

Sample lesson plan for *Writing for IELTS* Unit 3

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

Teacher preparation: none

Part 1: Vocabulary (up to 15 mins)

FOCUS These exercises train learners to use words in phrases or 'chunks' rather than learning them in isolation. Developing this aspect of their vocabulary will help make their language come across as more proficient and natural.

Spot check 1:

To check learners' recall of education related collocations:

1. On the board, write the first letter of each of the nouns listed in Vocabulary exercise 2 and spaces for subsequent letters, e.g. for *standards* write s _ _ _ _ _ . Learners copy what you have written onto a piece of paper.
2. Read aloud the adjectives that collocate with the nouns, pausing to give learners time to fill in the missing letters.

Spot check 2:

For more practice describing percentages, ask for a show of hands to questions such as:

1. Who enjoyed PE?
2. Who here is good at mathematics?
3. How many of you preferred arts subjects to science subjects?

After each show of hands, nominate a learner to describe the class's response using an expression such as *the (vast) majority of*, *nearly half* and so on.

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

FOCUS Exercises 1–3 teach learners to use a range of grammatical forms and expressions to compare and contrast information.

Exercise 1

1. Ask learners what form marks normally take in their learning context – e.g. percentages, letters etc. Explain that in the UK, marks for school work are often given as letters, with A* the highest.
2. On the board, write the subjects listed in the bar chart for Exercise 1 in alphabetical order. Ask learners to rank the subjects from 1 to 8 according to generally perceived level of difficulty (1 = most difficult, 8 = least difficult).
3. Ask learners to look at the bar chart and say what, if anything, they find surprising about the information.
4. Learners read the examples in the book and complete the exercise individually.

Typical mistakes: Check for faulty pairings, e.g. *as* with *than* (*Nearly as many students sat the Art and Design exam than as did the Chemistry exam*) and *more* with *per cent* (*The percentage of students gaining... was more higher than the percentage of students achieving...*).

Go over the exam tip on page 27. Challenge students to make sentences about the class using the adverbs listed, e.g. *There are far more females in this class than males. The boys in this class work nearly as hard as the girls.*

Exercise 2

Do the exercise following the instructions in the book.

Elicit additional expressions for signalling similarity and difference, e.g. *on the other hand* = *in contrast*, *whereas* = *while*.

Exercise 3

Learners do the exercise as instructed in the book individually then compare their answers in pairs. If they have made mistakes, direct their attention to examples of the target expression in the unit, and encourage them to make the corrections themselves.

Typical mistakes: If learners rewrite sentence 2 beginning: *As many boys achieved...*, make sure they complete the sentence using the auxiliary verb *did*: e.g. *As many boys achieved a passing grade in mathematics as did girls*. For sentence 3, make sure the correct punctuation is used (comma instead of full stop), e.g. *Whereas boys did well..., girls did well...*

Part 2: Practice exercises: Task 2 (50 mins–1 hour)**Exercise 4**

FOCUS This activity develops learners' understanding of how academic arguments are typically constructed.

- Before looking at the example, ask learners to discuss the following questions in small groups:
 - How good are you at working in a team?
 - Do you enjoy team work?
 - How have you acquired team working skills?
- Instruct learners to read the essay ideas and outline, answer questions 1–4 in the book, and discuss their answers in pairs.

Typical mistakes: Learners often like to lead with their strongest idea. Explain that in academic arguments, writers normally begin with a critical analysis of one or more 'weaker' points of view and then present their favoured view.

Exercise 5

- If time allows, ask learners to discuss the following questions in small groups:
 - How do you feel about sitting exams? Do you enjoy the challenge, or do they make you anxious?
 - What are some of your best and worst experiences of exams?
 - In general, do you think your exam results accurately reflect your skills and knowledge?
- Instruct learners to do the exercise following the instructions in the book. To help generate ideas, have them work in pairs. Ask some pairs to take the position that exams can accurately measure intelligence and others to take the opposite position.
- Once they have written their outlines, ask pairs who have taken contrasting positions to compare their outlines. Highlight examples of good work for the rest of the class.

Exercise 6

This can be assigned for homework.

Exercise 7

FOCUS This activity will allow you to see whether learners have understood the principles of academic argumentation sufficiently well to apply them to a different type of question.

Set this exercise as a whole class activity.

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

This can be assigned for homework.

FOCUS Emphasise the importance of comparing and contrasting information for Task 1 and constructing an effective argument 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. For Units 4–6, reduce the amount of extra thinking time by half. For Units 7–12, ask students to complete the work within the official exam-allotted time as printed on the paper.