and another 5 minutes to check for mistakes in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

You have 40 minutes to complete Task 2. You should write a response of about 350 words to score Band 7+.

Spend 5 minutes to plan your response, 30 minutes to write, and another 5 minutes to proofread for any errors.

These two sections are weighted.

**Task 2 counts more than Task 1.** So, complete Task 2 first!

Make sure to wear a watch to the exam and keep track of your time.

It may seem obvious. However, for preparation of the writing section, you need to practice writing under timed testing conditions!

Now, watch the following video on timing and IELTS Academic Writing section.



## Conclusion

If you truly want to score a Band 7+, and attain your goals, you must be time-conscious.

Therefore, when you practice your responses to Tasks 1 and 2, use a timer online or use your own watch to see how well you can write under the time pressure.

The more you practice before the test day the more comfortable you are going to be when you sit for the exam!

# GET THE ECOURSE

For in-depth resources, exercises, exact language to use, and greater focus on developing your writing skills for the IELTS, take my eCourse – [Maximizing Your IELTS Academic Writing Score](#).



**Don't risk your future by not being prepared for the IELTS Writing section!**

**[Enroll in the Ecourse](#) today!**

# GET PERSONALIZED WRITING FEEDBACK

Let me help you polish your writing skills before the big test day!

Choose my [Writing Boost for IELTS](#) today!

**I will grade two of your writings (up to 1000 words).**

**Here is what you get:**

- \* 5-point Diagnostic
- \* Prescription for Improvements
- \* 1 Re-edit –Review
- \* 48-Hour Turn Around

[Sharpen your writing skills!](#) Don't let the IELTS Writing section damage your score!

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Learn. Share. Communicate.

Get tips, insights, and news to boost your confidence and strengthen your writing skills ahead of the big test day!

Ask questions and get answers from your fellow IELTS candidates around the world. I will also help you out!

This exclusive Facebook Group is our own community. Enjoy!

[Join today!](#)

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# THANK YOU

I am always so excited to see my students overcome obstacles and master yet another part of English.

You are in IELTS training. You have taken a huge step toward obtaining the success you seek!

Now you should be ready to write solid responses to Tasks 1 and 2 on the IELTS.

Please visit my blog (<http://www.businessenglishace.com>) for more English tips to help you succeed in wherever English takes you in your life.

Thank you again for purchasing the eBook.

If you need deeper training, then purchase the [eCourse](#) with more exercises, insights, and resources to prepare you even better to obtain the optimal score you seek.

Happy English Studies!

***Professor H. E. Colby***

# **About the Author**

H. E. Colby is a seasoned Business English professor helping students reach their fullest potential since 2007.