

Tips and advice for getting the score you need

General advice for tasks 1 and 2 (for both modules)

- Timing is very important. Do spend enough time planning your answer and gathering your ideas before starting to write. If your writing is well-planned, you will be able to write more quickly and stop less frequently to think about what to write next.
- Try to avoid repeating the same words, phrases and ideas too often. Try to use a range of vocabulary.
- Try to make sure that you do not repeat the same idea too often. Explore different ideas to provide a well-balanced response.
- Word count is important. You lose marks if you write fewer than the required number of words. If you write a lot more words, the examiner will not assess them all and this will be time wasted.
- Allow time at the end to check your answer for careless mistakes. Check for mistakes in spelling, subject-verb agreement, singular / plural nouns, and tenses.
- Do not simply copy words and phrases from the question paper. Try to use your own words by paraphrasing the question.
- Stay on topic. Always ask yourself as you write, e.g.: “Am I answering the question?”
- If you have problems with time-keeping, consider doing task two before task one. Task two carries twice as many marks.
- Do not waste your time memorising essays or model answers to use in the test. Examiners are trained to spot pre-prepared answers and you will lose marks.

Task 1 (for Academic module only)

- Always try and include an introduction sentence. Your introduction should not simply repeat what is written in the task instructions. The examiner will ignore this kind of information. Your introduction can, for example, present an overall summary of what you are trying to communicate.
- It is important to show that you understand the function of paragraphs. Try to find an appropriate way to divide your answer into at least two paragraphs.
- A useful two-step pattern to follow is: first, state a trend, and then second, support your statement with an item of detail from the table or chart.
- Do not make any assumptions about information that is not given in the diagrams or charts. Do not attempt to explain the information using your general knowledge.
- When the task has more than one visual image showing data, check carefully to see whether you should be writing about them together or separately. Sometimes you need to compare them, but usually they should be described separately.

Task two (for both modules)

- You need an introduction, clearly divided paragraphs and a conclusion.
- Do not make your introduction too long. You need to allow enough time for the main part of your essay.
- Be sure to provide supporting evidence for any opinion you give.
- All ideas in your paragraphs need to be supported by examples.
- End your essay with a conclusion. Usually, this is a summary of your key points and your final viewpoint.
- Do not use note form or bullet points.
- Leave some time at the end to go back through your essay and edit for simple grammar or spelling mistakes.
- Remember that task 2 carries more marks than task 1, and so allow yourself plenty of time to answer.

Good luck in your writing test!