

Name:

Task: IELTS Writing task one and two (IELTS 9 General Test A)

Date:

Task one overall band: 7.5

Although I have given you a 7.5 for this task, you could achieve a higher band. I have been strict with the marking to err on the side of caution as I am aware you need a minimum 7.5. The main thing here for you to think about is that you need to write at least 150 words, not including salutations. If you do not reach the 150 word limit, you will incur a penalty from the examiner.

Task Achievement: 8

You have covered all the requirements of the task sufficiently. However, this task is slightly underlength. Minus salutations (and counting contractions as two words) you have 141 words. Because of this, I have given a penalty of 0.5.

Coherence and Cohesion: 7

In general, your coherence and cohesion are very effective with a logical progression between sentences. However, there is some repetition, [*I'd like to ask for some time off work...*] and also one sentence stating the dates, which would work better earlier in the email as it is the most important information for the manager. This kind of email is more effective when it is more direct. For example:

Dear Anne,

I hope this email finds you well. I would like to request a week off work starting from Monday 17th March.

The tone you have used is quite informal in places (the use of contractions and "till"). This is not necessarily an issue because the task has necessitated that you invent an imaginary manager – and the relationship that you have with her. But be aware that in IELTS you are marked for the tone that you use and, in some cases, a more formal register may be more appropriate.

Lexical Resource: 8

In general, you have a wide range of vocabulary appropriate for the task including less common lexical items [*thus far | the cases I'm handling*] and collocations [*cover my shifts | grant me this request*]. These are used in a natural way and show a good command of the language. I feel you could possibly achieve a 9 here, but the mix of formal and informal language brings it down to an 8.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy: 8

Your grammar is strong throughout with only one minor tense error. Other than that, you have used a wide range of tenses and structures appropriate for the task. Be aware that the use of present continuous [*I'm requesting...*] tends to be a little less formal than present simple would be here.

WRITING TASK 1: Band Descriptors (public version)

Band	Task achievement	Coherence and cohesion	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully satisfies all the requirements of the task clearly presents a fully developed response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skillfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers all requirements of the task sufficiently presents, highlights and illustrates key features/bullet points clearly and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skillfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers the requirements of the task (A) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages (GT) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriate clearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-over-use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses the requirements of the task (A) presents an overview with information appropriately selected (GT) presents a purpose that is generally clear; there may be inconsistencies in tone presents and adequately highlights key features/ bullet points but details may be irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication

TA	CC	LR	GRA
8	7	8	8

Underlength	No. of words	Penalty
Y	141	0.5

Off-topic	Memorised	Illegible
-	-	n/a

Task one corrections/comments:

Dear Anne,

I hope this email finds you well. I'd like to ask for some time off work for study purposes. As you are aware I had enrolled in a post-graduate course earlier in the year. I'd like to ask for some time off to prepare for an upcoming exam. You have been very supportive of me thus far and I'm very grateful for that.

Corrections:

- As you are aware... > I would work better with a comma here to separate the adverbial from the rest of the sentence (As you are aware, I enrolled...)
- I had enrolled > I enrolled (You do not need past perfect here as you are just referring to the past, not a previous past.)
- I'd like to ask... This is repetitious as you have already used the same structure.

The last sentence could be more naturally phrased as: I am extremely grateful for all of the support you have given thus far.

I'm requesting just one week off, beginning Saturday March 15th and ending Monday March 22nd.

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This sentence/paragraph would be better placed earlier in the email as it is the most important information to convey.

I have spoken to my colleague Colleen who has agreed to cover my shifts starting Monday 17th of March till Friday the 21st. I have emailed her all the notes relevant to the cases I'm currently handling.

"Till" is quite informal, and arranging cover seems a bit presumptuous from an employee – but it would depend on what kind of working relationship you had with your manager so it would probably be OK. It could be better phrased as: "I have taken the liberty of speaking to Colleen, who has agreed to cover my shifts, should you grant me this holiday."

I would really appreciate it if you could grant me this request for study leave. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kindest regards,
Name

Here is a model answer of the same task for comparison purposes:

MODEL ANSWER

This model has been prepared by an examiner as an example of a very good answer. However, please note that this is just one example out of many possible approaches.

Dear Jennifer

I am writing to request some unpaid leave next month.

My parents' 60th wedding anniversary is on March 21st, and they are planning to celebrate this significant achievement with all their children and grandchildren. To do this, they have rented a house big enough to accommodate the whole family.

To participate in this special occasion, I would need to be away from work for four days, from Monday 19th to Thursday 23rd. My schedule for that week is relatively light, apart from two meetings with clients. Netta would be able to attend these in my place, as she has had previous dealings with both companies and knows the relevant staff there. I have no other urgent work commitments at that time.

I would be very grateful if you could allow me this time. These few days are very important to my parents and the whole family, and it would be a way to thank them for all the support they have given me.

Best wishes

Task two overall band: 8.5

Overall, this is a very strong response to the task and follows the conventions of (IELTS) essays closely. You have

Task Response: 8

Your paragraphing is clear and effective. You have included a good paraphrase of the exam question and made your opinion clear from the start (and it is also clear throughout the essay). You have addressed all parts of the task although your essay would benefit from some clear examples. The task two rubric states that you should “include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.” Some of your points – for example “toxic celebrity circles” – would be more effective if illustrated or explained with an example. As such, I have given you an 8 here. You could quite easily achieve a 9, however.

Coherence and Cohesion: 8

You follow essay conventions in using clear paragraphing, topic sentences and a wide range of cohesive devices. Examples of which include clear topic sentences [*There is no doubt that... | It is important to remember | however*] and discourse markers [*So | however | That | Though*]. Some of these are a little informal as are your use of contractions throughout. However, bearing in mind this is a general test and the subject is not academic, these are appropriate in tone.

Lexical Resource: 9

Your vocabulary is strong throughout. Examples of uncommon lexical items include *exuberance; adoration; and contend with*. There are also a lot of collocations [*financial gain | devastating consequences | parasitic intrusion | a cascade of criticism | toxic celebrity | a dark underbelly*] and expressions [*in the public eye | far from the truth*]. These are all used skilfully and help to convey your opinion without repetition.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy: 9

In general, you make very few mistakes in grammar apart from occasional slips, which do not detract from the overall effect of your essay.

WRITING TASK 2: Band Descriptors (public version)

Band	Task response	Coherence and cohesion	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully addresses all parts of the task presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skilfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sufficiently addresses all parts of the task presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task presents a clear position throughout the response presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to over-generalise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas, there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use presents a clear central topic within each paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately uses paragraphing, but not always logically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication

TR	CC	LR	GRA
8	8	9	9

Underlength	No. of words	Penalty
N	-	-

Off-topic	Memorised	Illegible
-	-	n/a

Task two corrections/comments:

Being in the public eye can be both advantageous and challenging. Many assume that the lives of famous and well-known individuals in sports or cinema for example, are full of endless luxury and exuberance with little difficulty, but in my view, this is far from the truth.

*This is an effective introductory paragraph which both skilfully paraphrases the exam question and sets out a clear opinion. You have used some excellent topic-related vocabulary here including: **in the public eye; exuberance and this is far from the truth.***

There is no doubt that with celebrity comes recognition and fame but with that, comes financial gain, opportunity and adoration from loyal fans. Famous people are often those who are most talented or capable in their field and have achieved a status in society that reflects that talent and capability. So it's no surprise that the doors of wealth and luxury, that wouldn't normally be open to "regular folk", would be wide open to them.

*You have addressed the first part of the question in this paragraph and, again, used a good range of vocabulary appropriate for the topic [**celebrity (used as an abstract noun), adoration, reflects**].*

Its important to remember, however, that there's a dark underbelly to the shiny glamorous view of stardom that we have. Many celebrities have to contend with the parasitic intrusion of their lives by the media, often with devastating consequences. That, in combination with the constant cascade of criticism and intrusion by the public into their personal lives **contributes to severe decline** in their mental health. Well known public figures particularly those in show business are removed from the lives of normal people and isolated in their own, sometimes, toxic celebrity circles. They may also find themselves and their talent owned by companies and managers that dictate what they can and can't do.

*This is a strong paragraph with a wide range of less common lexical items. Good examples of vocabulary throughout include: **a dark underbelly; parasitic intrusion; devastating consequences; a cascade of criticism; and toxic celebrity.***

There is a repetition of the word “intrusion,” the second use of which could be replaced by a synonym, but this is a minor point. This paragraph could be improved by some examples to illustrate the points you make here regarding the negative aspects of fame.

Corrections:

- Its... > It's (missing apostrophe)
- ...contributes to... > This would be better phrased as “can contribute to...”
- severe decline > a severe decline (missing article)

Though on the surface a life of fame, glitz and glamour may seem appealing and attractive, in my view, its downsides greatly outweigh any superficial perceived benefit.

This is a clear, well-written conclusion, which summarises the opinion set out in the introduction.

Overall Writing Band: 8

If you can write to this same standard in exam conditions, you should have little difficulty in achieving a band 7.5 in IELTS (General Training) Writing.

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