

Collins

Get Ready for IELTS

Student's Book

**Pre-intermediate to Intermediate
IELTS Band 3.5–4.5**

Fiona Aish
Jane Short
Rhona Snelling
Jo Tomlinson
Els Van Geyte



Collins

Get Ready for IELTS

Student's Book

**Pre-intermediate to Intermediate
IELTS Band 3.5-4.5**

**Fiona Aish
Jane Short
Rhona Snelling
Jo Tomlinson
Els Van Geyte**

Unit	Page	Listening	Reading	Writing
Guide to IELTS	4			
1 Family	6	A presentation about the family Completing notes Multiple-choice questions Completing sentences Labelling diagrams p 8	Family structures Identifying information Adjusting reading speed <i>True/False/Not given</i> questions p 10	Family and society Structuring paragraphs and essays Structuring a Task 2 opinion essay p 13
2 Leisure	16	Hobbies, sports and interests Completing forms and tables Multiple-choice questions p 16	Spending time with friends Working with key words Multiple-choice questions p 21	Trends and statistics Task 1 introductions Analysing and describing a table for Task 1 p 24
3 Different cultures	26	Comparing lifestyles Recognizing contrasts Identifying categories Matching sentences Short-answer questions Multiple-choice questions p 31	British culture Understanding text organization Understanding the topic of paragraphs Matching headings p 28	World culture Sentence structure Understanding essay questions Writing a Task 2 opinion essay p 34
4 Places to live	36	Living on campus Following directions and identifying locations Labelling maps and flow charts Short-answer questions Completing sentences p 44	Creating communities Matching features p 41	Living in cities Comparing and contrasting multiple charts and graphs for Task 1 p 38
5 Arts and media	46	Communicating information Listening for key words and synonyms Recognising categories Multiple-choice questions Short-answer questions Completing tables p 54	Books Working with paraphrasing Completing sentences p 49	Films Analysing and describing a pie chart for Task 1 p 46
6 The natural world	56	The oceans as a natural resource Predicting answers from context Identifying key words Recognizing steps in a process Understanding statistics Completing diagrams and flow charts Completing notes p 58	Back to nature Skim-reading Completing and labelling diagrams p 63	Natural and unnatural processes Using sequence markers Describing a process for Task 1 p 60
7 Education	66	Studying for exams Following processes Multiple-choice questions Completing flow charts Completing sentences p 73	Studying abroad Scanning Completing tables and flow charts p 70	School, college and university Analysing and describing a bar chart for Task 1 p 66
8 Work	76	Types of jobs Listening for main ideas Listening for detailed information Distinguishing fact from opinion Completing notes Short-answer questions Matching p 76	Communication at work Predicting answers Completing notes and summaries p 80	Technology at work Connecting agreeing and contrasting ideas Describing advantages and disadvantages for a Task 2 essay p 83
9 Holidays and travel	86	Completing forms Predicting answers Recognizing number formats and spellings Completing forms and notes Multiple-choice questions p 91	Getting from place to place Working with paraphrases Distinguishing between fact and opinion Identifying information <i>Yes/No/Not given</i> answers p 93	Where people go on holiday Analysing and describing a line graph for Task 1 p 88
10 Health	96	Food and nutrition Identifying stages in a process Keeping to word counts Completing notes, tables and flow charts Matching information p 96	Body and mind Keeping to word limits Short-answer questions p 100	Healthcare and lifestyle Using linking words to describe cause and effect Writing a cause and effect essay for Task 2 p 103
11 Taking responsibility	106	Time management Paraphrasing and synonyms Using grammatical clues to complete sentences Completing notes and sentences Labelling diagrams p 114	Rights and responsibilities Categorizing and labelling Matching sentence endings p 106	Making choices Writing a problem and solution essay for Task 2 Checking writing for common mistakes p 109
12 Money	116	Spending habits Predicting key words Completing notes Matching information Short-answer questions p 116	Running a business Understanding the function of paragraphs Matching information p 123	Money and happiness Introducing, linking and contrasting opinions Writing about opinions for a Task 2 essay p 120
Practice test	126			
Grammar guide	141			

Speaking	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation
<p>Talking about the family Talking about your own life and experience Understanding Part 1 Exam practice: Part 1</p>	<p>Possessive 's and s' Possessive pronouns Adjectives Talking about future arrangements Direct and indirect questions Verbs for talking about habits and ongoing situations Talking about possibility Modal verbs for ability First conditional for possibility</p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: the family, family and relationships Synonyms Spelling</p>	<p>Pronouncing vowel sounds using the /ð/,</p>
<p>How we relax Talking about your free time Identifying key words in discussion Understanding Part 2 and the task card Exam practice: Part 2</p>	<p>Direct and indirect questions in the present and past Talking about what you like and don't like Comparatives and superlatives <i>Much, many, a lot (of), a little, a few</i> Present simple</p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: hobbies, interests, sport and free time Classifying vocabulary</p>	<p>Minimal pairs: /p/ and /b/</p>
<p>Celebrations Talking about special occasions Giving long answers Understanding Part 3 Exam practice: Part 2 and Part 3</p>	<p>Verbs for talking about the past Adverbs that introduce further explanation Modifying adverbs used with comparisons Linking words Expressing ideas and opinions Past simple</p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: special occasions, British culture, cultures across the world – food, dress, housing, places of culture Collocations with <i>make</i></p>	<p>Past tense endings</p>
<p>Different cities Talking about cities and city amenities Building fluency Exam practice: Part 1 and Part 2</p>	<p>Adjectives Prepositions for when things happen Present perfect</p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: following directions and identifying locations, describing city areas, population and amenities, describing change, university life and facilities</p>	<p>Syllables and word stress <i>There is / There are</i> Key word stress</p>
<p>TV and radio programmes Talking about types of TV and radio programme Organizing your answer Exam practice: Part 1 and Part 2</p>	<p>Modifying adverbs used with comparisons Nouns for describing quantities in graphs and charts Prepositions for talking about the purpose of actions or things Using adverbs to say how often you do something</p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: fractions, percentages and quantities, approximate quantities, literature genres and reading, types of TV and radio programmes, crime and protection Word formation</p>	
<p>The weather Talking about the weather Giving relevant answers Expanding answers Exam practice: Part 1 and Part 2</p>	<p>Talking about possibility Sequence adverbs Describing a process <i>can / can't</i> The passive</p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: the natural world, the weather, ocean life, natural resources, minerals, exploration, statistics Linking words</p>	<p>Vowel sounds</p>
<p>University study Talking about studying, exams and revision Exam practice: Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3</p>	<p>Adjectives and adverbs Verbs for talking about what is happening at the time of speaking Present perfect Comparisons <i>Make / do</i></p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: education Using collocations Using a range of vocabulary</p>	<p>Word stress</p>
<p>Choosing a job Talking about jobs Describing your job Exam practice: Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3</p>	<p>Talking about duties and responsibilities (<i>have to</i>) Using phrases to give yourself time to think</p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: work and the workplace, communication and technology</p>	
<p>Types of holidays Talking about holidays Taking notes and preparing answers Exam practice: Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3</p>	<p>Describing a sequence or process Talking about past situations and habits Talking about future arrangements (<i>be going to</i>)</p>	<p>Verbs for describing line graph trends Vocabulary related to: travel, timetables, places, countries and nationalities</p>	<p>/ə/ and sentence stress</p>
<p>Sport and exercise Talking about healthy activities Giving explanations Understanding questions in Part 1 and Part 3 Exam practice: Part 1 and Part 3</p>	<p><i>Should</i> and <i>ought to</i> Talking about cause and effect First and second conditionals</p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: health, food, cooking methods, numbers, weights, sports and feelings</p>	<p>Contractions</p>
<p>Facing life events Talking about important events Describing feelings Using the right tense Comparing Exam practice: Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3</p>	<p><i>Should</i> and <i>ought to</i></p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: groups, time management, deadlines, studying, coursework and projects</p>	<p>Giving emphasis Comparing</p>
<p>Possessions Describing objects Exam practice: Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3</p>	<p>Phrases to introduce opinions Present perfect with <i>for</i> or <i>since</i></p>	<p>Vocabulary related to: money, shopping and spending habits Recognising words that go together (collocations)</p>	<p>Linking words</p>

Guide to IELTS

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is jointly managed by the British Council, Cambridge ESOL Examinations and IDP Education, Australia.

There are two versions of the test:

- Academic
- General Training.

The Academic test is for students wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate level in an English-medium environment.

The General Training test is for people who wish to migrate to an English-speaking country.

There are separate Reading and Writing components for the Academic and General Training IELTS tests.

The test

There are four components to the test.

Listening 30 minutes, plus 10 minutes for transferring answers to the answer sheet.
There are 4 sections in this part of the test.

Reading 60 minutes. There are 3 texts in this component, with 40 questions to answer.

Writing 60 minutes. There are 2 writing tasks. Your answer for Task 1 should have a minimum of 150 words. Your answer for Task 2 should have a minimum of 250 words.

Speaking 11–14 minutes. There are 3 parts in this component. This part of the test will be recorded.

Timetabling – Listening, Reading and Writing must be taken on the same day, and in the order listed above. Speaking can be taken up to seven days before or after the other components.

Scoring – Each component of the test is given a band score. The average of the four scores produces the Overall Band Score. You do not pass or fail IELTS; you receive a score.

IELTS and the Common European Framework of Reference

The CEFR shows the level of the learner and is used for many English as a Foreign Language examinations. The table below shows the approximate CEFR level and the equivalent IELTS Overall Band Score.

CEFR description	CEFR code	IELTS Band Score
Proficient user (Advanced)	C2 C1	9 7–8
Independent user (Intermediate – Upper Intermediate)	B2 B1	5–6.5 4–5

This table contains the general descriptors for the band scores 1–9.

IELTS Band Scores		
9	Expert user	Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding
8	Very good user	Has fully operational command of the language, with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well

7	Good user	Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning
6	Competent user	Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations
5	Modest user	Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field
4	Limited user	Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language
3	Extremely limited user	Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur
2	Intermittent user	No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English
1	Non user	Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words
0	Did not attempt the test	No assessable information provided

Marking

The Listening and Reading components have 40 items, each worth one mark if correctly answered. Here are some examples of how marks are translated into band scores.

Listening 16 out of 40 correct answers: band score 5
 23 out of 40 correct answers: band score 6
 30 out of 40 correct answers: band score 7

Reading 15 out of 40 correct answers: band score 5
 23 out of 40 correct answers: band score 6
 30 out of 40 correct answers: band score 7

Writing and Speaking are marked according to performance descriptors.

Writing – Examiners award a band score for each of four areas with equal weighting:

- Task achievement (Task 1)
- Task response (Task 2)
- Coherence and cohesion
- Lexical resource and grammatical range and accuracy

Speaking – Examiners award a band score for each of four areas with equal weighting:

- Fluency and coherence
- Lexical resource
- Grammatical range
- Accuracy and pronunciation

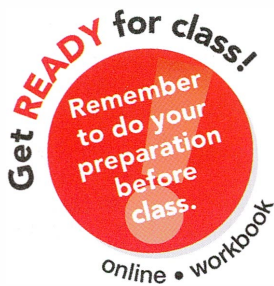
For full details of how the examination is scored and marked, go to: www.ielts.org.

Unit 1

Family

Speaking

Talking about your own life and experience in Speaking Part 1



Develop your exam skills

The complete Speaking test takes 11–14 minutes. The examiner asks questions and you give answers. The answers are recorded.

Part 1: Introduction and interview

- Part 1 takes 4–5 minutes.
- In the introduction, the examiner introduces himself/herself to you. He/She asks you to confirm your identity.
- Then the interview starts. The examiner asks you questions on general topics, e.g. family, hobbies, studying.
- Part 1 tests your ability to understand general questions and to give relevant answers. It also tests your ability to expand your answers.

info



1

You will hear the examiner's instructions in Part 1. Read the examiner's instructions before you listen and try to complete any gaps you can. Then listen and complete the instructions.

Hello. My (1) is Steve Smith. Could you tell me your (2), please?

Thank you. Can you show me your (3), please?

I'd now like to ask you some questions about yourself.

Tell me about your (4)

What does your father (5) ?

(6) much time do you spend with your family?

Are people in your (7) close to their family?

Do you prefer to go out with your family or your (8) ?

Where do you (9) at the moment?



2

Listen to a candidate answering a question from Exercise 1. Which question is it? What do you remember about the student's answer?



3

Listen to the candidate's answer again. Rate it out of 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent. Then choose the best description.

- 1 The information in the answer is *relevant / not relevant*.
- 2 The answer is *very short / OK / very long*.
- 3 The candidate speaks *with pauses / at normal speed / very fast*.
- 4 The vocabulary is *relevant / not relevant* to the topic.
- 5 The pronunciation is *poor / OK / clear*.
- 6 There are *a lot of errors / one or two errors / no errors* in the grammar.

4

Prepare to answer the question yourself. Make notes about your father's job (or the job of another person in your family). Then think about how you will use your notes to speak.

5

Ask and answer in pairs and assess each other's answer.

- 1 The information in the answer is *relevant / not relevant*.
- 2 The answer is *very short / OK / very long*.
- 3 My partner speaks *with pauses / at normal speed / very fast*.
- 4 The vocabulary is *relevant / not relevant* to the topic.
- 5 The pronunciation is *poor / OK / clear*.
- 6 There are *a lot of errors / one or two errors / no errors* in the grammar.

6

Read the advice below. Choose one or two pieces of advice to improve your answer. Then ask and answer in pairs again.

- Give a longer answer. Practise giving answers that are two or three full sentences.
- Imagine you are speaking to a friend and speak at your normal speed – not fast and not slow.

7

Choose and prepare one more question from Exercise 1. Ask and answer in pairs and assess each other. Then try to improve your answer and practise again.

Exam tip

The questions in Part 1 are on general topics about your life. Your answers are from your life and experience. There is no right or wrong answer.

Practice for the test

Part 1

1

Read the questions and record your answers.

- 1 Which country are you from?
- 2 Do you have a large family?
- 3 What does your mother do?
- 4 Do you live with your family?



2

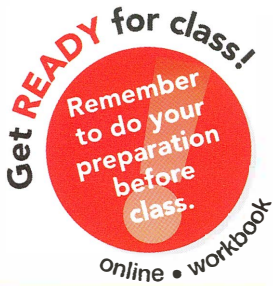
Listen to three more Part 1 questions. Write the questions. Then record your answers.

- 1
- 2
- 3

see **GRAMMAR**
page 142 and more
PRACTICE online

Listening

completing notes • answering multiple-choice questions
• completing sentences • labelling diagrams



Develop your exam skills

info

In the Listening test you will hear a group of people talking about a topic related to education or training. You will be asked to do different tasks in this section, and some of these will require you to identify the ideas and opinions of the individual speakers.

Exam tip

In this kind of question, where there are several speakers, it is useful to identify them as early as possible. Listen carefully and write their names on the exam paper, leaving enough room to make a note of any opinions as well.



1 You will hear a group of students talking about a project they are planning to present. Choose the correct letter, a, b or c, to complete the sentences.

- 1 'Families' is
 - a the title of the presentation.
 - b the topic of the presentation.
 - c the name of the course.
- 2 Who originally wants to compare families?
 - a Mona
 - b Edward
 - c Ibrahim
- 3 Mandy suggests families from
 - a the Arab Gulf and North Africa.
 - b North Africa and South Africa.
 - c only Arab countries.
- 4 Mona suggests South Africa because
 - a it is big.
 - b she knows someone from there.
 - c she knows about it herself.

see **GRAMMAR**
page 154 and more
PRACTICE online



2 Now you will hear the students planning the slides they are going to prepare for their presentation. Listen and complete the notes using **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

Introduction: Families around the world: (1)

Total no. of slides: (2)

2 slides each, families around the world, including:

How families are (3) and how they are (4)

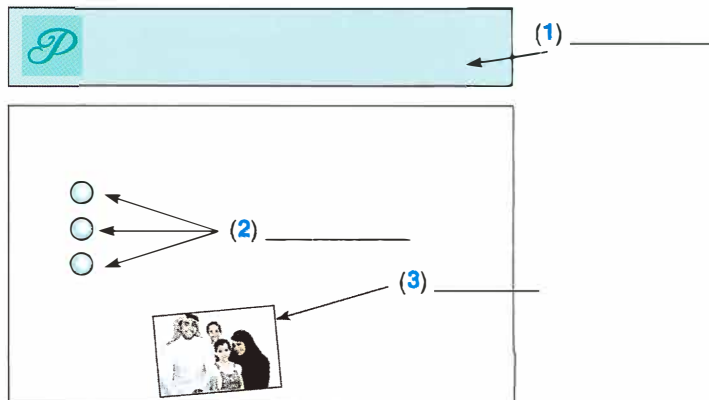
Conclusion

Exam tip

With multiple-choice questions, make sure you read all the options before you choose the answer. Some of the answers may look similar and you should check the details before you decide.



3 You will hear two of the students discussing the best way to design a slide. Label the drawing using **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for each answer.



Exam tip

Make sure you read all the answers carefully before you listen to the recording. When you have to choose more than one correct answer, it may help you to cross out the wrong answers as you listen.



4

You will hear the four students discussing their presentation. Choose **TWO** correct answers (a–e).

What do the students have to decide?

- a how to order the slides
- b who will compare the different families
- c the link between North Africa and the US
- d where the Arabs come from originally
- e when Western culture began in the US

Practice for the test

Section 3



Questions 1–4

You will hear three students talking to their tutor about the presentation they are planning. Choose the correct letter, a, b or c.

- 1 *The topic of the presentation is*
 - a how mobile phones are designed.
 - b the risks caused by mobile phones.
 - c how mobile phones are used.
- 2 *The introduction explains*
 - a the dangers of mobile phones.
 - b the importance of mobile phones.
 - c the importance of understanding the dangers of mobile phones.
- 3 *On the second slide, the students are planning to*
 - a explain why mobile phones are dangerous.
 - b point out some different kinds of risks.
 - c mention ways to avoid the risks.
- 4 *The tutor suggests*
 - a not discussing the dangers of mobile phones.
 - b discussing the benefits of mobile phones.
 - c having an argument.



Questions 5–7

Now you will hear the next part of the recording. Listen and complete the slides with **ONE WORD ONLY**.

Slide 1 Introduction

(5)

Slide 2

- Health
- (6)
- Security

Slide 3 Introduction

(7) for avoiding dangers



Questions 8–10

Now listen to the last part of the recording and complete the sentences. Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS OR A NUMBER**.

- 8 The actual talk will last for
- 9 Each student will speak for
- 10 The slides must all have the



see **GRAMMAR**
page 145 and more
PRACTICE online

Exam tip

Do not use your own opinion to answer but check in the text.



see **GRAMMAR**
page 143 and more
PRACTICE online

Develop your exam skills

info

In the Reading test, you may be asked whether information is correct or not. You will be given a list of statements. If the text confirms the statement, your answer should be 'TRUE'. If the text contradicts the statement, your answer should be 'FALSE'. If it is impossible to know from the text if the statement is true or not, your answer should be 'NOT GIVEN'.

- 1** Read three statements about families and the questions that follow. Can you answer the questions using only the information in the statements? Put a tick if you can, or write NOT GIVEN if not.

Statements	Questions	✓ or NOT GIVEN
Nuclear families, with mother, father and child/children, are more common in large cities.	1 Can you have a nuclear family of three people?	
	2 Were there any nuclear families 500 years ago?	
In China, there are words for many kinds of family relationships, e.g. a word for 'father's sister's son's daughter's son'.	3 What is the reason for China having so many words for family relationships?	
	4 Does 'aunt's grandson' have exactly the same meaning as the example?	
One of the main reasons for arranged marriages is to keep money and property in the family.	5 How does an arranged marriage keep the family money and property safe?	
	6 Are there other reasons for arranged marriages other than keeping wealth in the family?	

- 2** Read three more statements about families. Write TRUE if the text next to it confirms the information, FALSE if it contradicts the information, or NOT GIVEN if there is not enough information.

Statements	Information	✓ or NOT GIVEN
Children in large families usually don't have many possessions, but one advantage is that they can get help from their brothers and sisters.	1 Children with lots of brothers and sisters usually have more things of their own.	
	2 Brothers and sisters can provide help for each other.	
	3 Large families share their possessions.	
People sometimes talk about the disadvantages of being a child in a single-parent family, but single parents are often closer to their children.	4 People think there are many disadvantages of living in a single-parent family.	
	5 Children with one parent are looked after better.	
	6 A single-parent family can have benefits for the children as well as disadvantages.	
In families around the world, the father is usually in charge; however, it is usually the mother who takes charge of the home.	7 In Britain, the father is usually the head of the family.	
	8 In many countries, although the father is important, the mother deals with the home.	
	9 Mothers are the head of the family in most countries around the world.	

Exam tip

When we read texts, we use different techniques depending on what we are looking for in the text. Two useful techniques are skimming and scanning.

Skimming means that you read the text quickly to get a general idea of the topic or content without worrying about specific details and examples.

Scanning means that you read the text quickly to find specific information, e.g. places, names, phrases, ignoring other information you do not need.

3 Discuss what you have learnt about families in Exercises 1 and 2.

4 Read Part 1 of the text as fast as you can. Try to understand the main idea of what you read even if you do not know all the vocabulary. Check your understanding by answering the questions.

Part 1

Changes in family structure

There are many types of family systems around the world. In North America and northern Europe, the nuclear family (with two generations – a father, mother and one or more children) is often seen as the most typical. In contrast, in most other parts of the world, extended families, which include other family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, are seen as the norm.

True or False? The nuclear family is seen as the most common in the USA.

The common view is that the nuclear family has become the norm in many Western societies as a result of industrialization and urbanization. This trend began in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when people were forced to move to cities to find work in the factories that sprang up during the Industrial Revolution. In the twentieth century, greater industrialization resulted in even more people leaving their large extended families. Urbanization also meant that people lived in much smaller houses, which were not big enough for an extended family.

True or False? Nuclear families started with the rise in industrialization.

The trend towards nuclear families meant that many of the duties and responsibilities of a family, such as providing food and shelter, cleaning the home, preparing the food, caring for children and their education, and caring for the sick and elderly are no longer shared among the members of the extended family. The parents (or parent) now have to do this, with some help from the state. However, this is the price that people pay for the higher standard of living that may come from living in a city.

True or False? In nuclear families, people have a higher standard of living.

5 Read Part 2 of the text in the same way as you read Part 1 and answer the questions.

Part 2

We may think we know what we mean by a 'nuclear' family and an 'extended' family, but reality is more complicated than most people believe. Most nuclear families are part of extended families: children have grandparents and in many cases, aunts, uncles and cousins as well. Part of what makes them 'nuclear' is that they live in their own separate household, but it is not the whole story. In Greece or Italy, for example, a nuclear family may live in its own flat, but the extended family may live in the same apartment block or in the same street and family members see each other and even eat together every day.

True or False? Nuclear families are isolated from their extended family.

There is at least one more factor to consider. Family members may be separated from each other by geographical distance, but they may have close emotional ties. Even in North America and northern Europe, grandparents usually have close bonds with their grandchildren, and families often travel long distances so that they can see each other. Grandparents

often help their adult children, for example, by cooking and looking after their children in emergencies. In the same way, when their parents become too old to live on their own, adult children may take them into their own homes. As a result, they turn their nuclear family into an extended family.

True or False? Members of extended families often look after people who live in other households.

The structure of families changes over time. The effects of urbanization and industrialization are enormous, but they are not the only reasons for the changes. People marry, have children, become widowed, divorce and die. Children grow up and adults grow old. Nuclear families become extended families and extended families become nuclear families.

Family ties stay strong or become weak. One thing is certain: in a changing world, the family will continue to change, but ultimately, it is likely to continue to be the basic unit of society.

True, False or Not Given? Changes to family structure will become increasingly fast in the future.

Exam tip

You should adjust your reading speed throughout the exam. When you are looking for detailed information (e.g. the writer's opinion), you will need to slow down to make sure you find the exact answer. When you are asked for more general information, you may be able to skim (e.g. in order to match paragraph headings), or scan (e.g. in order to find a number or detail in the text). By practising, you will find the ideal balance between reading slowly enough to understand and fast enough to finish on time.

Practice for the test

Questions 1–8

Do the following statements agree with the information in the text? Write:

TRUE if the text confirms the statement

FALSE if the text contradicts the statement

NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to know from the text

Statements

- 1 Sixty years ago, children were expected to help around the house.
- 2 Today the world is a more dangerous place.
- 3 Helicopter parents love their children more than other parents.
- 4 People today have shorter childhoods than children in the past.
- 5 In the past children who lived in the country worked out of doors.
- 6 Eighteenth-century mothers were cruel or indifferent to their children.
.....
- 7 Children serving in the Royal Navy in the eighteenth century might find themselves in charge of adults.
- 8 Modern Western ideas about childhood are probably considered unusual in other cultures.

The Meaning of Childhood

What do we mean by a 'normal' childhood? It really depends on the period when a person was born and where they live. If you asked a parent in Britain today, they would probably say that childhood should be the happiest time of a person's life: a time when the child is loved, kept safe and is free to play.

However, even within the same culture, ideas about childhood have changed dramatically within a short period of time. British children growing up in the 1960s or 1970s seem to have had more freedom than children in the early twenty-first century. They were allowed to go about more freely, walking to school or to visit their friends, or using public transport. They were also more likely to be asked to do things like clean floors and wash the dishes and to look after younger brothers and sisters.

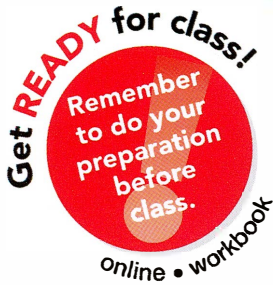
Today, parents are far more protective. They worry more about the dangers their children might face, and some parents also involve themselves excessively with their child's experiences and problems. These are the 'helicopter' parents. They are called this because, like helicopters, they continually hover over their child's head.

Childhood also ends later than it used to. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a twelve-year-old girl might have been sent off to work in a factory or as a maid for a wealthy family. She would have earned money and sent some of it back to her family. Twelve-year-old boys often become apprentices and learnt a trade, and in the countryside children worked in the fields and looked after animals almost as soon as they could walk.

The further back we go in history, the more difficult it is to have an accurate picture of attitudes to childhood. We know very little, for example, about the attitudes of mothers in eighteenth-century Britain. For example, what sort of mother could send her son, still a child, to join the Royal Navy, where he could expect a tough life, bad food and constant danger? Was she indifferent, cruel, or did she simply have no choice? And yet, boys as young as ten were sent away to sea. And it wasn't only the sons of the poor; wealthy families sent their sons, some as young as eight, to join the navy. Incredibly, they were put in charge of men who had many years of experience at sea.

So how have things changed? In some societies people are having fewer children. Does this fact alone mean that children are more precious to their parents and that therefore they have more of a 'normal' childhood? There is a concern that in a family with an only child, the parents and grandparents give the child a huge amount of attention and spoil them by buying them anything the child wants. The result of this is that the child expects their parents to do anything they tell them to, which creates problems for the child as they start to grow up.

A childhood in the slums of Bangladesh or on the war-torn streets of so many parts of the world remains what it has been for most children for much of history: a time of physical hardship, danger and little opportunity to get an education.



Develop your exam skills

info

Task 2 in the IELTS exam asks a question about a social topic such as the environment, education or the media. You must answer this question by giving your opinions, along with reasons and examples, in an essay. You must write at least 250 words and you should spend about 40 minutes writing the essay.

It is important to use a standard essay structure consisting of separate paragraphs: an introduction (one paragraph), followed by the main body of the essay (two or three paragraphs), and then a conclusion (one paragraph).

see **GRAMMAR**
page 157 and more
PRACTICE online



1 Read about one view of parenting. Do you agree or disagree with the author? Then read about how the paragraph is structured below.

I believe 1the family is one of the most important structures in society. 2Within the family, children can learn how to get on with other people and how to behave, and these things are important for life in the wider world. The family 3should also be a stable unit that 4provides children with love and support. Without this love and support, children might find it difficult to manage in the wider world. For example, children without loving, supportive parents could feel unable to do the things they would like to do, like go to university.

- 1 Main idea: *The family is important.*
- 2 Supporting idea which explains/adds to main idea: *People learn how to get on with others and how to behave in a family.*
- 3 Supporting idea: *The family gives love and support.*

Circled words = use of cautious language

2 Read the following statements and write T (True) or F (False).

- 1 A paragraph should have more than one *main idea*.
- 2 A paragraph should have more than one *supporting idea*.
- 3 The first sentence of a paragraph should contain the *main idea* of the paragraph.
.....
- 4 The last sentence of a paragraph should contain the *main idea* of the paragraph.
.....
- 5 You should mainly use definite modal verbs, e.g. *will, must*.
- 6 You should mainly use less definite modal verbs, e.g. *can, might, could, should*.
.....

3 Now read the following three paragraphs. Decide which one follows the rules in Exercise 1. Discuss with a partner what is wrong with the other two.

Paragraph A: Children should learn rules from their parents because teachers alone cannot teach a child how to behave. If a child doesn't have to obey strict rules at home, they could ignore the rules of the school and behave badly. Parents should teach a child rules from an early age so that when they reach school age they are more likely to behave and make friends with the other children at school.

see **GRAMMAR**
pages 147 and 157
and more **PRACTICE**
online

Paragraph B: Children will be really terrible if they have terrible parents. For example, some children in my school misbehave but their parents don't care; although the teacher complains to the parents, the parents don't do anything about it. It is better for children if their parents teach them rules from an early age because then the child will behave better. Rules must be taught by parents and teachers.

Paragraph C: Rules are important and must be taught by both parents and teachers. Rules need to be taught by parents first because this will help when the child gets into school. If a child is not taught to follow rules, he or she will misbehave. Furthermore, morals also need to be taught by parents. A child needs to learn the difference between right and wrong from their parents. Parents should also teach a child social skills, whereas the teacher's job is to teach them school subjects.

Exam tip

An essay should be made up of separate paragraphs, and the points within each paragraph should follow a logical order: a main idea followed by supporting ideas which explain or add to the main idea.

4 Read the first paragraph below. Look at how the first sentence summarizes what follows. Complete the first line of the following three paragraphs in the same way.

1 *Family structures are changing in the West.*

Once, the traditional family structure of two parents with two children was the most common family type in Western countries like the UK and the USA but this is changing. New family structures include single-parent families and families with children from more than one marriage. These new family types are becoming increasingly common. Different family structures mean that many children live with various combinations of full, step- or half-brothers and sisters.

2

If more women go out to work, this could affect the children in the family because they are not receiving the attention they need. Many people claim that children are happy when both their parents are working, but someone needs to look after the children and the home, and in my opinion, women are often better at this role than men.

3

Having brothers and sisters means that a child learns how to socialize with other children from a young age and this is incredibly beneficial for them. They also grow up and grow old with an existing support network around them, which people with no brothers and sisters may not have. An only child can also be very lonely.

4

It is not a child's job to cook, clean or help in the home. Children should be playing and having fun because childhood is the only time when they will be free from work. They should be developing rather than becoming tired doing housework. Although many argue that helping in the home teaches children to look after their environment and to be clean, children don't need to do housework to learn these things.

5 Read the essay question and think about what you would expect to read in the essay. Then read the essay on page 15 and put the paragraphs in the correct order by matching them to the headings.

In a family, both men and women should be employed outside the home and share childcare equally. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

a I believe that men should work outside the home and women should not because of the undoubted benefits for the family as a whole. These traditional roles have worked successfully for a long time so, in my opinion, they do not need to change now.

b I also believe women should be the main carers for their children. Although some people argue that women should be able to work outside the home, this is hard when there are children. Women need to be with their children when they are babies, and it is also better for young children to grow up with a parent who is always at home. It is not good for children to be looked after a professional carer.

c Nowadays, the traditional roles of men and women have changed. More men help in the home and more women go out to work. Some people say that this is a good thing, while others say that this is a negative thing. I believe that men should go out to work and women should stay at home because this is more economically efficient and it is also better for children.

d There are more economic benefits for a family with a traditional family structure where the man works and the woman stays at home. A man working full time is likely to earn more money than a man and woman who both work part time. A further benefit is that the woman can do things at home to save money, like making clothes or growing food.

Paragraph 1 (Introduction):

Paragraph 2:

Paragraph 3:

Paragraph 4 (Conclusion):

6 Now match the parts of an essay to their functions.

1 Introduction

2 Main body

3 Conclusion

a Gives some general information about the essay topic, may put forward some differing opinions and gives an answer to the essay question.

b Summarizes all the arguments and restates your answer/opinion.

c Describes and explains different viewpoints, arguments, advantages and disadvantages, supported by examples.

Exam tip

The introduction to a Task 2 essay can describe the topic of the essay, give background information to it and list various opinions about it. You should also briefly state your own view, which you then go on to explain and support in the main body of the essay.

Practice for the test

Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Children should always follow their parents' advice.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

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

Write at least 175 words.