

Sample lesson plan for *Writing for IELTS* Unit 2

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

Teacher preparation: none

Part 1: Vocabulary (10 mins)

FOCUS The first exercise introduces learners to key expressions associated with the theme of diet and nutrition. Exercises 2–5 introduce the most common verbs and nouns used to describe linear graphs along with their associated adjectives and adverbs.

Spot check 1:

To check learners' recall of nutrition related vocabulary:

1. Represent 5–6 of the expressions from Exercise 1 by writing on the board the first and last letter of each word and spaces for the remaining letters, e.g. organic food =
o _ _ _ _ c f _ _ d.
2. Read out the corresponding definitions and ask learners to complete the expressions.

Spot check 2:

To check learners' recall of expressions for describing line graphs:

1. Sketch a graph on the board illustrating some aspect of the class that has changed over time, e.g. size of the class or amount of participation. Explain that the graph represents something about the class and ask learners to guess what it is.
2. Elicit verbs and adverbs (e.g. rose sharply) and adjectives and nouns (e.g. a dramatic fall) to describe the graph.

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

FOCUS Exercises 1–3 cover the correct use of tense and time expressions.

Exercise 1

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

Typical mistakes: Sometimes students find it more natural to use continuous tenses and/or the past perfect tense to describe trends. Point out that tense use in academic English is generally more restricted than in everyday English. The simple past, simple present and present perfect tense are very commonly used. Continuous tenses and past perfect tense are less commonly used. In the exam they should focus on using the most common tenses accurately.

Exercise 2

Do the exercise following the instructions in the book.

Follow up by sketching a simple time line on the board indicating past, past up to the present, and future and drawing up a list of topics that are likely to engage your students personally: e.g. motivation to study English, self-confidence, or amount of free time. Invite learners to make sentences about themselves using the topics and the time frame that you indicate. E.g. Indicate the first topic and the 'past up to the present' to elicit a sentence such as 'My motivation to study English has increased steadily.'

Typical mistakes: Look out for correct tense use and word order: adjective + noun (e.g. dramatic fall) and verb + adverb (e.g. increased dramatically).

Exercise 3

Elicit prepositions relating to expressions of time by asking learners to complete sentences relating to their lesson: e.g. 'Our class meets ___ 3.00 ___ 5.00 ___ Mondays.' (key: from, to/until, on).

Then do the exercise following the instructions in the book.

Exercise 4

FOCUS This exercise involves combining and condensing information. It is more advanced than the others but important for anyone hoping to achieve a band 6.5 or above.

Learners who have a good grasp of sentence structure can do the exercise as instructed in the book individually then check their answers in pairs.

Typical mistakes: Learners sometimes fail to omit pronouns in sentences with multiple verbs, e.g. It rose sharply, then it fell, then it levelled off. After it rising steeply, it levelled off.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

If time allows, try this follow-up exercise: Each learner sketches a line graph representing one of the topics mentioned in the notes for Exercise 2 and uses this as a visual prompt for writing practice. To check for clarity, pairs read each other their written descriptions – the student who is listening draws the graph as it is being described, and then the two versions of the graph are compared.

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

Exercise 5

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This activity encourages students to engage more actively with the topic

To raise energy and allow the class to get a 'snapshot' of its members' views, ask learners to respond to each statement with a show of hands: hand raised all the way up = strongly agree, hand raised $\frac{3}{4}$ up = agree, hand raised $\frac{1}{4}$ up = disagree, hand down = strongly disagree.

Exercise 6

If possible pair up students who had different views about statement 1 above and have them work together.

Typical mistakes: Some learners may not be aware of the need to think about the topic from a variety of perspectives. Point out that this is normally what is expected of an academic essay.

Exercise 7

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This activity shows students how to use question prompts to brainstorm around a topic.

Have students work in pairs. Ask them to brainstorm their own answers to the essay question before completing the template. They can then assess whether the prompts helped them come up with ideas about the topic.

Exercises 8

To help learners generate ideas, have them work in small groups. Follow up with whole-class discussion and sharing of ideas. To help students gauge the quality of their ideas, periodically ask the class for a show of hands to express levels of agreement as in Exercise 5 above.

Part 3: Exam practice (Homework – 1 hour 25 mins)

This can be assigned for homework.

FOCUS

When you give feedback on learners' responses, focus on the areas covered in the unit, in particular variety of expression and grammatical accuracy for Task 1 and range of ideas for Task 2.

- ▶ For Task 1 allow 10 minutes for planning and 20 minutes for writing.
- ▶ For Task 2 allow 15 minutes for planning and 40 minutes for writing.

Note that these time allowances are slightly longer than the student would have in the exam. Depending on the level of the students and the proximity of the exam, you could instead ask the students to complete the work within the official exam-allotted time as printed on the paper.