PRE-SESSIONAL ENGLISH COURSE

Developed and awarded by SIM, Singapore

COURSE AIMS

This course aims to improve all four Academic English language skills, speaking, listening, reading and writing to IELTS 6.5, through one part: from IELTS 6.0 to at least IELTS 6.5 as a through trained course. The pre- sessional English course, in particular, is designed for students who need to improve their knowledge of spoken and written English in preparation for academic study at master level at the University of Birmingham. This course, among other things, seeks to provide opportunities for students to:

- Develop skills in understanding and analysing academic texts and use them in writing, listening and speaking
- Improve abilities to speak in academic contexts, with emphasis on oral and digital presentations
- Analyse and summarise academic texts and develop critical thinking
- Express arguments, writing and discussion more clearly, concisely and in a dynamic way in Academic English

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following:

Reading
- Understand a variety of different academic text types

- Skim, scan and focus on target material in all types of reading passages
- Identify the elements of a text and, where required, reproduce these elements in their own writing
- Achieve a deep understanding of the various questions' types found in the reading exam and how to address them
- Deduce the meaning of unknown vocabulary from their context
- Recognise a writer's point of view or claims and their implications
- Complete SIM reading tests in the allotted time

Writing
- Respond to the two tasks in the exam, following instructions and making the best use of the time available
- Write a variety of different types of essay, such as persuasive, cause and effect and problem-solution
- Write a brief report analysing graphs, tables and charts
- Interpret and describe statistical data using appropriate language and grammar
- Demonstrate enhanced vocabulary and grammatical structures
- Use suitable language and vocabulary for specific assignments with grammatical precision
- Summarize the main ideas of various types of texts
- Develop an argument and back it up in a structured essay
- Develop the ability to edit written work accurately
- Complete the SIM test tasks within the allotted time

Speaking
- Recognise the different sections and requirements of the SIM speaking test
- Confidently carry out a conversation on a topic, for example, family, hobbies, or work
- Evaluate and self-correct their speaking
- Formulate, express and defend opinions using appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures
- Speculate about general topics
- Fluently answer questions with clear pronunciation
- Use appropriate stress, intonation and speed patterns in their conversation
- Complete a speaking test within the allotted time

Listening
- Recognise the presentation and question patterns in SIM's listening tests and how to address them
- Develop predictive skills when preparing for listening tasks
- Demonstrate understanding of academic and everyday discourse such as conversation and talks
- Identify the main ideas and distinguish relevant supporting details of academic and everyday listening texts
- Demonstrate improved listening skills for overall comprehension and details
- Identify numbers, dates, time, letters, etc. correctly
- Accurately convey information gathered from listening to written answers within the set time frame

Vocabulary
- Build academic vocabulary
- Broaden vocabulary over a wide range of common topics
- Strengthen understanding of common collocations in everyday and academic contexts

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- Develop awareness of the link between word families to enable easier understanding of the connections between questions and reading and listening texts
- Strengthen paraphrasing skills
- Develop the ability to understand metaphorical language
- Use digital literacy tools to develop vocabulary skills

Grammar
- Strengthen grammar foundations in Part One of the course
- Deepen understanding of more complex grammar structures in Part Two of the course
- Use digital literacy tools to develop grammar skills

OVERVIEW OF PRE-SESSIONAL COURSE: PART TWO

MODULE	READING	VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	WRITING
WEEK ONE **1: Lifelong Learning** 1A: Successful Learning	Predicting; Scanning; Note & Table completion	Language of learning; Collocations; Dictionary use	Using a range of tenses & vocabulary; Word stress	Section 2: MCQs & selecting from lists	Synonyms, prefixes; Word formation & Paraphrasing	Structuring answers; Task 1: Summarising
1B: Untapped Resources Module 1 Review	Table & note completion	Describing trends	Part 1: Talking about studying	Section 2: MCQs & selecting from lists	Review of tenses	Task 1: Line graphs
2: A World of Change 2A: Human development	Topic sentences & Supporting details; T/F/NG questions; Short-answer questions	Academic words; Written & spoken language; Process verbs	Topic-specific vocabulary; Making notes & Planning answers	Section 1: Labelling a map	Passive forms (simple & perfect)	Using the active & passive; Task 1: Describing a process
2B: The Natural World Module 2 Review	T/F/NG questions; Short-answer questions	Sequencing with prepositions & adverbs	Part 2: Describing a place visited	Section 1: Form completion & Labelling a map	Relative clauses	Task 1: Describing a process
WEEK TWO **3: The Feel-Good Factor** 3A: The Mind…	Identifying main ideas; Matching headings; MCQs	Problems and solutions; Academic collocations	Topic-specific vocabulary; Developing answers	Identifying specific details; Section 4: Sentence completion & short answer questions	Reviewing real & unreal conditionals; Other ways to express conditionality	Developing a paragraph; Task 2: Problem and solution essay
3B: …and Body Module 3 Review	Matching headings: MCQs: Two answers	Adverbs of attitude	Part 3: Discussing health	Section 4: Sentence completion; short-answer questions	Modal forms & Degrees of certainty	Task 2: Problem & solution essay
4: A Consumer Society 4A: The Cost of Buying	Identifying functions; Matching information; Summary completion	Academic verbs & collocations (thoughts & beliefs); Impersonality	Develop topic-specific vocabulary; Part 3: Using conjunctions & phrases	Predicting answers; Section 2: Note & sentence completion	Forming clauses & subordinate clauses; Expressing opinions with *that*	Giving opinions & developing arguments; Task 2: Opinion essay
4B: Objects of Desire Module 4 Review	Matching information; Summary completion	Signposting words	Part 3: Discussing consumerism	Section 2: Note & Table completion	Pronoun referencing	Task 2: Opinion essay
WEEK THREE **5: Homes of the Future** 5A: Making Life Easier	Recognising reference words; Matching features; Note completion	Invention & innovation words: Expressing quantity; Agreement & disagreement	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 2: How to add detail	Listening for agreement & disagreement; Section 3: Matching	Reported speech & other reporting patterns	Task 1: Bar & pie charts; Interpreting data; Supporting trends with details

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5B: Expanding Our Horizons Module 5 Review	Labelling a diagram; T/F/NG	Noun phrases	Part 2: Describing an experience	Section 3: Matching; Labelling a diagram	Reporting verbs	Task 1: Describing a chart
MCA TESTS	READING MCA		SPEAKING MCA	LISTENING MCA		WRITING MCA

WEEK FOUR 6: Law and Order 6A: Preventing Crime	Unknown words; Flow chart & Sentence completion	Argument & opinion verbs; Academic words; Argument collocations	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Ordering arguments; The schwa; Part 3	Section 4: Summary completion; Understanding attitude from tone & intonation	Linking ideas: *Both, neither* & *either*	Comparing & contrasting structures; Contrasting opinions; Task 2: Opinion essay
6B: Solving Crime Module 6 Review	Flow chart & Sentence completion	Cleft sentences	Part 3: Discussing crime	Section 4: MCQs and Summary completion	Using *there* & *it*	Task 2: Opinion essay
7: On the Move 7A: Urban Living	Linking ideas & paraphrasing; Matching sentence endings; Summary completion		Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 1: Speaking more accurately	Section 1: Form completion & MCQ; Identifying distractors	Sentence fragments & run-on sentences; Punctuation	Representing data clearly & accurately; Identifying inaccuracies in writing; Task 1: Tables & charts
7B: Infrastructures Module 7 Review	Matching sentence endings; Summary completion		Part 1: Describing travel & transport	Section 1: MCQs & Form completion	Improving grammatical accuracy; Prepositions	Task 1: Describing tables & charts
WEEK FIVE 8: Social Networks 8A: Community	Identifying writer's claims & opinions; Y/N/NG questions; MCQs: Two answers	Academic words; word families; Collocations with *plan*	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Real & hypothetical situations & reactions; Part 2: Pronunciation – connected speech	Section 2: Matching; Table completion; Following arguments	Review of future forms; Speculating on the future	Situations, causes & effects; Task 2: Developing a situation, cause & effect paragraph
8B: Communication Module 8 Review	Y/N/NG questions; MCQs	Noun phrases 2	Part 2: Describing a famous person	Section 2: Matching; Note completion; MCQs	Cause & effect linking words	Task 2: Cause & effect essay
9: Being Successful 9A: A Recipe for Success	Inferring meaning & attitude; Y/N/NG questions	Words related to talent; Collocations for success & talent; Describing personal qualities	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 3: Creating thinking time	Section 3: Sentence completion; General & specific language	Explaining how something works; Describing an object's appearance	Working with unknown vocabulary; Task 1: Diagrams; Writing about unknown processes

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MODULE	READING	VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	WRITING
9B: Working Better Module 9 Review	MCQs; Y/N/NG questions	Replacing *thing*	Part 3: Discussing work & skills	Section 3: Sentence completion; MCQs	Estimation & indication	Task 1: Describing changes over time
WEEK SIX **10: Cutting Edge** 10A: Thinking Creatively	Paraphrasing; Matching sentence endings; MCQs	Nouns for hypothesising; Academic collocations; Speculation phrases	Developing topic-specific vocabulary; Part 2 & Part 3: Speculation	Section 4: Note completion; Metaphors & similes in lectures	Unreal conditionals, *wish* & *if only*; Other hypothetical forms	Writing about hypothetical alternatives; Task 2: Coherent arguments
10B: Innovation Module 10 Review	Matching sentence endings; Y/N/NG questions		Part 3: Discussing inventions	Section 4: Table & Note completion	Past modal verbs; Verb patterns	Task 2: Opinion essay
EOC TESTS	**READING EOC**		**SPEAKING EOC**	**LISTENING EOC**		**WRITING EOC**

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