Letters
IELTS Task 1 Checklist

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

- Read the question carefully.
- Decide whether the letter should be 'informal' / 'semi-formal' or 'formal'.
- Make sure you understand the 3 bullet points in the question.

STRUCTURE OF A LETTER

- Write the salutation beginning *"Dear ___,"*.
- Paragraph 1: Give the reason for writing, beginning *"I'm just writing to let you know that / apologise for / ask about …"*.
- Paragraph 2: Cover the 1st bullet point.
- Paragraph 3: Cover the 2nd bullet point.
- Paragraph 4: Cover the 3rd bullet point.
- Sign off with *"Looking forward to hearing from you soon"*.
- Close with *"All the best, NAME" or "(Yours) sincerely, NAME"*.

USEFUL LETTER PHRASES

- Apologising: *"I'm very sorry about …" / "I'd just like to apologise for …" / It's completely my fault and …"*.
- Asking for help: *"I'd be really grateful if you could just …" / "I was wondering if/hoping that you could give me a hand with …" / "I was wondering if you could do me a small favour."*
- Expressing satisfaction: *"I was over the moon/so happy to hear about …" / "I was thrilled to find out about …"*
- Giving bad news: *"I'm afraid I've got a bit of bad news for you …"*

BE CAREFUL!

- Don't use common acronyms ("lol" or "omg") or abbreviations ("becuz") in formal letters.

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IELTS Task 1 Checklist

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

- ⬭ Read the question carefully.
- ⬭ Decide on type of chart (*pie / bar / line / process / table / map*).
- ⬭ Think of synonyms for the title keywords.
- ⬭ Choose the key trend from the chart.

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

- ⬭ Paraphrase the title with keyword synonyms, beginning *"The (type of chart) chart shows …"*.
- ⬭ If possible, change the grammar or add extra information in the first sentence.
- ⬭ Write the key trend sentence beginning *"Overall, it can be seen that .."* or *"In general, it can be seen that …"*.

DETAILS + COMPARISON PARAGRAPH

- ⬭ Begin with "**To be specific, …**" or "**Looking in (more / further / greater) detail, …**".
- ⬭ Describe some different ideas with "**In contrast, …**" / "**Conversely, …**" / "**However, …**" or "**On the contrary, …**".
- ⬭ Describe some similar ideas with "**Similarly, …**" / "**Likewise, …**" / "**In the same way, …**" or "**Equally importantly …**".
- ⬭ Describe additional ideas with "**Also, …**" / "**Furthermore …**" / "**Moreover, …**" / "**Additionally, …**" or "**In addition, …**".

GRAMMAR REMINDERS

- ⬭ Verbs + adverbs: "**increased slightly**".
- ⬭ Adjective + noun: "**slight increase**".
- ⬭ Prepositions: "**at**" / "**from .. to ..**" / "**by….**"
- ⬭ Present continuous for: temporary situations / something happening now / trends.
- ⬭ Present perfect simple for: something from the past that is connected to the present.

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PREPARATION AND PLANNING

- ⬭ Read the question carefully.
- ⬭ Are you agreeing / disagreeing / neutral?
- ⬭ Brainstorm 4 ideas for your two body paragraphs.
- ⬭ Make simple plan for the two body sections.

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

- ⬭ Write a "background statement" to ground the essay. e.g. **"Recently, boys and girl are being educated separately"**.
- ⬭ Write a "thesis statement" to explain what you will do, e.g. **"This essay will explain why this is a good idea"**.

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BODY PARAGRAPHS (x2)

- ⬭ Write a "topic sentence" to start. e.g. **"On the one hand, educating boys and girls separately can have some solid benefits"**.
- ⬭ Write two "reason + evidence" or "reason + result" sentence pairs for each body paragraph.
- ⬭ Write between 4-6 sentences in total for each paragraph.
- ⬭ Add one linking phrase at the beginning of every sentence.

CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

- ⬭ Paraphrase the introduction "thesis statement". e.g. **"This essay has discussed why boys and girls should be in separate schools"**.
- ⬭ Summarise the two topic sentences from the body paragrahs (optional).
- ⬭ Sum up with a result sentence beginning **"As a consequence, ..."** or **"Therefore, ..."**

GRAMMAR REMINDERS

- ⬭ Use 'could' to describe proposed solutions and 'would' to describe effects.
- ⬭ Use sentence pairs in the body paragraphs instead of stand-alone sentences.
- ⬭ Use a wide variety of linking language and grammar.