

## IELTS: WRITING

Ensure that candidates are aware that the writing task lasts 60 minutes, is divided into two tasks, and the weighting of the tasks is a third for **Part 1** and two thirds for **Part 2**. It could be suggested to candidates that they try writing **Part 2** first and then move onto **Part 1**. Although this will ensure that **Part 2** is completed, students must still aim for 150 words in **Part 1**. By completing **Part 2** well, it may make candidates less stressed to then move onto the shorter task. Practice timed tasks are essential.

**Task:** Candidates need to be convinced that plans **DO** save time and produce well-thought-out writing, which is one of the marking criteria. Give the students a Part 2-style writing task but ask them to plan by writing only opening and concluding topic sentences for each paragraph. They will then be able to see how they can work to a plan, and also fill in cohesive devices introducing each paragraph and supporting points. Give this as a five-minute task, followed by 30 minutes' writing time with five minutes to check at the end.

**Task:** Spelling can be a problem area. It is a good idea to record students' spelling errors when correcting scripts and then have a short spelling test at the end of the week for all the students. In group classes, this will also allow students to learn new vocabulary from each other as well as improving their spelling.

**Task:** When students are comfortable with each other it can be useful to get them to mark another student's script. Take a particular point from the marking criteria i.e. **Part 1**: task fulfilment; coherence and cohesion; lexical resource; grammatical range and accuracy; **Part 2**: arguments, ideas and evidence; communicative quality; lexical resource; grammatical range and accuracy -and get them to mark accordingly. Then have a class feedback session on what they spotted.

### The main potential problems found in the last examiners' report were:

- script not long enough
- irrelevance: misunderstanding of question or 'stock answers'
- format/register: inappropriate for target audience
- lack of paragraphing and punctuation