IELTS Band 7: What Examiners Actually Look For

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After coaching hundreds of IELTS candidates, I can tell you the biggest mistake: preparing by 'improving your English' instead of preparing for the criteria. Examiners score four specific things, and each can be trained.

In Writing, Task Response matters more than vocabulary. Examiners want a clear position, developed ideas, and a direct answer to the actual question. Memorable phrases you shoehorned in will cost you, not save you.

In Speaking, fluency beats perfection. Band 7 speakers self-correct naturally and keep going. Band 6 speakers pause hunting for the perfect word. Practice speaking for two minutes without stopping ? record yourself and count the silences.

For Reading and Listening, the skill is paraphrase recognition. The test rewrites the same idea in different words. Build that reflex with past papers, not vocabulary lists.

Give yourself six to eight focused weeks. One of our students moved from 5.5 to 7.5 in exactly that window ? the plan, not the talent, made the difference.