

# Why your IELTS score isn't moving

Five honest questions. Tick the ones that are true of how you're preparing right now.

Be honest — this only works if you tell yourself the truth. Tick a box only if it's genuinely true of you.

**I review my wrong answers, not just my score**

After a practice test I work out why I got things wrong and what keeps going wrong — I don't just check the score and move on.

**I've read the band descriptors for my target band**

I know what a Band 7 answer looks like and why it scores what it does — I'm preparing for the exam, not just "studying English".

**I spend the most time on my weakest skill**

I give my weakest skill more time, not less — I'm not quietly avoiding it by polishing skills I'm already comfortable with.

**I know my single lowest skill won't sink my application**

I've checked whether one low score disqualifies me for my visa or university — even if my other three are strong.

**Someone who knows the exam gives me real feedback**

A person trained in IELTS regularly tells me what the examiner sees. Not an app. Not me marking myself.

## What your ticks mean

**4-5:** Your approach is sound. If your score is still stuck, the leak is subtle — usually the things you can't see in your own work.

**2-3:** You're grinding at the wrong things. The gaps you left unticked are almost certainly capping your band.

**0-1:** Working hard, learning slowly — the most common and most fixable pattern.

**The last box is the one almost no one can tick honestly.** You can sharpen vocabulary, reading and listening alone — but you can't hear your own Speaking drift or see your own Writing patterns. That's usually where the missing half-band lives. A free diagnostic shows you what the examiner sees: [sound-ready.com](https://www.sound-ready.com)