

PRE-SESSIONAL ENGLISH COURSE

Developed and awarded by SIM, Singapore

COURSE AIMS

This course aims to improve all four Academic English language skills, speaking, listening, reading and writing to IELTS 7.0, through three parts: from IELTS 5.5 to IELTS 6.0 in Part One, IELTS 6.0 to IELTS 6.5 in Part 2 and, from IELTS 6.5 to IELTS 7.0 in Part 3 as a through trained course. The pre-session English course, in particular, is designed for students who need to improve their knowledge of spoken and written English in preparation for academic study at master level at the University of Birmingham. This course, among other things, seeks to provide opportunities for students to:

- Develop skills in understanding and analysing academic texts and use them in writing, listening and speaking
- Improve abilities to speak in academic contexts, with emphasis on oral and digital presentations
- Analyse and summarise academic texts and develop critical thinking
- Express arguments, writing and discussion more clearly, concisely and in a dynamic way in Academic English

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following:

Reading

- Understand a variety of different academic text types

- Skim, scan and focus on target material in all types of reading passages
- Identify the elements of a text and, where required, reproduce these elements in their own writing
- Achieve a deep understanding of the various questions' types found in the reading exam and how to address them
- Deduce the meaning of unknown vocabulary from their context
- Recognise a writer's point of view or claims and their implications
- Complete SIM reading tests in the allotted time

Writing

- Respond to the two tasks in the exam, following instructions and making the best use of the time available
- Write a variety of different types of essay, such as persuasive, cause and effect and problem-solution
- Write a brief report analysing graphs, tables and charts
- Interpret and describe statistical data using appropriate language and grammar
- Demonstrate enhanced vocabulary and grammatical structures
- Use suitable language and vocabulary for specific assignments with grammatical precision
- Summarize the main ideas of various types of texts
- Develop an argument and back it up in a structured essay
- Develop the ability to edit written work accurately
- Complete the SIM test tasks within the allotted time

Speaking

- Recognise the different sections and requirements of the SIM speaking test
- Confidently carry out a conversation on a topic, for example, family, hobbies, or work
- Evaluate and self-correct their speaking
- Formulate, express and defend opinions using appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures
- Speculate about general topics
- Fluently answer questions with clear pronunciation
- Use appropriate stress, intonation and speed patterns in their conversation
- Complete a speaking test within the allotted time

Listening

- Recognise the presentation and question patterns in SIM's listening tests and how to address them
- Develop predictive skills when preparing for listening tasks
- Demonstrate understanding of academic and everyday discourse such as conversation and talks
- Identify the main ideas and distinguish relevant supporting details of academic and everyday listening texts
- Demonstrate improved listening skills for overall comprehension and details
- Identify numbers, dates, time, letters, etc. correctly
- Accurately convey information gathered from listening to written answers within the set time frame

Vocabulary

- Build academic vocabulary
- Broaden vocabulary over a wide range of common topics
- Strengthen understanding of common collocations in everyday and academic contexts

- Develop awareness of the link between word families to enable easier understanding of the connections between questions and reading and listening texts
- Strengthen paraphrasing skills
- Develop the ability to understand metaphorical language
- Use digital literacy tools to develop vocabulary skills

Grammar

- Strengthen grammar foundations in Part One of the course
- Deepen understanding of more complex grammar structures in Part Two of the course
- Use digital literacy tools to develop grammar skills

OVERVIEW OF PRE-SESSIONAL COURSE: PART ONE

MODULE	READING	VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	WRITING
WEEK ONE 1: Communication 1A: Communication Today	Identifying topic sentences; Matching headings;	Collocations; Phrasal verbs; Multiple meanings; communication	Expanding answers; Part 1	Locating information: Section 1; Note completion	Present tenses	Task 1: Writing an overview
1B: Back to the Old Ways Module 1 Review	Matching headings; Sentence completion	The media	Part 1: Talking about the news	Section 1: Notes, Table and Form completion	Past simple	Task 1: Describing a chart
2: Feelings 2A: Feeling Good	Identifying key words; Y/N/NG questions	Definitions; Collocations; Research; Adjectives describing experiences	Generating ideas & vocabulary; Part 2	Word stress & main idea; Section 2: MCQs	Building complex sentences; Relative clauses	Generating ideas & vocabulary; Task 2: Opinion essay
WEEK TWO 2B: Looking Good Module 2 Review	Matching information; Y/N/NG questions	Adjectives of feeling	Part 2: Describing an event	Section 2: MCQs; Sentence completion	Parts of speech; Intensifiers	Generating ideas and vocabulary; Task 2: Opinion essay
3: Work and Study 3A: Learning for Life	Using text structure to follow main ideas; Summary completion	Dependent prepositions; Education; Adjective endings; Collocations	Giving reasons for opinions; Part 3;	Identifying similarity & difference; Note completion; Section 3: Matching	Comparative forms	Choosing & comparing data; Linking information; Task 1: Describing a chart
3B: The World of Work Module 3 Review	Y/N/NG questions; Summary completion	Business & finance	Part 3: Discussing shopping & retail	Section 3: Notes completion; Matching	Verb patterns (-ing and infinitives)	Task 1: Writing a summary
WEEK THREE 4: Science 4A: Discoveries and Inventions	Text referencing; Matching features	Academic research; Collocations; Science; Verb endings	Part 2: Giving yourself time to think	Understanding context & connected speech; Section 2: Note completion	Future probability; Present probability	Structuring a paragraph; Task 2: Opinion essay
4B: Inner and Outer Space Module 4 Review	Matching features; Sentence completion	Technology	Part 2: Describing a skill	Section 2: MCQs; Notes completion	Future forms	Task 2: Opinion essay
5: Art and Leisure 5A: The Arts	Identifying antonyms & synonyms; MCQs;	Verbs/nouns + prepositions; Compound adjectives; Collocations; Art	Structuring an argument; Pronunciation; Part 3;	Following a sequence of ideas; Section 3: Labelling a diagram	Grammar to connect ideas;	Generating comparisons: Task 2: Opinion essay
5B: Hobbies and Interests Module 5 Review	MCQs; Matching information	Culture & entertainment	Part 3: Discussing toys & games	Section 3: Labelling a diagram; Table completion	Participle clauses (-ed & -ing)	Compare & contrast essay

MODULE	READING	VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	WRITING
WEEK FOUR 6: Natural World 6A: Living with our Environment	Identifying cause & effect; Short-answer questions	The environment; Collocations	Part 2: Describing places	Identifying the correct word form; Section 4: Summary completion	Present perfect simple	Describing changes over time; Task 1: Graphs
6B: Living with Other Animals Module 6 Review	Matching headings; Short-answer questions	Wildlife	Part 2: Describing an animal	Section 2: Short-answer questions; MCQs	Articles; Countable & uncountable nouns	Task 1: Summarising a graph
7: Around the World 7A: The Joy of Travel	Understanding complex sentences; Matching sentence endings	Travel & tourism; Dependent prepositions; Cause & effect; Collocations	Part 1: Expanding answers;	Following directions; Section 2: Labelling a map;	Zero & first conditional	Writing an introduction; Task 2: Cause & effect essay
7B: Global Issues Module 7 Review	Matching sentence endings; Y/N/NG questions	Global issues	Part 1: Describing learning a language	Section 2: Labelling a map; Matching	Complex noun phrases	Task 2: Cause & effect essay
WEEK FIVE 8: Food 8A: From the Field	Dealing with unknown vocabulary; Labelling a diagram	Nutrition; Synonyms; Collocations; Prefixes	Stress & intonation; Giving an opposing opinion; Part 3: Talking about eating habits;	Listening for the correct spelling; Section 1: Table completion	The passive	Sequencing a process; Task 1: Describing the stages in a process
8B: The Food on our Plates Module 8 Review	Matching information; Labelling a diagram	Formal synonyms	Part 3: Discussing food & culture	Section 1: Table completion	Review of formal structures	Task 1: Describing a process
9: Well-being 9A: World Health	Following a sequence of ideas; Flow chart completion	Adverbs & adverbials; Collocations; Dependents; Prepositions; Healthcare	Using a range of structures	Identifying reference words; Section 3: Table completion & MCQs; Short-answer questions	Modals of obligation;	Writing a conclusion; Task 2: Essays
WEEK SIX 9B: Life Stages Module 9 Review	Flow chart completion; MCQs	Describing people	Part 2: Describing a person	Section 3: MCQs; Short-answer questions; Note completion	Passive & active voice	Task 2: problem-solution essay
10: Community 10A: Law and Order	Identifying information not given; T/F/NG questions	Crime & punishment; Collocations;	Asking for clarification; Part 3: Discussing school rules	Following a process; Section 4: Flow chart completion	Quantifiers	Describing locations on a map; Task 1
10B: Living Together Module 10 Review	Matching headings; T/F/NG questions	Town & city	Part 3: Discussing friends, family & community	Section 4: MCQs; Flow chart & Summary completion	Second conditional	Task 1: Describing a map
PRACTICE TESTS	READING		SPEAKING	LISTENING		WRITING

OVERVIEW OF PRE-SESSIONAL COURSE: PART TWO

MODULE	READING	VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	WRITING
WEEK ONE 1: Lifelong Learning 1A: Successful Learning	Predicting; Scanning; Note & Table completion	Language of learning; Collocations; Dictionary use	Using a range of tenses & vocabulary; Word stress	Section 2: MCQs & selecting from lists	Synonyms, prefixes; Word formation & Paraphrasing	Structuring answers; Task 1: Summarising
1B: Untapped Resources Module 1 Review	Table & note completion	Describing trends	Part 1: Talking about studying	Section 2: MCQs & selecting from lists	Review of tenses	Task 1: Line graphs
2: A World of Change 2A: Human development	Topic sentences & Supporting details; T/F/NG questions; Short-answer questions	Academic words; Written & spoken language; Process verbs	Topic-specific vocabulary; Making notes & Planning answers	Section 1: Labelling a map	Passive forms (simple & perfect)	Using the active & passive; Task 1: Describing a process
2B: The Natural World Module 2 Review	T/F/NG questions; Short-answer questions	Sequencing with prepositions & adverbs	Part 2: Describing a place visited	Section 1: Form completion & Labelling a map	Relative clauses	Task 1: Describing a process
WEEK TWO 3: The Feel-Good Factor 3A: The Mind...	Identifying main ideas; Matching headings; MCQs	Problems and solutions; Academic collocations	Topic-specific vocabulary; Developing answers	Identifying specific details; Section 4: Sentence completion & short answer questions	Reviewing real & unreal conditionals; Other ways to express conditionality	Developing a paragraph; Task 2: Problem and solution essay
3B: ...and Body Module 3 Review	Matching headings: MCQs: Two answers	Adverbs of attitude	Part 3: Discussing health	Section 4: Sentence completion; short-answer questions	Modal forms & Degrees of certainty	Task 2: Problem & solution essay
4: A Consumer Society 4A: The Cost of Buying	Identifying functions; Matching information; Summary completion	Academic verbs & collocations (thoughts & beliefs); Impersonality	Develop topic-specific vocabulary; Part 3: Using conjunctions & phrases	Predicting answers; Section 2: Note & sentence completion	Forming clauses & subordinate clauses; Expressing opinions with <i>that</i>	Giving opinions & developing arguments; Task 2: Opinion essay
4B: Objects of Desire Module 4 Review	Matching information; Summary completion	Signposting words	Part 3: Discussing consumerism	Section 2: Note & Table completion	Pronoun referencing	Task 2: Opinion essay
WEEK THREE 5: Homes of the Future 5A: Making Life Easier	Recognising reference words; Matching features; Note completion	Invention & innovation words: Expressing quantity; Agreement & disagreement	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 2: How to add detail	Listening for agreement & disagreement; Section 3: Matching	Reported speech & other reporting patterns	Task 1: Bar & pie charts; Interpreting data; Supporting trends with details

MODULE	READING	VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	WRITING
5B: Expanding Our Horizons Module 5 Review	Labelling a diagram; T/F/NG	Noun phrases	Part 2: Describing an experience	Section 3: Matching; Labelling a diagram	Reporting verbs	Task 1: Describing a chart
MCA TESTS	READING MCA		SPEAKING MCA	LISTENING MCA		WRITING MCA

WEEK FOUR 6: Law and Order 6A: Preventing Crime	Unknown words; Flow chart & Sentence completion	Argument & opinion verbs; Academic words; Argument collocations	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Ordering arguments; The schwa; Part 3	Section 4: Summary completion; Understanding attitude from tone & intonation	Linking ideas: <i>Both, neither & either</i>	Comparing & contrasting structures; Contrasting opinions; Task 2: Opinion essay
6B: Solving Crime Module 6 Review	Flow chart & Sentence completion	Cleft sentences	Part 3: Discussing crime	Section 4: MCQs and Summary completion	Using <i>there & it</i>	Task 2: Opinion essay
7: On the Move 7A: Urban Living	Linking ideas & paraphrasing; Matching sentence endings; Summary completion		Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 1: Speaking more accurately	Section 1: Form completion & MCQ; Identifying distractors	Sentence fragments & run-on sentences; Punctuation	Representing data clearly & accurately; Identifying inaccuracies in writing; Task 1: Tables & charts
7B: Infrastructures Module 7 Review	Matching sentence endings; Summary completion		Part 1: Describing travel & transport	Section 1: MCQs & Form completion	Improving grammatical accuracy; Prepositions	Task 1: Describing tables & charts
WEEK FIVE 8: Social Networks 8A: Community	Identifying writer's claims & opinions; Y/N/NG questions; MCQs: Two answers	Academic words; word families; Collocations with <i>plan</i>	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Real & hypothetical situations & reactions; Part 2: Pronunciation – connected speech	Section 2: Matching; Table completion; Following arguments	Review of future forms; Speculating on the future	Situations, causes & effects; Task 2: Developing a situation, cause & effect paragraph
8B: Communication Module 8 Review	Y/N/NG questions; MCQs	Noun phrases 2	Part 2: Describing a famous person	Section 2: Matching; Note completion; MCQs	Cause & effect linking words	Task 2: Cause & effect essay
9: Being Successful 9A: A Recipe for Success	Inferring meaning & attitude; Y/N/NG questions	Words related to talent; Collocations for success & talent; Describing personal qualities	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 3: Creating thinking time	Section 3: Sentence completion; General & specific language	Explaining how something works; Describing an object's appearance	Working with unknown vocabulary; Task 1: Diagrams; Writing about unknown processes

MODULE	READING	VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	WRITING
9B: Working Better Module 9 Review	MCQs; Y/N/NG questions	Replacing <i>thing</i>	Part 3: Discussing work & skills	Section 3: Sentence completion; MCQs	Estimation & indication	Task 1: Describing changes over time
WEEK SIX 10: Cutting Edge 10A: Thinking Creatively	Paraphrasing; Matching sentence endings; MCQs	Nouns for hypothesising; Academic collocations; Speculation phrases	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 2 & Part 3: Speculation	Section 4: Note completion; Metaphors & similes in lectures	Unreal conditionals, <i>wish</i> & <i>if only</i> ; Other hypothetical forms	Writing about hypothetical alternatives; Task 2: Coherent arguments
10B: Innovation Module 10 Review	Matching sentence endings; Y/N/NG questions		Part 3: Discussing inventions	Section 4: Table & Note completion	Past modal verbs; Verb patterns	Task 2: Opinion essay
EOC TESTS	READING EOC		SPEAKING EOC	LISTENING EOC		WRITING EOC

OVERVIEW OF PRE-SESSIONAL COURSE: PART THREE

Topics proposed here further develop students' language skills. Similar to Part 2, two themes are covered every week.

MODULE	READING	VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	WRITING
WEEK ONE 6: Law and Order 6A: Preventing Crime	Unknown words; Flow chart & Sentence completion	Argument & opinion verbs; Academic words; Argument collocations	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Ordering arguments; The schwa; Part 3	Section 4: Summary completion; Understanding attitude from tone & intonation	Linking ideas: <i>Both, neither & either</i>	Comparing & contrasting structures; Contrasting opinions; Task 2: Opinion essay
6B: Solving Crime Module 6 Review	Flow chart & Sentence completion	Cleft sentences	Part 3: Discussing crime	Section 4: MCQs and Summary completion	Using <i>there & it</i>	Task 2: Opinion essay
WEEK TWO 7: On the Move 7A: Urban Living	Linking ideas & paraphrasing; Matching sentence endings; Summary completion		Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 1: Speaking more accurately	Section 1: Form completion & MCQ; Identifying distractors	Sentence fragments & run-on sentences; Punctuation	Representing data clearly & accurately; Identifying inaccuracies in writing; Task 1: Tables & charts
7B: Infrastructures Module 7 Review	Matching sentence endings; Summary completion		Part 1: Describing travel & transport	Section 1: MCQs & Form completion	Improving grammatical accuracy; Prepositions	Task 1: Describing tables & charts
WEEK THREE 8: Social Networks 8A: Community	Identifying writer's claims & opinions; Y/N/NG questions; MCQs: Two answers	Academic words; word families; Collocations with <i>plan</i>	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Real & hypothetical situations & reactions; Part 2: Pronunciation – connected speech	Section 2: Matching; Table completion; Following arguments	Review of future forms; Speculating on the future	Situations, causes & effects; Task 2: Developing a situation, cause & effect paragraph

8B: Communication Module 8 Review	Y/N/NG questions; MCQs	Noun phrases 2	Part 2: Describing a famous person	Section 2: Matching; Note completion; MCQs	Cause & effect linking words	Task 2: Cause & effect essay
WEEK FOUR 9: Being Successful 9A: A Recipe for Success	Inferring meaning & attitude; Y/N/NG questions	Words related to talent; Collocations for success & talent; Describing personal qualities	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 3: Creating thinking time	Section 3: Sentence completion; General & specific language	Explaining how something works; Describing an object's appearance	Working with unknown vocabulary; Task 1: Diagrams; Writing about unknown processes
9B: Working Better Module 9 Review	MCQs; Y/N/NG questions	Replacing <i>thing</i>	Part 3: Discussing work & skills	Section 3: Sentence completion; MCQs	Estimation & indication	Task 1: Describing changes over time

MODULE	READING	VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	WRITING
WEEK FIVE 10: Cutting Edge 10A: Thinking Creatively	Paraphrasing; Matching sentence endings; MCQs	Nouns for hypothesising; Academic collocations; Speculation phrases	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 2 & Part 3: Speculation	Section 4: Note completion; Metaphors & similes in lectures	Unreal conditionals, <i>wish</i> & <i>if only</i> ; Other hypothetical forms	Writing about hypothetical alternatives; Task 2: Coherent arguments
10B: Innovation Module 10 Review	Matching sentence endings; Y/N/NG questions		Part 3: Discussing inventions	Section 4: Table & Note completion	Past modal verbs; Verb patterns	Task 2: Opinion essay
WEEK SIX REVISION EOC TESTS	READING EOC		SPEAKING EOC	LISTENING EOC		WRITING EOC