



Case Study

Profession: Engineering school applicant (France)

Objective: Achieve IELTS 7; master exam strategies; expand academic vocabulary and skills for higher education

Outcome: Higher test performance with targeted strategies; improved academic listening, reading, and writing readiness

1. Profile / Background

Age / Nationality: 20, France

Current Level of English: Intermediate (B1)

Previous Learning Experience: Academic English at secondary level; no prior intensive exam preparation.

Occupation / Area of Study: Aspiring engineering student aiming for entry to a competitive programme in France.

2. Specific Needs and Objectives

Language Skills Focus:

- IELTS-specific exam strategies and timing.
- Academic vocabulary development relevant to IELTS topics
- Refinement of grammar, cohesion, and coherence in writing.
- Listening and reading comprehension under exam conditions.
- Speaking practice with focus on fluency, accuracy, and thematic range.

Reasons for Learning English:

- Requirement of an IELTS band 7 for entry into an engineering school.
- Broader goal of achieving academic English fluency for future studies and professional opportunities.

Short-Term Objectives:

- Maximise performance in each IELTS paper by using proven strategies.
- Identify and close knowledge and skills gaps (e.g., reading speed, paraphrasing, speaking organisation).
- Gain familiarity and confidence with IELTS tasks and formats.

Long-Term Goals:

- Secure entry into her chosen engineering programme.
- Build a strong academic English foundation for success in higher education.

3. Method

Tutors' Approach:

- Intensive, exam-focused preparation with targeted feedback.
- Balancing strategy training with language development to ensure both test performance and lasting improvement.

Instructional Strategy:

- Use of **IELTS-specific materials** (Cambridge IELTS Practice Tests, model answers, examiner criteria).
- Supplementation with **authentic listening and reading** materials on academic and topical themes (science, technology, environment, education) to broaden vocabulary and practice inference skills.
- Frequent timed practice to simulate exam conditions and reduce stress.
- Tailored exercises to address individual weaknesses (e.g., coherence in essays, lexical range in speaking).

Materials and Resources Used:

- IELTS preparation books and past exam papers.
 - Authentic readings from *FT* and *The Guardian* for advanced comprehension and vocabulary.
 - Podcasts and news bulletins for listening practice across different accents and registers.
 - Teacher-prepared materials targeting specific gaps (e.g., paraphrasing drills, cohesive devices).
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4. Content

Examples of Content Used in Lessons:

- IELTS Academic reading and listening practice with detailed review.
- Speaking Part 2 “long turn” practice with feedback on structure and timing.
- Essay-writing workshops on common IELTS topics (e.g., technology, environment, education).
- Authentic listening exercises where the student extracted gist and then identified key details and vocabulary.
- Vocabulary banks created for frequent IELTS themes.

Skills Developed:

- Improved ability to manage time and structure answers in exam conditions.
- Stronger academic vocabulary for IELTS writing and speaking.
- Enhanced listening skills for identifying gist, details, and paraphrased information.
- More coherent, well-structured essay writing with accurate grammar and a wider range of cohesive devices.

Specific Exercises or Activities:

- Timed mock exams with examiner-style feedback.
 - Vocabulary extraction tasks from authentic readings and lectures.
 - Paraphrasing and synonym exercises to avoid repetition in writing/speaking.
 - Practice of IELTS Part 3 speaking discussions, focusing on abstract ideas and opinion development.
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5. Progress**Challenges Faced:**

- Initial difficulty managing timing in the reading and writing sections.
- Limited range of academic vocabulary at the outset.
- Nervousness in speaking, especially when expanding on abstract ideas.

Highlights / Key Achievements:

- Achieved marked improvement in essay coherence and lexical range.
 - Noticeable growth in speaking fluency and confidence with examiner-style questions.
 - Became adept at handling authentic listening materials and extracting both gist and key detail.
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6. Outcome**Immediate Applications:**

- The student entered her IELTS exam with greater confidence, equipped with strong strategies and targeted vocabulary.
- She was able to maximise her existing knowledge while demonstrating progress in weaker areas.

Long-Term Use:

- The skills and strategies developed will continue to support her in her engineering studies, particularly in handling academic texts, lectures, and international collaboration.