

## Sample lesson plan for *Writing for IELTS* Unit 4

**Student preparation:** Have learners complete all of Part 1: Vocabulary before the class. (1 hour)

**Teacher preparation:** none

### Part 1: Vocabulary (20–30 mins)

**FOCUS** Exercises 1 & 2 introduce learners to key expressions associated with the theme of nature and the environment. Exercises 3 & 4 introduce words and phrases used to describe cause and effect. Exercise 5 focuses on the different strength of similar words.

#### Spot check 1:

To check learners' recall of vocabulary associated with natural habitats and environmental damage.

1. Write *natural habitats* and *environmental damage* on the board.
2. Have learners copy the headings and write as many words as they can connected with each. Tell them to include any words they know as well as the ones from Vocabulary exercises 1 & 2.
3. Have learners work in pairs to combine their lists of words.
4. Elicit the words from the pair that has written the most words and check that they are all relevant.

#### Spot check 2:

For practice in using cause-and-effect words and phrases.

1. Elicit the six words and phrases from Vocabulary exercise 4 and write them on the board.
2. Have learners work in groups of four to discuss environmental issues in their own country/ies. They should include at least one cause-and-effect sentence for each issue they discuss.
3. Elicit at least one cause-and-effect sentence from the class for each of the words and phrases on the board.

### Part 2: Practice exercises: Task 1 (40–50 mins)

**FOCUS** These exercises train learners to use language related to describing a process. Exercise 1 uses two short texts to introduce the language of the unit, students completing a flow diagram with information from Text 2. Exercises 2–4 focus on

sentence combining, signposting a sequence of events and the passive voice. Exercise 5 gives practice in using the elements introduced.

#### Exercise 1

Have learners read the text on clear cutting to identify the three main stages. Learners then read the second text and complete the flow chart as instructed in the book. After checking answers, have them think about the follow-up task based on the two texts they have read.

#### Exercise 2

This exercise encourages learners to notice and use a variety of ways of combining sentences. Have them do the activity in two stages to make sure they get maximum benefit. In stage 1, they study the sentences and how they are combined; in stage 2, they cover the text and write the sentences.

**Typical mistakes:** Learners often feel that getting the right answer is more important than the process of learning. This activity highlights this dilemma in two ways. Firstly, students might just copy the answers from the text, so it is useful to follow the procedure above. Secondly, they might feel that the examples of how to combine sentences are too unsystematic. To address this issue and encourage your learners to take an interest in the language, have them work in small groups and discuss the six ways of combining sentences. They should think about: how they add clarity and interest to the description; how they can use the sentences in their own writing.

#### Exercise 3

This exercise encourages learners to notice signposting language as part of the process of using it themselves. Have them complete the exercise according to the instructions. Highlight that in some IELTS question types, such as sentence completion, the information is always in the same order as the text. Go over the Exam tip at the bottom of page 35. To highlight the fact that signposting is not always used, have learners find examples of where it could be used but isn't, e.g. Text 1 paragraph 2: *The limbs and tree tops are (then) removed.*

#### Exercise 4

Exercises 4 & 5 focus on the use of the passive. Remind learners of the hint about when to use the passive in the second part of Practice exercise 1. Then have them complete the exercise according to the instructions and check answers in pairs.

**Typical mistakes:** L2 English speakers often have problems with passives, particularly if they are not used in their L1. It is therefore useful to give clear guidelines and practice on specific aspects such as the distinction highlighted in Practice exercise 1 and made use of in Exercise 4.

### Exercise 5

Clarify the first part of the instructions using the example. Point out the following about each clause of the new sentence:

- One clause always remains similar to the original sentences in Practice exercise 4, but the other usually changes in some way, e.g. *'the flow of water slows down'* → *'slowing the flow of water down'*.
- The word/expression in brackets can come at the beginning of the first or second clause (second in the example).

Have learners check their work in pairs and do feedback as a class before learners re-write the sentences as a passage using signposting.

**Typical mistakes:** The answer for item **c** uses a semi-colon to divide the two clauses. However the answer could also be: *A sand bar forms across the estuary and, as a result, salinity in the estuary decreases.* Your students need to know that two phrases divided by a colon or semi-colon is still one sentence; also that the use of these will make their writing appear more academic.

## Part 2: Practice exercises: Task 2 (50 mins–1 hour)

**FOCUS** These exercises develop learners' understanding of the difference between informal and academic style.

### Exercise 6

Have learners read the instructions and the question that follows. Books closed, elicit a few views on the topic from the class to stimulate their interest. Have them read the two texts and answer question 1. Then have learners work in pairs to find characteristics of the academic style, both in terms of style and linguistic features. Tell them to underline anything they notice as this will help them evaluate the texts more easily.

### Exercise 8

Have learners read the Exam tip and answer any questions that arise. Before they begin the exercise, have them read the table of characteristics of academic style and discuss anything that is unfamiliar in pairs.

Provide help out where necessary. Then have learners complete the exercise according to the instructions and check answers in small groups.

**Typical mistakes:** Some students may be unfamiliar with words like *impersonal*, *emotive*, *subordinators*. However, the use of examples makes the meaning clear in most cases. Encourage your learners to work out the meaning for themselves.

### Exercise 9

Remind learners of the Exam tip at the bottom of page 37, and particularly the point about not using too many words. Have learners work individually and then discuss their sentences in pairs, modifying them if they feel it is appropriate. Then have them work in small groups to modify their sentences further. Finally, have them compare their answer with those in the key.

**Typical mistakes:** One important aspect of academic writing is the use of noun phrases as in sentence 1 *'the desire for wealth'*. It would be useful to highlight this point so that your learners begin to notice other examples and start using them in their own writing. You might wish to have your students identify the ones used in Response 2, Practice exercise 6, e.g. *'ever-increasing areas of land'*, *'elephants and lions living in the wild'* (noun phrase as object); *'the conflict between humans and animals'*, *'People living thousands of miles away'*, *'the poor farmer living nearby'* (noun phrase as subject)

## Part 3: Exam practice (Homework – 1 hour 15 mins)

This can be assigned for homework.

**FOCUS** Emphasise the importance of using signposting language, appropriate use of the passive voice and a suitable academic style.

- For Task 1, allow 5 minutes for planning and 20 minutes for writing.
- For Task 2, allow 10 minutes for planning and 40 minutes for writing.

Note that these time allowances are slightly longer than the student would have in the exam. For Units 7–12, ask students to complete the work within the official exam-allotted time as printed on the paper.