

A comparison of the IELTS and CELPIP exams

Listening

Exam	Time	Task types	Sections	Accents	Types of recordings	Extra unscored parts?	Questions are...
IELTS	30 minutes + 10 minutes' transfer time	6	4	All British (i.e. Irish, Received Pronunciation, etc), American (i.e Coastal, Mid-Atlantic, etc), Australian and Canadian accents	Two conversations, two monologues [two for social contexts and two for academic contexts]. One to four people.	No	read
CELPIP	47 - 55 minutes	2	6	Canadian accent only	Conversations, monologues and a video. One to four people.	Yes	heard for some questions, read for some questions

Reading

Exam	Time	Section s	Questions per section	Task types	Extra unscored parts?
IELTS	60 minutes	3	10-13	11	No
CELPIP	55 - 60 minutes	4	8-11	4	Yes

On the IELTS, you are expected to manage your time. You are given 60 minutes to finish all sections. On the CELPIP, time is strictly enforced per section. You cannot continue working on section 1 once the timer has gone down to 0.

Speaking

Exam	Time	Type	Sections	Time to prepare	Time limit	Questions are...	Task fulfilment criteria?
IELTS	11-14 minutes	Conversation with an examiner	3	1 minute for section 2	appropriately enforced	heard	No
CELPIP	20 minutes	Speak into a microphone. Your answers are recorded by the computer.	8	30 to 60 seconds for every section	Strictly enforced	read	Yes

On the IELTS, the examiner may stop you at any time to go to the next question once he/she feels like they have had a good sample of your speech. There are no task fulfilment criteria here.

On the CELPIP, the computer will simply stop recording once the timer has gone down to 0 and if you haven't finished your answer by then, there is nothing that can be done. If you haven't fulfilled the criteria laid down by the question (i.e. give advice, describe a situation, deal with a difficult situation, etc.), your answer will be considered incomplete. Task fulfilment is important!

Writing

Exam	Time	Word count - Task 1	Time – Task 1	Word count - Task 2	Time – Task 2	Task weight	Written task 1	Written task 2
IELTS	60 minutes	150	20 minutes*	250	40 minutes*	Task 2 is worth 2x Task 1	Letter or Report [#]	Essay
CELPIP	53 - 60 minutes	150-200	23 minutes	150-200	26 minutes	Both tasks are equally important	E-mail	Survey response

*Note that on the IELTS you are given one hour to complete both tasks and are expected to manage your time based on the 20 minute and 40 minute recommendations for tasks 1 and 2 respectively. You can choose which task you'd like to attempt first.

On the CELPIP, the time limit is strictly enforced by the computer. You cannot continue working on task 1 after the time limit is over, nor can you choose which task you'd like to do first.

[#]The report is only for the academic exam.

On both exams, you are always expected to write a bit more than the recommended minimum word count if you want a good score (over 6.5 or CLB 8)

Some other differences between the IELTS and the CELPIP

The CELPIP...

1. It was specifically developed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada for potential immigrants to Canada.
2. It is a 19-year-old exam and is still undergoing development, as is evident by the fact that the last revision was 2 years ago.
3. There are experimental sections on the CELPIP. You may be asked questions that will not be graded and there is no way for you to know which questions are the ones that aren't graded.
4. Little-to-no information is available about what it takes to become a CELPIP rater.
5. You will always have a timer on the screen to remind you of how much time you have left for your tasks.
6. The CELPIP is accepted only by Canada.
7. Currently, it is available only in select cities in Canada, the United States of America, the United Arab Emirates, the Philippines and India
8. Scores are given as whole numbers. There is no 'half-band' system on this exam.

The IELTS...

1. It is a 29-year-old standardised exam that doesn't change much; this is evident by the fact that the last IELTS revision was 7 years ago.
2. Not only do IELTS examiners undergo rigorous training in order to become examiners, but the information regarding their required work experience and qualifications is publicly available to everyone.
3. There are no developmental or experimental sections on the IELTS. The only questions you are asked are the ones you will be graded on.
4. It is accepted by all English-speaking countries.
5. There are many test centres in hundreds of cities around the world for the IELTS.
6. The IELTS awards bands scores in increments of 0.5. For writing and speaking, there are four major areas you are tested on, and you receive a band score between 1-9 for each area, which can come out to an

average of 6.125 or other such numbers with decimals. When the average score is under .150, it gets rounded down (so 6.125 would become 6) but if the average score is .250 and above, it gets rounded up to the next half-band.

For scores that are around band 6.5 this becomes very crucial. If a test-taker receives band 6.625, they will get rounded down to the nearest half-band, but if they receive a score of 6.725, they get rounded UP to band 7!

Are you still confused? If so, talk to an expert tutor now.