

## Sample lesson plan for *Writing for IELTS* Unit 1

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

**Teacher preparation:** Photocopy sample task 1 response (sufficient for 1 per student) and cut up into paragraphs. (10 mins)

### Part 1: Vocabulary (up to 15 mins)

**FOCUS** These exercises introduce learners to adjectives and abstract nouns for describing character traits, nouns for describing figures and tables, and some common verbs for expressing points of view. These will help learners write introductory paragraphs for task 1 and task 2 and to write in an academic style.

#### Spot check 1:

To check learners' recall of adjectives for character traits:

1. Ask learners to rank the adjectives *aggressive*, *authoritative* and so on from 1 to 7 according to how strongly they associate each adjective with themselves (1 = most like me, 7 = least like me).
2. Learners compare answers in small groups.
3. Ask each group to give the noun form for 1–2 of the adjectives.

#### Spot check 2:

To check learners' recall of words for describing figures and tables, sketch the six visual prompts on the board and ask learners to identify:

- a) the type of visual represented and
- b) the following components: segment, column, row, vertical axis and horizontal axis. (If you have access to a computer and projector, display a selection of figures and tables using a Google™ image search.)

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

**FOCUS** These activities introduce learners to task 1 instructions and sample task 1 responses.

#### Exercise 1

1. Elicit vocabulary for branches of scientific study by asking learners to identify names for:
  - a) the study of forces such as heat, light, and gravity. (Answer: physics)
  - b) the study of the stars, planets and other natural objects in space. (Answer: astronomy)
  - c) the study of the Earth's structure, surface, and origins. (Answer: geology)
  - d) the study of living things. (Answer: biology)
  - e) the science of diagnosing, treating, and preventing disease in people (Answer: medicine)
  - f) the science of diagnosing, treating, and preventing disease in animals (Answer: veterinary medicine)
2. Ask learners to group the sciences according to whether they are more likely to be studied by men or by women.
3. Ask learners to look at the bar chart on page 10 and compare their answers to the information in the chart.
4. Then do exercise 1 following the instructions in the book.

**Typical mistakes:** Although learners often know that they should spend no more than 20 minutes on task 1, in practice they often spend more time than they should. Emphasise that task 2 is weighted more than task 1, so they should always spend less time on task 1. (For example, if candidates score a band 6.0 in task 1 and 5.5 in task 2, they will only achieve a 5.5 overall for writing.) Some candidates also believe that they should describe all of the information presented. Emphasise the importance of selecting and highlighting key information.

#### Exercise 2

To encourage learners to focus on text organisation, distribute copies of the sample response on page 11 cut up into paragraphs. Ask learners to work in pairs to put the paragraphs in the correct order. Check their responses as a class asking learners to give reasons for their choices. Then go over questions 1–6.

#### Exercise 3

To raise energy, set as a competition to see who can find the errors in the shortest time.

**Typical mistakes:** Candidates often fail to look closely at what the figure or table is showing, for example numbers may represent percentages or units of a hundred, thousand, or million.

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

### FOCUS

These activities introduce learners to task 2 instructions and a sample response.

### Exercise 4

Do the exercise following the instructions in the book. Then ask students to work in pairs to list ways of promoting equality of opportunity for men and women in the workplace. Ask them to decide in which order they would present their ideas and why.

**Typical mistakes:** Learners will often lead with what they consider their strongest point. Good task 2 essays often work towards the strongest point by first considering and dismissing weaker points.

### Exercise 5

Learners can do the exercise individually then check their answers in pairs.

**Typical mistakes:** Learners often present points of view as simply right or wrong. Point out that it is a good strategy to point out strengths and weaknesses of all of the opinions presented.

### Exam information and Exercise 6

### FOCUS

This part of the lesson helps learners to analyse task 2 questions.

Point out that although learners cannot predict writing paper topics, they can learn to recognise common question types. This will allow them to 'recycle' essay plans and set expressions they have learned for similar question types. Learners can do the exercise individually then check their answers in pairs.

### Exam tip

Prior to looking at the exam tip on page 14, ask learners to indicate how long they think they should spend on the following stages of essay writing:

- a) analysing the question
- b) thinking of ideas
- c) making a plan
- d) writing the essay
- e) checking for mistakes

Then compare their answers to the recommendations in the exam tip.

**Typical mistakes:** Candidates often feel they can save time by starting to write straightaway. Emphasise the importance of thinking and planning. If they spend 6–7 minutes on these stages, they will be able to write more quickly and coherently.

## Part 3: Exam practice (Homework – 2 hours)

This can be assigned for homework.

### FOCUS

Emphasise the importance of analysing the question and planning *before* writing.

When you give feedback on learners' responses, focus on how well they have followed instructions.

- ▶ For Task 1 allow 15 minutes for planning and 30 minutes for writing.
- ▶ For Task 2 allow 15 minutes for planning and 60 minutes for writing.

Note that these time allowances are twice what the student would have in the exam. This is to allow learners to develop the skills they need to produce good quality work. As learners become more proficient, the amount of time they spend on practice exam tasks can be gradually reduced until they can complete the work within the official exam-allotted time as printed on the paper.