

Prepare for {IELTS}

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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Ellipsis

PART 1

EXPLANATION

- Sometimes we can leave words and phrases out of sentences. Often this is because we do not need/want to repeat these words. This is **ELLIPSIS**.
- Using this strategy can make your writing more coherent and cohesive, and can improve your grammatical range. This can significantly improve your **IELTS Writing** grade.
- Knowing about this feature of English can help you to read and understand more complex texts.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can often leave **that** out of a **that**-clause:

- I sincerely hope **(that)** politicians will begin to take the issue of animal rights seriously.
- Many medical experts believe **(that)** physical health and mental wellbeing are strongly linked.
- Research indicates **(that)** living in the countryside is healthier than living in a large city.
- Many would argue **(that)** public gardens have a valuable purpose.
- I cannot deny **(that)** I found it quite enjoyable in the end.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

When we connect two clauses with the same subject or subject and verb, we can often leave this information out of the second clause:

- **I would like to** travel around the world **and** learn to ski.
- **Those who** do shift-work **and** have irregular working patterns often struggle with their mental health.
- **Many people** would like to eat more healthily **but** don't feel they have time to cook properly.
- **Many students** work hard at school **but** struggle to get the grades they need.
- **Coral reefs** are under threat, **yet** could be saved if action is taken quickly.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

When we connect two clauses with the same subject or subject and verb, we can often leave this information out of the second clause:

- **Many museums have decided** to reduce the cost of entry **but** not to dispense with an entry fee altogether.
- Some scientists believe that **our civilisation will be destroyed** by a pandemic **or** by the arrival of a huge meteorite.
- **Anyone suffering from obesity could start** doing exercise **or** eating less.
- **Children from deprived backgrounds** often do not have the materials they need to study in school **so** fall behind other learners.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

When we have a dependent clause with a subject pronoun + **to be**, we can sometimes leave this out:

- **When (it is) spoken** properly, **Russian** is a beautiful language.
- **When (they are) asked**, **most people** believe that they should be earning a higher salary.
- **While (they are) working** at night, **many members of staff** struggle to concentrate.
- **Although (they were) tired**, **the students** completed the task.
- **Even though (they are) lacking** the necessary resources, **many teachers** manage to inspire and support their students.
- **If (it is) necessary**, we can stay an extra night in the hotel.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can reduce relative clauses to participle clauses by taking out the relative pronoun (**who; which** etc.) and the auxiliary verb **to be**. This can be done when the meaning is active:

- **Anyone** (who is) **living** near a nuclear power plant will certainly be apprehensive about the possibility of a radiation leak.
- **People** (who are / who were / who have been / who will be) **working** during public holidays should be paid extra.
- **Homeless people** (who are / who have been) **sleeping** in shelters are vulnerable.
- **Students** (who are) **taking** courses in medicine have to spend far more time at university than **those** (who are) **completing** courses in economics.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can reduce relative clauses to participle clauses by taking out the relative pronoun (**who; which** etc.) and the auxiliary verb **to be**. This can be done when the meaning is passive:

- **Criminals** (who are / who have been) **convicted** of murder should serve a minimum term of twenty years in my opinion.
- **Those** (who have been) **found** to have cheated in exams should be expelled from school or university, as far as I am concerned.
- **The charts** (which have been) **given/provided** show levels of exports of goods and services in 1990.
- **The problems** (which are) now **faced** by species living in extreme climates will soon affect other groups of animals.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can reduce relative clauses to adjective clauses or prepositional clauses by taking out the relative pronoun and auxiliary verb **to be**:

- There are **many countries** (which are) **desperate/willing/keen** to host a major sporting event such as The Olympics.
- There are **several candidates** (who are) **capable** of doing the job.
- I have never met **anybody** (who is) **brave/stupid** enough to work as a lion tamer.
- We need **somebody** (who is) **calm** to take decisions under pressure.
- Companies want to recruit **employees** (who are) **interested** in helping the firm to become more profitable.
- **Anyone** (who is) **over** eighteen can vote.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Ellipsis

PART 2

EXPLANATION

- Sometimes we can leave words and phrases out of sentences. Often this is because we do not need/want to repeat these words. This is **ELLIPSIS**.
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- Knowing about this feature of English can help you to read and understand more complex texts.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can use **to** instead of an infinitive clause when it is clear what we mean:

- I do not believe we could solve the environmental crisis even if we wanted **to. (solve the environmental crisis)**
- Students often use their smartphones in class despite the fact that they are not allowed **to. (use their smartphones in class)**
- The figures suggest that approximately a third of workers do overtime, but that most choose not **to. (do overtime)**
- Most of us would not go to work if we did not have **to (go to work)**
- You can borrow some money if you need **to. (borrow some money)**

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can use **to** instead of an infinitive clause when it is clear what we mean:

- Unfortunately, my train did not stop at the station, even though it was supposed/meant **to**. (stop at the station)
- We should all spend a bit less time in front of computer screens as doctors advise us **to**. (spend a bit less time in front of computer screens)
- Please feel free to come and visit whenever you would like **to**. (come and visit)
- Overweight individuals may sometimes refuse to cut the amount of food they eat, even when doctors advise them **to**. (cut the amount of food they eat)

LEAVING OUT WORDS

Sometimes we can leave out information which appears in a later clause:

- If you have **to, (leave your bags at the airport)** you can leave your bags at the airport.

Sometimes we can leave information out of two clauses:

- I'm going to help you because I want **to, (help you)** not because I have **to. (help you)**

We can use this strategy with negative sentences:

- Students have to do a lot of homework but sometimes they would prefer **not to. (do a lot of homework)**

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We cannot usually leave out the verb **to be**:

- To be honest, I wasn't too happy that she got the job, though I pretended to **be. (happy)**
- Taking a holiday is not always as relaxing as it is supposed to **be. (relaxing)**
- Many individuals report being less satisfied than they used to **be. (satisfied)**
- Working as a journalist is sometimes more boring than it is thought to **be. (boring)**

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can use **so** instead of repeating an adjective, adverb or clause:

- The meeting was incredibly boring. To be honest, I expected it to be **so. (boring)**
- If we expect children to act responsibly, we need to show them how to behave **so. (responsibly)**
- Workers have always fought for their rights. They are entitled **to do so. (to fight for their rights)**
- Though most of us do not think **so, (that the world will end soon)** there are some people who believe the world will end soon.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can often use **so** after verbs of thinking and communicating:

- Nobody told me that the party had been cancelled. I just presumed **so (that the party had been cancelled)** when I saw all the snow.
- Although I cannot be sure that most journalists write truthfully, I assume **so. (that most journalists write truthfully)**
- You asked if I was going to the house-warming party. I suppose **so. (that I am going to the house-warming party)**
- It is probably better not to say **so (that you think your boss is incompetent)** if you think your boss is incompetent.
- I knew you had lost because you told me **so. (that you had lost)**

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can use **do/does/did/doing so** to avoid repeating a verb phrase:

- Your chance of success in life used to depend on how wealthy you were and, to a degree, it still **does so**. (**depends on how wealthy you are**)
- Many companies used to judge job applicants on the colour of their skin. Thankfully, it is illegal for them to **do so** now. (**judge job applicants on the colour of their skin**)
- Some say that our climate will soon reach a tipping point from which it will be impossible to recover. Others say it has already **done so**. (**reached a tipping point**)

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can use **do/does/did/doing so** to avoid repeating a verb phrase:

- Some believe that in order to get a high-ranking job, you have to go to university. Others say you can achieve this goal without **doing so**.
(going to university)
- I certainly didn't mean to upset you. If I **did so**, (upset you) I'm really sorry.
- I consider it essential to eat fruit. I **have done so** ever since I was a child. (considered it essential to eat fruit; eaten fruit)
- I have always believed in democracy and will continue to **do so** until the day I die. (believe in democracy)

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can use **do/does/did/doing so** to avoid repeating a verb phrase:

- We should allow everyone to enter museums without having to pay. **Doing so (allowing everyone to enter museums...)** would please many art-lovers who cannot currently afford the admission fees.
- Governments could bring in taxes to double the price of petrol. If they **did so, (brought in taxes to double the price...)** the number of motor vehicles on our roads would presumably fall sharply.
- If a close friend asked me to lend her a large amount of money, I would probably **do so. (lend her a large amount of money)**
- Killing another human being is morally wrong. I would not **do so (kill another human being)** under any circumstances.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We usually leave out **so** with states and regular/repeated actions:

- Doctors usually earn more than teachers **do**. (earn)
- My parents used to favour my older sister. She always got far more presents than I **did**. (got)
- Most people enjoy eating fast food but some **do** not. (enjoy eating fast food)
- Most school-leavers try to find a job but some **do** not. (try to find a job)
- Some people like living in the countryside but many **do** not. (like living in the countryside)

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We usually leave out **so** with states and regular/repeated actions:

- Most people prefer not to live in high-rise apartment blocks but a few people **do**. (prefer to live in high-rise apartment blocks)
- According to the figures provided, the vast majority of individuals do not speak a foreign language. Only around twelve percent of the population actually **do/does**. (speak a foreign language)
- Nowadays, many people live in apartments, whereas in the past significantly fewer **did**. (lived in apartments)
- Statistics indicate that far more people now feel dissatisfied than **did** (felt dissatisfied) just a decade ago.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can use **such + noun** to refer back to something which we wrote earlier. **Such** means **of this kind; of that type**. This is a formal structure:

- Students sometimes **text each other, whisper to each other or even play games while the teacher is explaining something**. **Such behaviour** is unacceptable.
- Participating in **activities like boxing and horse-riding** can lead to serious injury. **Such sports** should be banned or at least regulated.
- The government could bring in **new laws to punish motorists who speed**. **Such measures/policies** might not be popular amongst drivers.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can use **such + noun** to refer back to something which we wrote earlier. **Such** means **of this kind; of that type**. This is a formal structure:

- We may soon have to consider **banning air travel for all but the most essential journeys**. **Such a move/measure/policy** would have serious implications for many.
- Parents sometimes **withdraw their children from school in order to teach them at home**. Making **such a decision** is obviously difficult.
- The company wants to recruit **someone who is committed and who has relevant experience and qualifications**. Surprisingly, **such a person** seems very hard to find.



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PART 3

EXPLANATION

- Sometimes we can leave words and phrases out of sentences. Often this is because we do not need/want to repeat these words. This is **ELLIPSIS**.
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LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can avoid repeating words or phrases from a previous clause, especially verb structures, by using an auxiliary verb such as **be, have, can, will, would**:

- Some people are sure that we can find ways of reducing crime. Unfortunately, I do not think we **will**. (find ways of reducing crime)
- I promise I will come to the party if I **can**. (come to the party)
- Many of us still do not turn off lights when we leave a room, even though we know that we **should**. (turn off lights)
- They told me that the train had gone, even though it **hadn't**. (gone)

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can avoid repeating words or phrases from a previous clause, especially verb structures, by using an auxiliary verb such as **be, have, can, will, would**:

- Many of us do not eat fruit and vegetables, even though we know we **ought to**. (eat fruit and vegetables)
- I haven't forgotten about your visit, although Marcus **had**. (forgotten about your visit)
- A lot of people say that they would not want to be incredibly rich. However, secretly, I think most of us **would**. (want to be incredibly rich)
- I cannot swim. I really wish I **could**. (swim)

LEAVING OUT WORDS

When there is no auxiliary verb, we often use **do/does/did** etc.:

- Personally, I never buy clothes and then only wear them once, even though most of my friends **do**. (buy clothes and then only wear them once)
- Many people say that they enjoy working with their colleagues but, in actuality fact, few of them really **do**. (enjoy working with their colleagues)
- Adolescents often believe that their parents never understand them. However, they often **do**. (understand them). They were once teenagers too.

LEAVING OUT WORDS

We can sometimes use the verb **to be**:

- Some say that democracy is not the best political system, whereas others are convinced that it **is**. (the best political system)
- We should expect exams to be difficult. They usually **are**. (difficult)
- It is sometimes said that good infrastructure is the key to a country's economic success. I wholeheartedly believe that it **is**. (the key to a country's economic success)
- Although some believe that authoritarian government is the answer to many of our problems, I really doubt whether it **would be**. (the answer to many of our problems)



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PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Look at the following sentences. In each sentence it is possible to take out a word or words. Decide which word/words can be omitted:

EXAMPLE: I think that making public transport free of charge would be a sensible policy.

ANSWER: I think (**that**) making public transport free of charge would be a sensible policy.

1. I hope that the weather will improve.
2. I would like to visit Mexico and I would like to learn Spanish.
3. Many students work hard at school but many students struggle to get good grades.
4. Some people believe that our civilisation will be destroyed by a pandemic or that it will be destroyed by climate change.
5. When it is spoken properly, Japanese is a beautiful language.
6. If it is necessary, we could lend you some of the money which you need.
7. People who are living on the streets deserve our sympathy and deserve our support.
8. The problems which are faced by animals who are living in extreme climates will certainly become even greater in the future.
9. I have never heard of anybody who is brave enough to climb that mountain.

ANSWERS

1. I hope (**that**) the weather will improve.
2. I would like to visit Mexico and (**I would like to**) learn Spanish.
3. Many students work hard at school but (**many students**) struggle to get good grades.
4. Some people believe (**that**) our civilisation will be destroyed by a pandemic or (**that it will be destroyed by**) climate change.
5. When (**it is**) spoken properly, Japanese is a beautiful language.
6. If (**it is**) necessary, we could lend you some of the money (**which**) you need.
7. People (**who are**) living on the streets deserve our sympathy and (**deserve our**) support.
8. The problems (**which are**) faced by animals (**who are**) living in extreme climates will certainly become even greater in the future.
9. I have never heard of anybody (**who is**) brave enough to climb that mountain.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

The following sentences include examples of ellipsis. Try to complete each sentence by adding the missing word:

EXAMPLE: I can come with you if you want me _____.

ANSWER: I can come with you if you want me **to**.

1. I couldn't help you even if I wanted _____.
2. Most people wouldn't go to work if they didn't have _____.
3. If you have _____, you can borrow some money from the bank.
4. If we want children to behave well, we need to show them how to do _____.
5. Workers have always fought for their rights. They are entitled to _____.
6. I didn't actually say _____, but I thought it was a bad idea.
7. The likelihood that you would succeed in life used to depend very much on how wealthy your family was. To a degree it still _____.
8. Some companies used to prefer to give senior jobs to men. Other organisations still _____.
9. Some people say that you have to get a good qualification from a top university. Others say that you can be incredibly successful without _____.
10. I have always believed in fairness and will continue to _____ for the rest of my life.

ANSWERS

1. I couldn't help you even if I wanted **to**.
2. Most people wouldn't go to work if they didn't have **to**.
3. If you have **to**, you can borrow some money from the bank.
4. If we want children to behave well, we need to show them how to do **so**.
5. Workers have always fought for their rights. They are entitled to **do so**.
6. I didn't actually say **so**, but I thought it was a bad idea.
7. The likelihood that you would succeed in life used to depend very much on how wealthy your family was. To a degree it still **does**.
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10. I have always believed in fairness and will continue to **do so** for the rest of my life.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

The following sentences include examples of ellipsis. Try to complete each sentence by adding the missing word:

EXAMPLE: I can come with you if you want me _____.

ANSWER: I can come with you if you want me **to**.

1. Some people love living in cities, but many d_____ not.
2. Figures indicate that many people feel more dissatisfied than d_____ just a decade ago.
3. Students sometimes bully each other in the real world or online. S_____ behaviour should never be tolerated.
4. I promise that I will come to the meeting if I c_____.
5. My brother promised to come to the meeting, but I don't think he w_____.
6. Many of us do not turn off the lights when we leave a room, even though we know that we sh_____.
7. She said that she had sold the car, but I know she h_____.
8. I cannot speak Portuguese, but I really wish I c_____.
9. We give far less money to charity than we o_____ t_____.
10. Many people say that they enjoy work but, in reality, they probably d_____.

ANSWERS:

1. Some people love living in cities, but many **do** not.
2. Figures indicate that many people feel more dissatisfied than **did** just a decade ago.
3. Students sometimes bully each other in the real world or online. **Such** behaviour should never be tolerated.
4. I promise that I will come to the meeting if I **can**.
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6. Many of us do not turn off the lights when we leave a room, even though we know that we **should**.
7. She said that she had sold the car, but I know she **hadn't**.
8. I cannot speak Portuguese, but I really wish I **could**.
9. We give far less money to charity than we **ought to**.
10. Many people say that they enjoy work but, in reality, they probably **don't**.