

FREE IELTS BOOKS

Stuck at 6.5? The Half-Band Wall and How to Break It

An overall 6.5 can be one half-band step from 7.0, or four. Count yours, tell a real wall from a wobble, and choose between a re-mark, a one-skill retake and a full resit.

freeieltsbooks.net

Free to download, free to pass on · October 2026

Contents

Stuck at 6.5? The Half-Band Wall and How to Break It

Part 1 — What your 6.5 is made of

- 1.1 The rule, as ielts.org states it
- 1.2 The number is 27
- 1.3 Four candidates
- 1.4 When your requirement is for each skill

Part 2 — Wall or wobble?

- 2.1 How much a score moves by itself
- 2.2 Lay out every result
- 2.3 Four patterns

Part 3 — Why 6.5 is sticky

- 3.1 A practice test measures you. It does not change you.
- 3.2 The errors left are the ones you cannot see
- 3.3 A band is a result, not feedback
- 3.4 Resitting on a feeling
- 3.5 Changing everything at once

Part 4 — Where the wall usually is, skill by skill

- 4.1 Listening: sort your misses by why
- 4.2 Reading: sort by question type and by passage
- 4.3 Writing: find the error you make in every essay
- 4.4 Speaking: check the target before the skill
- 4.5 When you have found it

Part 5 — Breaking it

- 5.1 Name the wall in one sentence, with a count
- 5.2 Practise the wall. Use full tests to measure it.
- 5.3 Leave the cleared skills alone
- 5.4 What counts as proof
- 5.5 The four candidates, broken down
- 5.6 How long it takes

Part 6 — Re-mark, retake or resit, in 2026

- 6.1 A re-mark: the Enquiry on Results
- 6.2 One Skill Retake
- 6.3 A full resit
- 6.4 Which one, by steps

Part 7 — Your score sheet

The end

Stuck at 6.5? The Half-Band Wall and How to Break It

Free IELTS Books — freeieltsbooks.net Updated October 2026

What this book is

You have a 6.5. Maybe more than one. You need 7.0, and the last half band will not move. You have done more practice, more tests, maybe a course, and the result came back the same.

This book is about that half band. It starts with something most candidates have never been told: 6.5 is not one place. Two people who both hold "6.5 overall" can be one small step from 7.0, or four. The book shows you how to count your own distance, which skill the steps have to come from, and how to tell a real wall from the ordinary ups and downs of a score. Then it helps you choose what to do next: a re-mark, a retake of one skill, or the whole test again.

What this book is not

It is not a skill course. Each skill has its own 7.0 book on this site, and this book sends you to the right one rather than repeating it: *Listening 7.0: The 30-Correct-Answers Playbook*, *Reading 7.0: The 30/40 Question-Type Priority Map*, *Writing 7.0: The Four Criteria, Decoded Sentence by Sentence* and *Speaking 7.0: What "Fluent Enough" Actually Sounds Like*.

It does not repeat three books that already cover the ground around it. *The Band 7.0 Blueprint* explains why to work on your weakest skill first and where most candidates lose the band. *Why Band 7.0 Is Called the Golden*

Score explains which organisations ask for 7.0, and whether they read your overall band or each skill. *The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0* tells you when a skill is done and when you are ready to book. This book points to all three where they already have the answer.

It is not a study plan, and it is not a Writing book. If Writing is your wall, *Why You Keep Getting 6.5 in Writing — and the 3 Fixes That Move You to 7.0* takes it on. *The 6.5 → 7.0 Sprint: A 30-Day Correction Plan* lays out the study plan.

The one promise this book makes

Your 6.5 is between one and four half-band steps from 7.0. By the end of this book you will know how many steps yours is, where they have to come from, and what evidence to collect before you book again. No move in this book is claimed to guarantee a band. Only an official result tells you where you stand.

One thing to know before you start

The four candidates in this book, and all their scores, were invented for it. The scoring rule, the measurement figures and the retake conditions come from ielts.org, and each one is named where it is used.

© 2026 OurSharedCode — freeieltsbooks.net. This book is an independent publication, distributed free of charge for educational purposes.

IELTS® is a registered trade mark of the British Council, IELTS Australia Pty Ltd (owned by IDP Education), and Cambridge English (part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment) — together, the 'IELTS Partners'. This publication and its author

are not affiliated with, sponsored by, endorsed by, or approved by the IELTS Partners; 'IELTS' appears in the title and text solely to describe the subject of this book.

All questions, model answers and explanations are the original work of the author; no official IELTS material is reproduced. For current official information about the test, visit ielts.org.

You may share this book freely in its complete, unmodified form. It may not be sold. Voluntary donations support hosting, domain, translation costs only; no materials are sold, and donations are not connected with the IELTS Partners.

Part 1 — What your 6.5 is made of



1.1 The rule, as ielts.org states it

Your overall band is the average of your four skill scores, rounded to the nearest half band. The rounding has one rule that matters here. ielts.org puts it like this: if the average ends in .25, it is rounded up to the next half band, and if it ends in .75, it is rounded up to the next whole band.

So an average of 6.25 becomes 6.5, and an average of 6.75 becomes 7.0. An average of 6.125 is closer to 6.0 than to 6.5, so it becomes 6.0. ielts.org's own examples show each of these.

Put the other way round, an overall 6.5 is any average from 6.25 to 6.625. That is the whole width of the wall. Where you sit inside it decides how far you are from 7.0.

1.2 The number is 27

Averages with three decimal places are hard to work with. There is a simpler way. Add your four scores together instead of averaging them.

An average of 6.75 is a total of 27. So **7.0 overall needs your four scores to add up to 27 or more.** Every total that gives 6.5 is somewhere below that:

Your total	Your average	Overall band	Steps to 7.0
25.0	6.25	6.5	4
25.5	6.375	6.5	3
26.0	6.5	6.5	2
26.5	6.625	6.5	1
27.0	6.75	7.0	0

A **step** here means one half band in one skill: a Writing 6.0 becoming 6.5, or a Listening 7.0 becoming 7.5. Each step adds 0.5 to your total. So to find your distance from 7.0, take your total away from 27 and count the half bands.

Look at the first and last rows that give 6.5. Both print the same overall band on the Test Report Form. One of them needs a single half band from somewhere. The other needs four. They are not the same problem, and they do not need the same plan.

1.3 Four candidates

These four people appear all through the book. They are invented, but their score patterns are common ones. Each has taken the test twice; this table shows their first results, and Part 2 adds the second.

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Total	Overall	Steps
Mai	7.0	7.0	6.0	6.5	26.5	6.5	1
Arjun	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	26.0	6.5	2
Sofia	6.5	7.0	7.0	6.0	26.5	6.5	1
Karim	7.5	7.0	5.5	5.5	25.5	6.5	3

Mai is one step from 7.0. Writing is her lowest score, at 6.0, and it came back at 6.0 the second time too.

Arjun is flat: 6.5 in everything. He is two steps away, and no single skill stands out as the problem.

Sofia is one step away, like Mai. But her second result was different from her first, and Part 2 shows why that matters.

Karim looks like the strongest of the four. His Listening is 7.5. But his total is the lowest, and he is three steps away. Two strong skills are hiding two weak ones.

All four would say, "I'm stuck at 6.5." They are stuck in four different ways.

1.4 When your requirement is for each skill

Some organisations do not read your overall band at all. They ask for a minimum in each of the four skills, or for an overall band with a floor under every skill. *Why Band 7.0 Is Called the Golden Score*, Part 1, shows which bodies use which kind of rule. Check yours before you count anything, because the count changes with it.

When the requirement is for each skill, count steps per skill instead. Take Mai, with Listening 7.0, Reading 7.0, Writing 6.0 and Speaking 6.5:

- **"7.0 overall."** She needs one step, from any skill. Writing is the obvious place, but a Speaking 7.0 would do it too.
- **"7.0 overall, with no skill below 6.5."** She still needs one step. But now it has to be Writing, because Writing is under the floor. A step anywhere else lifts her total to 27 and still fails her.
- **"7.0 in each skill."** She needs three steps: two in Writing (6.0 to 7.0) and one in Speaking.

Same four scores, three different distances. The requirement does not only decide how far you are. It decides which skill the steps must come from. Write your requirement down, exactly as the organisation states it, before you go on.

Part 2 — Wall or wobble?

One result tells you where you stood on one day. It does not tell you whether you are stuck. For that you need to read more than one result together, and you need to know how much a score can move on its own.

2.1 How much a score moves by itself

No test measures perfectly. Sit two different versions of the same test a week apart, with no change in your English, and your scores will not always match. ielts.org publishes a figure each year that says how big this effect is. It is called the **standard error of measurement**.

For 2024–25, ielts.org gives these figures:

	Standard error of measurement
Listening	0.43
Reading, Academic	0.36
Reading, General Training	0.47
Overall band, Academic	0.17
Overall band, General Training	0.19

You do not need the statistics behind them. Two plain facts are enough.

For Listening and Reading, the figure is close to half a band. So a half-band change in one of those skills between two sittings can happen with no change in your English at all. On its own, it is not proof that you got better or worse.

For the overall band, the figure is much smaller. When one skill comes out a little high and another a little low, they partly cancel out. That makes your overall band steadier than any one of the four scores inside it.

Writing and Speaking are marked by examiners, and ielts.org reports how closely two examiners agree when they mark the same work, not a figure in bands. So there is no number to quote for them here. Read a half-band change in Writing or Speaking with the same caution.

What this means for you: **do not read one number. Read the pattern.** A skill that moves up and down by half a band is behaving like a normal score. A skill that comes back at the same level, or the lowest of the four, time after time, is telling you something real.

2.2 Lay out every result

Before you decide anything, put all your results in one place. Use three groups, and trust them in this order:

1. **Official results.** Every Test Report Form you have, with the date and how you took the test (computer or paper).
2. **Practice results marked the same way.** Listening and Reading practice tests from official material, scored with the table that comes with them. Writing or Speaking marked by a teacher who works from the public band descriptors.
3. **Bands you gave yourself.** A Writing or Speaking band you gave your own work is a guess. Write it down if you have it, but do not let it outvote the first two groups.

Then, for each official result, add up the four scores and find your steps, as in Part 1.

2.3 Four patterns

Most score sheets fall into one of four patterns. Here are our four candidates, each with two official results.

The same skill is low every time — a skill wall.

Mai	L	R	W	S	Total
First test	7.0	7.0	6.0	6.5	26.5
Second test	7.5	6.5	6.0	6.5	26.5

Listening and Reading moved by half a band, the way 2.1 says scores do. Writing did not move at all. It was the lowest score both times. That is not chance. Something specific in Mai's writing is holding it at 6.0, and it is the same thing both times. Her wall is in one skill, and Part 4 shows where to look for it.

A different skill is low each time — a wobble.

Sofia	L	R	W	S	Total
First test	6.5	7.0	7.0	6.0	26.5
Second test	7.0	6.5	6.0	7.0	26.5

Sofia's total is the same both times, but the skill at the bottom changed. Speaking went from the lowest score to one of the highest. Writing went the other way. No single skill is holding her back, and every one of the four has scored 7.0 at least once. Sofia is not stuck in a skill. She is losing a half band somewhere on the day, and it lands in a different place each time.

For a wobble, look at the day before you look at the skills. Did she finish every section in time? Did she answer the exact question that was asked? *The Band 7.0 Blueprint*, sections 6.1 and 6.2, covers both. And has she ever sat a full practice test, all four skills, in one sitting? A skill that holds up on its own can slip in the third hour.

Everything is level — a flat wall.

Arjun	L	R	W	S	Total
First test	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	26.0
Second test	7.0	6.5	6.5	6.0	26.0

Arjun needs two steps and has no obvious place to take them from. His Listening has touched 7.0 once and his Speaking has dropped to 6.0 once, which is the ordinary movement from 2.1. For a flat wall, the question is not "which skill is broken?" It is "which two steps are cheapest?" Usually that means the skill closest to 7.0 already (here, Listening, which has been there) plus the one where his mistakes are easiest to name. Parts 4 and 5 help with both.

Two strong skills hide two weak ones.

Karim	L	R	W	S	Total
First test	7.5	7.0	5.5	5.5	25.5
Second test	7.5	7.5	5.5	6.0	26.5

Karim's second result was better, and he is now one step away. But look at what carried it. Half the gain came from Reading, which was already over the line. His Writing has not moved from 5.5. If his requirement is "7.0 in

each skill", he is three steps from it in Writing alone. *The Band 7.0 Blueprint*, section 6.3, explains how one strong skill can make the overall picture look better than it is. Karim has the same problem with two strong skills instead of one.

Find your pattern. Put your own results next to these four. If you have only one official result, you cannot tell a wall from a wobble yet. Use your practice results from group 2, and treat the answer as a first guess until a second result confirms it.

Part 3 — Why 6.5 is sticky



Why Band 7.0 Is Called the Golden Score, section 3.4, puts the short version in one paragraph: at 6.5, the gap is usually a handful of specific habits, and broad practice stops paying. This part looks at why that happens. The reason matters, because it tells you what to stop doing.

3.1 A practice test measures you. It does not change you.

Between 5.5 and 6.5, almost any practice helps. You are learning how the test works, your reading speed goes up, your essays get a shape. A full practice test every few days feels like progress, and for a while it is.

At 6.5 that stops. A full test now mostly tells you what you already know: you are at 6.5. Taking another one tomorrow will very likely tell you the same thing. The test is a ruler. Measuring yourself more often does not make you taller.

This is the most common way to stay stuck. The candidate works hard, the hours are real, and almost all of them go into finding out the same score again.

3.2 The errors left are the ones you cannot see

At 5.5, most of your mistakes are ones you can spot. You know a word is missing, or a sentence is broken, or a Listening answer is a guess.

At 6.5, those mistakes are mostly gone. What is left is different in kind: the mistakes you make because you believe they are correct. A word combination that sounds fine to you but not to an examiner. A Reading answer you marked False when the passage never said either way. A Speaking answer you think is well developed because it is long. If you could see these mistakes, you would have fixed them already. That is why they are still there.

This has a practical result. **Checking your own work finds almost nothing at 6.5**, because you are checking it with the same eyes that made the mistake. You need a second pair of eyes, or a method that does not depend on your judgement: an answer key, a count, a recording played back. Part 4 gives one for each skill.

3.3 A band is a result, not feedback

Your Test Report Form gives you four scores and an overall band. It does not tell you why. It does not say which criterion held your Writing at 6.0, or which questions you lost in Reading, or what the examiner heard in your Speaking.

So a second 6.5 contains almost no new information about what to fix. It confirms the problem without describing it. Many candidates read it as "I need to work harder" and do more of the same, which takes them back to 3.1.

The information you need is underneath the band: which answers, which sentences, which moments. A practice test is only useful at 6.5 if you take it apart afterwards, answer by answer.

3.4 Resitting on a feeling

ielts.org's advice is that you can apply to resit "as soon as you feel ready". That is true, and it is meant kindly. But a feeling is the wrong signal for a candidate who is stuck. After a month of hard work, you will feel more ready than you did before. Your English may not have changed in the place that was holding the band.

The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0, section 3.1, replaces the feeling with a checklist. For a stuck candidate, add one more question to it: **can you name, in one sentence, what is different since your last result?** "I studied more" is not an answer. "I used to lose four or five Reading answers to Not Given questions every test, and in my last three practice tests I lost one" is. If you cannot name the change, the next result will most likely repeat the last one.

3.5 Changing everything at once

The opposite mistake is just as common. After a second 6.5, a candidate changes course, finds a new teacher, buys new books and starts a new study timetable, all in the same week.

Sometimes the score moves. But nobody can tell which change moved it, so nothing is learned. And if it does not move, there is no way to tell which change failed. Change one thing at a time, on purpose, and check it. Part 5 shows how.

Part 4 — Where the wall usually is, skill by skill

A wall is something that repeats. One bad answer, one weak paragraph or one long pause does not hold a band down over two tests. The same mistake, made again and again, does. So in each skill the job is the same: find the mistake that keeps coming back.

This part does not teach the skills. Each one has its own 7.0 book on this site, and each section below sends you there. What it adds is where to look when you are stuck, using results you already have.

4.1 Listening: sort your misses by why

About 30 correct answers out of 40 is band 7 in Listening. *Listening 7.0: The 30-Correct-Answers Playbook*, Part 1, explains that number. A 6.5 is usually only a few answers short of it. A few answers is a small target, which is good news, but only if you know which answers.

Take your last two or three official practice tests. For every wrong answer, write down one of these four reasons:

- **I did not hear it.** The answer went past and you missed it.
- **I heard it, but wrote it wrong.** A spelling, a plural, a number, or too many words.
- **I lost my place.** You missed one answer and the next two went with it.
- **I took the first answer.** You wrote what you heard first, and the speaker changed it a moment later.

Now count each pile. If one pile is clearly bigger than the others across all the tests, that is your wall. The second, third and fourth piles are the

cheapest marks on the whole test, because you already understood the audio. The Listening book deals with each one: Part 5 for spelling and word limits, Part 6 for losing your place, and section 1.2 for the speaker who changes the answer.

4.2 Reading: sort by question type and by passage

Reading is the same idea, with two ways to sort. *The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0*, section 2.2, already asks you to sort your wrong answers by question type. Do that across every practice test you have, not just one.

Then sort them a second way: by passage. If most of your wrong answers, or your blank ones, are in the third passage, your wall may not be a question type at all. It may be time.

Reading 7.0: The 30/40 Question-Type Priority Map covers both. Its section 4.1 calls the True/False/Not Given and Yes/No/Not Given questions the single biggest blocker between 6.5 and 7.0, and they are where many stuck readers find their pile. Its Part 6 covers time across the three passages.

4.3 Writing: find the error you make in every essay

Writing is the skill where candidates most often stay stuck, and the hardest to check alone. You cannot mark your own essay the way an examiner would (3.2 explains why). So the method here needs someone else, or at least something other than your own judgement.

Collect three essays you have already written and had marked, ideally by a teacher who works from the public band descriptors. Do not write new ones yet. Read the three together and look for what repeats:

- **The same grammar mistake** in all three: an article, a tense, a sentence that runs on.
- **The same part of the task** left thin or missing: a second question in the prompt, or a Task 1 overview.
- **The same opening move** in every paragraph, or the same set of linking words in the same places.

Anything that appears in all three essays is a candidate for the wall. Something that appears once is not. *Writing 7.0: The Four Criteria, Decoded Sentence by Sentence* shows where the line sits in each criterion: section 3.3 for the part of the task that gets left out, and section 6.3 for two grammar patterns that often hold essays at 6.5. *Why You Keep Getting 6.5 in Writing — and the 3 Fixes That Move You to 7.0* takes Writing's 6.5 on directly.

If you have no marked essays and no teacher, use the questions in Part 8 of *Writing 7.0* on your own three essays, and count rather than judge: count the errors per hundred words, as *The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0*, section 2.3, suggests. A count is harder to fool yourself with than a band.

4.4 Speaking: check the target before the skill

Many speakers stuck at 6.5 are working hard toward the wrong thing: no pauses, faster speech, more idioms, a native accent. *Speaking 7.0: What "Fluent Enough" Actually Sounds Like* shows that band 7 still pauses, still searches for words and still corrects itself. What it does not do is lose the listener. Read its Part 1 before you change anything else, because aiming at the wrong target can keep you at 6.5 however hard you practise.

Then find what repeats. Record two or three full practice tests, a few days apart, on different topics. Use the check in Part 6 of the Speaking book on

each one. If the same thing shows up in every recording, such as sentences you start and drop, or a long turn that runs out of things to say, that is your wall. If something shows up once, leave it.

4.5 When you have found it

Write the wall down in one sentence, with a number in it if you can. You will need that sentence in Part 5. If you could not find anything that repeats, go back to Part 2. You may have a wobble, and the half band you are missing may be in how the day goes, not in one skill.

Part 5 — Breaking it



By now you have three things: your number of steps (Part 1), your pattern (Part 2), and, if you have a wall, the thing that repeats (Part 4). This part turns them into a way of working. It is not a timetable. It is a set of rules for spending your hours on the half band, not on the score you already have.

5.1 Name the wall in one sentence, with a count

A wall you cannot describe is a wall you cannot work on. Write it down in one sentence, and put a number in it. Here is what that looks like for our candidates:

- **Mai:** "In all three of my marked essays, I wrote about only one of the two questions in the Task 2 prompt, and I made about six article mistakes in every two hundred words."
- **Arjun:** "In my last three Listening tests I lost eight answers to spelling and plurals, and in my last two Speaking recordings I dropped about one sentence in four before I finished it."

- **Karim:** "My Writing has been 5.5 on both official tests, and my teacher marks the same three problems in every essay."

A sentence like this does two jobs. It tells you what to practise tomorrow. And the number in it is how you will know, later, whether anything has changed. "My Writing is weak" does neither.

Sofia's sentence is different, because she has a wobble, not a wall: "I have never sat all four skills in one sitting, and in my second test I ran short of time in Writing." Her work is on the day, not on a skill.

5.2 Practise the wall. Use full tests to measure it.

Most of your hours should go into the thing your sentence names. A full practice test is not that. As 3.1 showed, it mostly tells you your score again.

So split the two jobs. **Focused practice** works on the wall directly: Task 2 prompts with two questions in them, if that is the wall; True/False/Not Given sets from official material, if that is the wall; thirty-second Speaking recordings, written out and checked, if that is the wall. **Full tests** are checkpoints. You take one when you want to know whether the count in your sentence has moved, and you take it apart afterwards.

The Band 7.0 Blueprint, section 7.2, gives a simple split for one weak skill over two weeks: most of your practice time on that skill, and just enough on the others to keep them from slipping. It ends each session with a one-line note on which failure showed up. That note is your count, kept up to date.

5.3 Leave the cleared skills alone

If your requirement is 7.0 overall and one of your skills is already at 7.0 or above, it has done its job. *The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0*, Part 1, explains

why more practice on a cleared skill does not raise your score. For a stuck candidate this matters more than for anyone, because the cleared skills are often the ones you enjoy. Karim's Listening is 7.5. He could spend a month on it, feel good about every test, and still be at 6.5.

There is one exception. If your requirement has a floor under every skill (1.4), check that each cleared skill is clear of the floor with room to spare, not by a single half band that 2.1 says can come and go.

5.4 What counts as proof

Your count is falling: good. That is a sign. It is not yet proof that your band has moved.

Use the stopping rule from *The Minimum-Effort Path to 7.0*, Part 2: a skill is done when you reach your target on **two attempts in a row, on two different practice tests**. One good result can be chance, as 2.1 showed. Two in a row, on different material, is much harder to explain that way.

For Writing and Speaking, the target has to be checked by someone who marks from the public band descriptors, or by a count you can trust, such as errors per hundred words. A band you give yourself is the weakest evidence you have (2.2).

5.5 The four candidates, broken down

- **Mai** has one step to find, and it has to come from Writing if her requirement has a floor. She works on the two things in her sentence and nothing else, and checks her count every week. When two essays in a row, on different prompts, are marked 6.5 or better, she is ready for Part 6.

- **Sofia** does not change her English first. She sits two full practice tests, all four skills in one sitting, timed as the real test is. If one skill drops in the third hour, her wall is stamina or time, and she works on that. If nothing drops and she finishes Writing in time, Part 6 shows why a retake may suit her.
- **Arjun** needs two steps. He picks the two cheapest from Part 2: Listening, which has touched 7.0 already and loses easy marks to spelling, and one more. He works on those two and leaves the other two alone.
- **Karim** first checks his requirement. For "7.0 overall", he is one step away and Speaking or Writing can give it to him. For "7.0 in each skill", he is five steps away in his two weak skills, and that is a longer piece of work than this book can plan.

5.6 How long it takes

This book does not promise a number of weeks. Nobody can say how long one wall takes to move until you have started counting it. What you can say is this: if your count has not moved after two weeks of focused work, the problem is probably not the hours. Go back to Part 4. You may be working on the wrong thing.

The 6.5 → 7.0 Sprint lays out a day-by-day plan for the move from 6.5 to 7.0.

Part 6 — Re-mark, retake or resit, in 2026

When you have your evidence, there are three ways to try for 7.0 again. They cost different amounts, they test different things, and each one fits a different number of steps. The conditions below were checked against ielts.org when this book was written. They can change, and they vary by country and test centre, so check them again before you pay for anything.

6.1 A re-mark: the Enquiry on Results

What it is. You ask for your test to be marked again. ielts.org says the re-mark is done by senior examiners or markers. If your band changes, you get a new Test Report Form and your fee is refunded in full. If it does not change, the fee is not refunded. ielts.org gives the time for a result as anything from the same day up to 21 days. Your test centre will tell you the fee and the time limit for asking.

What it checks. A re-mark checks the marking. It does not check you. It looks again at the same answers, the same essays and the same recording. If your Writing was weak because you ran out of time or misread the question, a second marker will most likely see the same thing.

When it fits. A re-mark fits one score that is out of line with **all** your other evidence: not just lower than you hoped, but lower than your other official results and your practice marked by a teacher. A score that matches your history does not fit. Mai's Writing came back at 6.0 twice, and her teacher marks her at about the same level. A re-mark would very likely confirm it.

Sofia is the harder case. Her Writing fell from 7.0 to 6.0 between her two tests, which is out of line with her first result. But she also knows she ran

short of time in that Writing test. A re-mark cannot give her back the minutes she lost.

6.2 One Skill Retake

What it is. You sit one skill again, not the whole test. ielts.org's main conditions when this book was checked:

- you take it within 60 days of your original test;
- you can use it once for each original test;
- the original must be a full IELTS test on computer, at a centre that offers the retake;
- you get a new Test Report Form with the retaken score and your other three original scores, and you choose which report to use;
- not every organisation accepts a retake result, so check with yours before you book.

Prices vary by country. *Speaking 7.0: What "Fluent Enough" Actually Sounds Like*, section 2.2, looks at the retake from Speaking's side.

What it changes. Only one score. The other three stay exactly as they are. So the question is simple: **can the steps you need come from one skill?** Count them.

- **One step.** This is where the retake fits best. Mai needs one half band, and it has to come from Writing. If her evidence from Part 5 says Writing has moved, a Writing retake is aimed at exactly her problem.
- **One skill short of a per-skill line.** The same logic. If one skill is under the floor and the rest are clear, a retake is aimed at the one score that matters.

- **Two steps.** A retake can do it only if one skill rises a full band. Arjun's first result, 6.5 in everything, would need one skill to go from 6.5 to 7.5, which takes his total to 27. That is possible in the skill closest to 7.5, but it is a big move to plan on.
- **Three or four steps.** One skill would have to rise by one and a half or two bands. Plan on a full resit instead.

Sofia, with a wobble, is a special case, and the retake suits her better than it first looks. She needs one step. A retake of Writing keeps the three scores that landed well this time, Listening 7.0, Reading 6.5 and Speaking 7.0. In a full resit, any of the four could land low again, as one did each time before. But the retake makes sense only if she knows why Writing fell. She does: she ran short of time. If her practice since then shows she now finishes in time, the retake is aimed at the right thing. A candidate with a wobble who cannot say why the low skill fell has nothing to aim at.

Keep the 60 days in mind. A retake is not a reason to rush. If your evidence is not ready within the window, it is better to let the window close than to sit the retake on a feeling (3.4).

6.3 A full resit

What it is. The whole test again, all four skills. ielts.org says you can apply to resit as soon as you feel ready, and 3.4 explains why "feel" is the word to be careful with.

When it fits. Three or four steps. Steps that have to come from more than one skill. A requirement that does not accept a retake. An original test taken on paper, which does not qualify for a retake. And a wobble where you cannot say why the low skill fell.

What changed in 2026. From mid-2026, the paper-based test began to be withdrawn worldwide, with the timing varying by market. If your last test was on paper, your next one may be on computer. That changes how Listening and Reading feel more than it changes what they test. *The Band 7.0 Blueprint*, section 1.4, and Part 2 of each skill's 7.0 book explain what changes for each skill. Sit at least one practice test on a computer before you book.

6.4 Which one, by steps

Your situation	Usually fits
One score out of line with all your other evidence	Re-mark
One step, from one skill you know you have fixed	One Skill Retake
One skill under a per-skill floor, everything else clear	One Skill Retake
Two steps	Retake only if one skill can rise a full band; otherwise a full resit
Three or four steps	Full resit
A wobble, one step, and you know why the low skill fell	One Skill Retake of that skill
A wobble, and you cannot say why	Full resit, after work on the day

This is a guide, not a rule. Whatever you choose, it is only worth paying for when you can name what is different since your last result.

Part 7 — Your score sheet

Everything in this book fits on this page. Copy it, and fill it in again after every official result.

	Date	Computer or paper	L	R	W	S	Total	Steps to 7.0
Official result 1								
Official result 2								
Practice, marked (2.2)								

Six questions. Answer each one in a single line.

- 1. **What does my organisation ask for, word for word?** (1.4)
- 2. **How many steps, and from which skills?** (1.2, 1.4)
- 3. **Wall, wobble, flat wall, or two strong skills hiding two weak?** (2.3)
- 4. **My wall in one sentence, with a count.** (Part 4, 5.1)
- 5. **What is different since my last result?** (3.4, 5.4)
- 6. **Re-mark, One Skill Retake or full resit, and why?** (6.4)

If you cannot answer question 5 yet, do not book anything. Go back to your count, and keep working on the wall.

The end

You started this book with one number, 6.5, and the feeling that it would not move. You finish it with a few more. How many steps you are from 7.0. Which skills they have to come from. Whether your results show a wall or a wobble. And, if it is a wall, a count of the thing that keeps holding it there.

None of that raises a score on its own. What it does is point your hours at the half band, instead of at finding out your score again. The candidates who get past 6.5 are rarely the ones who practised the most. They are the ones who found what repeated, worked on it, and checked that it had changed before they paid for the next test.

About the candidates and the figures. The four candidates in this book and their scores were invented for it. The rounding rule, the One Skill Retake conditions, the Enquiry on Results details and the measurement figures are from ielts.org, checked when this edition was written. Rules like these get adjusted over time. Confirm the current ones with ielts.org and with your own test centre before you rely on them.

Good luck with the test, and with whatever it is a step toward.

About these books

[Click here https://freeieltsbooks.net/en/about/](https://freeieltsbooks.net/en/about/)

This book is free. It was written to be given away, and you are welcome to pass the file on to anyone preparing for the test — a classmate, a study group, a teacher. You do not need permission and there is nothing to pay.

More free books are at **freeieltsbooks.net**.

Come back next week

Write the address down now, while you are thinking about it:

freeieltsbooks.net

Save it in your bookmarks, or set a reminder on your phone for next week — we are adding more books. The site shows the date it was last updated, so you can see at a glance what has changed since you were there.

There is nothing to sign up for and no email address to give. The reminder is yours, on your own phone — that is the only way we have of reaching you, and we prefer it that way.

This edition was updated October 2026.

[Click here https://freeieltsbooks.net/en/about/](https://freeieltsbooks.net/en/about/)

Independent publication — not affiliated with or endorsed by the IELTS Partners.

The four candidates in this book and their scores were invented for it. The rounding rule, the retake and re-mark conditions and the measurement figures are from ielts.org; nothing here is official IELTS content.