

# IELTS Grammar Syllabus

## Essential Grammar for IELTS Success

A concise and comprehensive grammar syllabus tailored for IELTS candidates needing grammar improvement. Quick-to-learn and focused on key essentials for exam success.

# Course Objectives & Structure

## 🎯 Course Objectives

- | Master essential grammar areas tested in IELTS
- | Identify and correct common grammar mistakes
- | Apply accurate grammar in Writing & Speaking tasks
- | Improve comprehension of complex structures for Reading & Listening

## 🏗️ Course Structure

- ✓ 10 focused grammar units covering all essentials
- ✓ Each unit includes key rules, examples & IELTS application
- ✓ Concise format for efficient learning in short timeframe
- ✓ Special focus on common IELTS pitfalls & exam strategies

## 📍 Learning Path



# Overview of English Tenses

## 💡 Tense Control in IELTS

- | Accuracy: Proper tense use demonstrates language proficiency
- | Coherence: Consistent tenses improve writing and speaking flow
- | Scoring: Grammatical range and accuracy is a key marking criterion

## 🔗 English Tense System

The English tense system has three time references (present, past, future) with four aspects:

Aspect	Present	Past	Future
Simple	I work	I worked	I will work
Continuous	I am working	I was working	I will be working
Perfect	I have worked	I had worked	I will have worked
Perfect Continuous	I have been working	I had been working	I will have been working

### IELTS Application

- ✎ **Writing Task 1:** Use past tense for historical trends, present perfect for recent changes
- ✎ **Writing Task 2:** Present simple for general statements, future forms for predictions
- 💬 **Speaking:** Present tenses for current situations, past for experiences

### ⚠️ Common Errors

- ✖ The graph show that prices increased.  
✓ The graph shows that prices increased.
- ✖ I am living in London since 2020.  
✓ I have been living in London since 2020.

# Present Tenses




## 🕒 Four Present Tenses

- Present Simple: Facts, habits, routines, general truths
- Present Continuous: Actions happening now, temporary situations, future arrangements
- Present Perfect: Past actions with present relevance, experiences, recent events
- Present Perfect Continuous: Ongoing actions started in past continuing to present

## 🧩 Structure & Examples

Tense	Structure	Example
Present Simple	Subject + V1/V+s	Water boils at 100°C. She works in a bank.
Present Continuous	Subject + am/is/are + V-ing	I'm studying for IELTS now. They are moving next week.
Present Perfect	Subject + have/has + V3	I have visited Paris twice. She has finished the report.
Present Perfect Continuous	Subject + have/has been + V-ing	I have been waiting for an hour. He has been working here since 2020.

## IELTS Application

-  **Writing Task 1:** Present simple for describing graphs, present perfect for recent trends
-  **Writing Task 2:** Present simple for opinions and general facts
-  **Speaking:** Present continuous for current activities, present perfect for experiences

## Time Markers

- Present Simple:**



  - Always
  - Usually
  - Often
  - Every day/week
- Present Continuous:**

  - Now
  - At the moment
  - Currently
  - These days
- Present Perfect:**

  - Ever/never
  - Already/yet
  - Just
- Present Perfect Continuous:**

  - Since
  - For
  - Recently

## ⚠️ Common Errors

-  ~~I am knowing the answer.~~  
✓ I know the answer.  
(State verbs don't use continuous form)
-  ~~I live here since 2018.~~  
✓ I have lived/been living here since 2018.  
("Since" requires perfect tense)

# Past Tenses

## 🕒 Past Tense Forms

- | Past Simple: Completed actions in the past
- | Past Continuous: Actions in progress at a specific time in the past
- | Past Perfect: Actions completed before another past action
- | Past Perfect Continuous: Ongoing actions that continued up to a point in the past

## 📄 Form & Usage

Tense	Structure	Example	Usage
Past Simple	Subject + V2	I studied for the exam.	Completed actions, habits, states in the past
Past Continuous	Subject + was/were + Ving	I was studying when she called.	Actions in progress at a specific moment
Past Perfect	Subject + had + V3	I had finished the report before the meeting.	Actions completed before another past action
Past Perfect Continuous	Subject + had been + Ving	I had been working for 3 hours when you arrived.	Ongoing actions up to a specific point in the past

## IELTS Application

- ✎ **Writing Task 1:** Use past simple for completed trends (e.g., "Prices fell in 2020.")
- ✎ **Writing Task 2:** Use past perfect to describe cause-effect relationships in the past
- 💬 **Speaking Part 2:** Past continuous for setting scenes ("I was walking home when...")
- 💡 **Tip:** Use a mix of past tenses to show range of grammatical knowledge

## ⚠️ Common IELTS Errors

- ✖ ~~When I reached home, she left already.~~  
✓ When I reached home, she had already left.  
*Use Past Perfect for the earlier of two past actions*
- ✖ ~~I was belonging to a sports club last year.~~  
✓ I belonged to a sports club last year.  
*State verbs rarely use continuous forms*

# Future Tenses

## 🕒 Future Tense Forms

**Will:** Predictions, spontaneous decisions, promises

Example: I will help you with your homework.

**Going to:** Plans, intentions, evidence-based predictions

Example: I am going to study medicine next year.


**Present Continuous:** Fixed arrangements in near future

Example: I am meeting my teacher tomorrow.


## ⬆️ Advanced Future Forms

Tense	Structure	Usage	Example
Future Perfect	will have + past participle	Action completed before a future time	By 2030, I will have finished my studies.
Future Continuous	will be + verb-ing	Action in progress at a future time	This time tomorrow, I will be flying to London.
Future Perfect Continuous	will have been + verb-ing	Duration of action up to future point	By June, I will have been working here for 5 years.







## IELTS Application

 **Writing Task 2:** Use future forms to discuss predictions, solutions and consequences

 **Speaking Part 3:** Express opinions about future trends and developments

 **Band 7+:** Demonstrate range by using a mix of simple and complex future forms

## ⚠️ Common Errors

-  I will to see you tomorrow.  
 I will see you tomorrow.
-  I go to the cinema tonight.  
 I am going to the cinema tonight.
-  When you will arrive, call me.  
 When you arrive, call me.

# Conditional Sentences

## Types of Conditionals

### Zero Conditional

Structure: If + present simple, present simple

Usage: General truths, scientific facts

Example: *If water reaches 100°C, it boils.*

### First Conditional

Structure: If + present simple, will + infinitive

Usage: Real and possible future situations

Example: *If it rains tomorrow, I will take an umbrella.*

### Second Conditional

Structure: If + past simple, would + infinitive

Usage: Hypothetical or unlikely present/future situations

Example: *If I had more time, I would learn another language.*

### Third Conditional

Structure: If + past perfect, would have + past participle

Usage: Impossible past situations (expressing regret)

Example: *If I had studied harder, I would have passed the exam.*


### Mixed Conditional


Structure: Combination of different types

Usage: Past condition with present result or present condition with past result

Example: *If I hadn't missed the train, I wouldn't be late now.*




## IELTS Application

 **Writing Task 2:** Use conditionals to explore cause and effect or hypothetical situations

 **Speaking Part 3:** Use second conditionals for hypothetical questions about society or policy

 **Band Scores:** Varied conditionals demonstrate higher grammatical range

## Common Errors

-  ~~If I will have time, I will visit you.~~  
✓ If I have time, I will visit you.
-  ~~If I would have known, I would have told you.~~  
✓ If I had known, I would have told you.
-  ~~If the weather is good, I would go out.~~  
✓ If the weather is good, I will go out.  
✓ If the weather was good, I would go out.

# Modal Verbs

## ⚙️ What Are Modal Verbs?




Modal verbs are auxiliary verbs that express necessity, possibility, permission, or ability. They modify the main verb and cannot be used alone.

- Modal verbs do not change form (no -s, -ing, -ed endings)
- They are always followed by the base form of the main verb

## ☰ Common Modal Verbs & Functions

Modal Verb	Primary Functions	Example
Can	Ability, possibility, permission	I can speak three languages.
Could	Past ability, polite requests, possibility	Could you help me with this question?
Will	Future actions, promises, predictions	I will submit my application tomorrow.
Would	Hypothetical situations, polite requests	I would study harder if I had more time.
Should	Advice, recommendation, obligation	You should arrive at least 30 minutes early.
Must	Strong obligation, necessity, prohibition	All candidates must bring identification.
May	Formal permission, possibility	Students may use dictionaries during the exam.
Might	Possibility (less certain than may)	The weather might improve later.

## IELTS Application

-  **Writing Task 2:** Use modal verbs to express opinions and show nuance in arguments
-  **Speaking Part 3:** Express possibilities and hypothetical situations with modals
-  **Vocabulary boost:** Different modals show different levels of certainty and formality

## Expression Categories

### Ability

- I **can** speak English fluently. (present)
- I **could** swim when I was a child. (past)





### Obligation/Advice

- You **must** wear a suit for the interview. (strong)
- You **should** practice speaking daily. (recommendation)

### Possibility/Probability

- It **might** rain tomorrow. (less certain)
- The problem **could** be solved by technology. (possible)

## ⚠️ Common Errors

-  ~~I must to go now.~~  
 I must go now.
-  ~~She cans speak Japanese.~~  
 She can speak Japanese.



# Passive Voice

## ↔ Active vs Passive Voice

Voice	Structure	Example
Active	Subject + Verb + Object	Scientists conduct experiments.
Passive	Object + be + Past Participle (+ by Subject)	Experiments are conducted (by scientists).

**Focus shift:** Passive voice emphasizes the object or action rather than who performs it

**Agent omission:** "By + agent" can be omitted when the performer is unknown or unimportant

## ✂ Forming the Passive Voice

Formula: Object + appropriate form of BE + past participle (+ by + agent)

Tense	Active	Passive
Present Simple	They build houses.	Houses are built (by them).
Present Continuous	They are building houses.	Houses are being built (by them).
Present Perfect	They have built houses.	Houses have been built (by them).
Past Simple	They built houses.	Houses were built (by them).

### When to Use Passive in IELTS

- ✍ **Writing Task 1:** "The highest increase was recorded in 2018" (focus on data, not who recorded it)
- ✍ **Writing Task 2:** "Children are influenced by advertising" (focus on children, not advertisers)
- 💬 **Academic context:** "It is generally believed that..." (formal, objective tone)

### ⚠ Common Errors

- ✖ The book was written since 2020.  
✓ The book has been written since 2020.
- ✖ The problem is solving by experts.  
✓ The problem is being solved by experts.
- ✖ I born in 1990.  
✓ I was born in 1990.

### Pro Tips

- ✓ Mix active and passive voices for a balanced writing style
- ✓ Use passive for scientific/academic writing and formal contexts

# Articles & Determiners

## Article Rules

Article	When to Use	Example
A	Before singular countable nouns beginning with consonants	a book, a desk
An	Before singular countable nouns beginning with vowel sounds	an apple, an hour
The	For specific, previously mentioned, or unique items	the sun, the book I read
No Article	For general plural/uncountable nouns	cars, water, information

## Common Determiners

Quantifiers (countable): many, few, several, a few

Quantifiers (uncountable): much, little, a little

Both types: some, any, enough, all, no

Special rule: Use "some" in positive statements, "any" in questions/negatives

## IELTS Application

- Writing Task 1:** Use "the" when referring to chart/graph already mentioned
- Writing Task 2:** Use articles correctly with abstract concepts (society, education)
- Speaking:** Choose appropriate quantifiers to express quantity precisely

## Common Errors

- ~~I live in the London.~~  
✓ I live in London.  
*No article with most city names*
- ~~There are few people who can help.~~  
✓ There are a few people who can help.  
*"Few" (negative) vs. "a few" (positive)*
- ~~I don't have some time.~~  
✓ I don't have any time.  
*Use "any" in negative sentences*

# Sentence Structure & Complex Sentences




## Sentence Types

- Simple sentences:** One independent clause (subject + verb)  
*Example: Pollution affects our environment.*
- Compound sentences:** Two or more independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, so)  
*Example: Cities are crowded, but rural areas are quiet.*
- Complex sentences:** Independent clause + one or more dependent clauses  
*Example: Although technology has benefits, it causes some problems.*
- Compound-complex sentences:** Multiple independent clauses + one or more dependent clauses  
*Example: When the results were announced, the students celebrated, and the teachers felt proud.*

## Types of Clauses

Clause Type	Function	Example
Relative	Adds information about a noun	The book <u>which I bought yesterday</u> is interesting.
Adverbial	Expresses time, reason, condition, etc.	<u>When I arrived</u> , everyone was waiting.
Noun	Functions as a noun in the sentence	I believe <u>that education is important</u> .
Conditional	Expresses a condition	<u>If it rains tomorrow</u> , the event will be canceled.

## IELTS Application

-  **Writing:** Use a mix of sentence types to demonstrate range of structures
-  **Task 2 essays:** Complex sentences help develop sophisticated arguments
-  **Speaking:** Practice both simple and complex structures for flexibility

## Linking Words for Coherence

- Contrast:**



  - However
  - Nevertheless
  - On the other hand
  - Despite/In spite of
- Addition:**

  - Furthermore
  - In addition
  - Moreover
  - Besides
- Cause & Effect:**

  - Therefore
  - As a result
  - Consequently
- Sequence:**

  - Firstly/Finally
  - Subsequently
  - Meanwhile

## Watch Out For

-  Fragment sentences (incomplete thoughts)
-  Run-on sentences (independent clauses without proper connection)

# Common Grammar Mistakes in IELTS

## ⚠ Most Common Errors

### Subject-Verb Agreement:

~~The number of students are increasing.~~

✓ The number of students is increasing.

### Tense Consistency:

~~Yesterday I go to the store and bought some groceries.~~

✓ Yesterday I went to the store and bought some groceries.

### Article Usage:

~~I had lunch at restaurant near my university.~~

✓ I had lunch at a restaurant near my university.

## 📄 Real IELTS Task Examples

### Common Writing Task 2 Errors:

~~In conclusion, the government should takes action.~~

✓ In conclusion, the government should take action.

Error type: Modal verb form

~~Many people believes that technology have more advantages.~~

✓ Many people believe that technology has more advantages.

Error type: Subject-verb agreement (plural/singular)

~~Although this is expensive, but it is necessary.~~

✓ Although this is expensive, it is necessary.

Error type: Double connector

## Error Prevention Strategies

- ✓ **Proofread backwards:** Read your writing from the last sentence to the first to catch grammar errors
- ✓ **Focus on one error type:** Check specifically for article errors, then verb tenses, etc.
- ✓ **Use simpler structures:** If unsure about complex grammar, opt for simpler but correct constructions

## 💡 Final Tips for Success

- ★ Master a set of grammatical structures rather than attempting too many complex ones
- ★ Practice speaking while focusing on verb tenses and subject-verb agreement
- ★ Learn from your mistakes – keep an error log to track recurring issues
- ★ Reserve 2-3 minutes in Writing tasks specifically for grammar checking