IELTS Describing Information in a Table
Notes for teachers

Aim
The aim of this exercise is to help students extract information from data presented in a table.

Objectives
The exercise helps students:

- to extract specific information from a table
- to write a text under guidance
- to extract information at speed
- to be aware of grammar as they write

The exercise may be used with a range of levels.

Materials
The material consists of:

- a table showing the review ratings of several performances of plays with a Key.
- a series of questions for guided writing with pre-oral preparation
- a series of questions with text for completion
- a text with gaps for completion
- a Key

Methodology

Practice stage
You may want to shorten the sequence below or use any item on its own.

Guided writing 1

- Divide the students into pairs or groups of three and give them each a copy of the table and the questions in Exercise 1
- Tell them they have 10/15 minutes, depending on the level of the class, to answer the questions relating to the table. Tell the students that they are not allowed to write, even to make notes.
- Or give the students the table in pairs and give them 5 minutes to look at it together. Then ask the questions to the class as a whole, developing or adding to the questions. If you can, follow the sequence of the questions.
- Or ask the questions to the class and then have the students in pairs write down the answers. Give them a specific time limit for each question.
- Or put the students into groups of four and turn it into a competition with a time limit.

**Time**
- If the class is of a high level, you may want to limit the time for the exercise to mimic the extraction and organisation of information in the students’ heads in the exam. Use a stop-watch and point out that you are going to stick to the time limit strictly. Over a period of using exercises for exam practice you can gradually decrease the time allowed. Note: intersperse this with exercises without time limits.

**Guided writing 2**
- Then given the students *Guided writing 2* and ask them to complete in pairs or groups the blanks in the text.
- Tell the students to go though the text first and decide what types of words they need to complete the text: names, adjectives, prepositions, adverbs etc. Then they should put in the words
- Again you may wish to limit the time.

**Guided writing 3**
- Finally give the students *Guided Writing 3* and ask them not to look at *Guided Writing 2*. Tell them that they may, however, look at the questions in *Guided Writing 1* and the table itself.
- Tell the students to go though the text and decide what types of words they need to complete the text: names, adjectives, prepositions, adverbs etc. Use the examples to explain and start the exercise.
- Then ask the students to go though and write in the words they think are missing.
- Accept words that are not in the **Key** but which fit.
- Give the students the **Key** and ask them to compare what they have written
- Do not mark the answers in the text. Looking for the exact answers will help students look at the grammar.
- Allow them to ask to you questions.

**Checking**
- Ask the students to describe in sentences going round the class. Do not allow the text to continue unless the language is correct.

**Productive stage**
- Ask the student to put all the exercises away or cover them.
- Ask them to produce sentences or a text about the information in the table.
- Read out a selection of the sentences/texts produced by the students.
If you have classes of different levels, you may want to divide them into text or sentence production

**Vocabulary Development**

- shows - illustrates
- data - information
- whereas – while/whilst
- favourite – use the verb like
- was the least popular – use the verb dislike
- awarding - giving
- followed very closely – came a close second/ came next/ was second
- except for – with the exception of// excluding/ apart from

As for ____, - as regards/ regarding/ with regard to/ as far as _____ is/are concerned// where _____ is/are concerned/when it comes to [Point out the grammar, i.e. that the construction needs a noun/pronoun after it – *As for Electra, it .. Also point out that they should not use these phrases too often in one text.*]