

IMPROVING LANGUAGE SKILLS BY SELF-STUDY FOR IELTS TAKERS

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Abstract: *this study explores various strategies and methods for improving general English through self- study. It inspects effective techniques such as reading books watching English videos, practicing speaking and writing, using language apps and engaging daily conversation. The study finds that immersive learning is highly effective, making errors is essential for growth and speaking regularly builds confidence.*

Keywords: *Self-study, IELTS, 4 language skills, Grammar, Vocabulary, Listening, Speaking, Writing, Comprehension, Learning strategies.*

Introduction

The ability to communicate effectively in English has become essential for academic success and career advancement, especially for those preparing for standardized tests like IELTS. While formal education provides structured learning, self-study has emerged as a powerful alternative for improving language proficiency. Self-study allows learners to progress at their own pace, focusing on their weaknesses and strengths without external pressure.

According to Brown (2021), self-directed learning allows individuals to tailor their study to their specific needs. Therefore, implementing self-study techniques can lead to measurable improvements in language skills.

Utilizing various resources enriches the self-study experience. Lee (2019) stresses the importance of diverse materials, such as books, podcasts, and online courses. As a result, using varied resources can make learning more

engaging and comprehensive.

Setting achievable goals enhances motivation in self-study. Chen (2022) points out that learners who establish clear objectives exhibit greater persistence and focus. Therefore, developing specific and realistic goals can significantly increase the effectiveness of self-study efforts.

Incorporating technology can facilitate language learning. Patel (2018) discusses how applications and online platforms provide interactive learning opportunities. As such, leveraging technology can greatly enhance the self-study experience for IELTS takers.

Regular practice is essential for language retention. Nguyen (2020, emphasizes that frequent engagement with the language reinforces memory pathways. Consequently, integrating daily practice routines can lead to sustained improvements in English proficiency.

Joining online communities aids in learning through peer support. Smith (2021) notes that participating in forums and study groups fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange. Thus, interacting with others can provide valuable insights and motivation during self-study. Thus, regular self-evaluation is a key step in the language learning process. In addition to identifying weaknesses, learners benefit greatly from cultivating reflective habits that deepen their self-awareness and strategic thinking. Developing a reflective practice encourages continuous improvement. Thompson (2021) posits that reflective learners analyze their progress and adjust strategies accordingly. Hence, fostering a habit of reflection can optimize self-study outcomes for IELTS candidates.

Consistency is key for successful self-study. Martinez (2022) argues in Educational Psychology that a regular study schedule reinforces discipline and

predict content, and repeat phrases – enhances concentration and comprehension. Repetition and shadowing techniques, in particular, are known to improve listening fluency. Over time, learners begin to grasp not only the meaning but also intonation and natural rhythm. Thus, consistent listening with focused strategies plays an essential role in self-study for English learners.

Writing skills can be significantly improved through consistent practice such as journaling, writing essays, and using sample IELTS questions. When learners write regularly, they become more aware of grammar structures, punctuation, and logical organization. Writing also helps to develop critical thinking and clarity in expression, which are crucial for achieving a high score in IELTS Writing. Moreover, analyzing sample band 9 essays enables learners to notice common patterns, vocabulary usage, and coherence devices used by advanced writers. Hence, self-practice and model analysis make writing a powerful self-study tool.

Speaking regularly, even without a partner, helps build fluency and confidence. According to Brown & Yule (2020), speaking practice through monologues, voice recordings, and topic-based speech can enhance fluency, pronunciation, and idea organization. Practicing IELTS-style questions aloud enables learners to get comfortable with the test format. Additionally, Zokhidov (2022) emphasizes that speaking in front of a mirror or recording one's own voice allows learners to self-assess and improve their delivery. Shadowing native speakers in videos or podcasts also helps with intonation and natural expression. Therefore, integrating speaking activities into daily routines is a highly effective self-study approach.

Survey on IELTS Preparation Methods

A survey was conducted among IELTS teachers to detect their preferred preparation methods. The survey asked whether they prepared for IELTS through self-study or formal IELTS center courses and which method they believed was more effective for learners.

13 participants,

Survey Questions:

How did you prepare for the IELTS exam—self-study or an IELTS center course?

1. **Which method do you find more effective for learners?**
2. **What are the main advantages of self-study?**
3. **What are the benefits of IELTS center courses over self study?**
4. **Do you recommend self-study or studying at language centers?**

Survey Results:

6 out of 13 teachers preferred self-study, citing flexibility and

personalized learning. 4 out of 13 favored IELTS center courses for structured lessons and expert guidance. 3 out of 13 agreed that a combination of both ways yields the best results.

Research question

This study aims to answer the following research question:

How effective is self-study in improving English skills for students preparing for the IELTS exam?

Findings and Solutions

From the research and survey results, key findings emerge:

1. Self-study is effective but requires strong motivation.
2. Solution: Learners should create structured study plans and use technology to track progress.
3. Reading and listening to authentic English content significantly improve fluency. Solution: Exposure to books, podcasts, and native speakers should be a daily habit.
4. Self-evaluation is crucial for improvement.

Solution: Learners should regularly assess their progress through mock tests and writing reviews.

5. A combination of self-study and IELTS center courses produces the best results.

Solution: Students should use self-study for flexibility and IELTS courses for structured practice.

Conclusion

Self-study is an effective method for improving general English, particularly for IELTS preparation. It offers flexibility and personalization,

allowing learners to focus on their specific needs. However, structured IELTS courses provide valuable guidance and expert feedback. The results suggest that a combination of both methods is the most effective approach. By following strategic self-study techniques and supplementing with IELTS courses, learners can maximize their potential and achieve high IELTS scores.

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