

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 give the students **Guided writing 2** and ask them to complete in pairs or groups the blanks in the text.
- Tell the students to go through 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 through 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 through 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 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.*]