Flow Charts

0. About IELTS Writing Task 1 Flow Charts

On this page, you' ll learn how to answer **IELTS Writing Task 1 flow chart / process diagram questions**, with useful vocabulary, Band 9 sample answers, visual notes, and writing tips.

Subsection A | What does this task test?

In IELTS Academic Writing Task 1, you are sometimes given a **flow chart** or **process diagram** instead of a graph or table. The question usually asks you to summarise the information and describe the main stages of a process.

A flow chart or process diagram tests whether you can:

- describe stages in a logical order (from beginning to end)
- explain how something works or how something is produced
- use process language (e.g. *is heated, passes through, is collected*)
- summarise the overall purpose of the process in clear, academic English

In this example, the diagram shows the structure of a **home smokery** and how it works to smoke food such as fish or meat.

Subsection B | Timing & basic exam rules

- Paper: **IELTS Academic Writing**
- Task: **Writing Task 1** (a flow chart / process diagram is one possible visual)
- Recommended time: **about 20 minutes** (out of 60 minutes for the whole Writing test)
- Minimum length: **at least 150 words**

A typical flow-chart prompt contains:

1. A short description of what the diagram shows
2. The diagram itself, often with arrows or numbered stages
3. The instruction:

> 1. "Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant."

Subsection C | Assessment criteria for Task 1

Examiners use four criteria, each worth 25% of your IELTS Writing Task 1 score:

1. **Task Achievement**
   - Did you describe all the **main stages** of the process?
   - Did you give a clear **overall purpose** (what the system/process is for)?
   - Did you avoid **missing** or **inventing** stages?
   - Did you write **150+ words** in a complete, relevant response?
2. **Coherence and Cohesion**
   - Is your answer divided into logical paragraphs (e.g. *overview + stages 1–2 + stages 3–4*)?
   - Does the description follow the correct **sequence** from start to finish?
   - Do you use linking phrases such as *firstly, next, afterwards, finally, as a result*?
   - Are reference words clear (e.g. *this chamber, these logs, the final stage*)?
3. **Lexical Resource (Vocabulary)**
   - Do you use a range of **process verbs** and **technical nouns** where needed?
   - Do you avoid repetition by using synonyms (e.g. *device, unit, system* instead of repeating *smoker*)?
   - Are word choices accurate (e.g. *combustion, chamber, pipe, smoke, heat*) with few spelling errors?
4. **Grammatical Range and Accuracy**
   - Do you use both simple and complex sentences correctly?
   - Do you use the **passive voice** appropriately (e.g. *the food is hung in a box; fresh air is drawn in*)?
   - Are your tenses consistent (usually **present simple** for describing how a system works)?
   - Are articles, plurals, and punctuation mostly correct, with only occasional mistakes?

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1. Useful Vocabulary & Sentence Patterns for Flow Charts

To reach Band 7–9 in a **process / flow chart Task 1**, you need accurate process language, clear sequencing phrases, and precise technical vocabulary. Below is a practical toolkit you can reuse with other diagrams.

1.1 Process & Description Verbs

Describing what the diagram shows

- *show, illustrate, describe, depict, present, outline, demonstrate, represent*

Example patterns:

- *The diagram illustrates the structure and operation of a home smokery.*
- *The flow chart describes how food is smoked in a simple household device.*

Describing movement and flow

- *pass through, travel along, rise, escape, enter, be drawn in, be released, circulate, be carried, be channelled*

Example patterns:

- *Fresh air enters the first chamber and then passes along the underground passage.*
- *Smoke rises from the fire and is channelled through a pipe into the smoking box.*

Explaining functions

- *is used to…, serves to…, is responsible for…, allows…, enables…, is designed to…*

Example patterns:

- *The central pit is used to generate heat and smoke.*
- *The long passage allows the smoke to cool slightly before it reaches the food.*

1.2 Stage & Sequence Expressions

Ordering stages

- *first / firstly*
- *then / next / afterwards / subsequently*
- *at this stage / in the next step / in the final step*
- *finally / ultimately*

Example:

- *First, fresh air is drawn into an underground trench. Next, it passes over a fire in the central pit. Finally, the smoke travels along a pipe into the box above ground, where food is exposed to it.*

Showing cause and result

- *as a result, therefore, consequently, thus, so that*

Example:

- *Logs are burned in the central compartment; as a result, hot smoke is produced and carried towards the smoking box.*

1.3 Nouns for Process Diagrams

For this home smokery example (and similar diagrams), useful nouns include:

- *compartment, chamber, section, trench*
- *pipe, passage, tunnel*
- *box, container, lid*
- *logs, fuel, fire, fire pit, heat, smoke*
- *fresh air, ground level*

Example sentences:

- *The system consists of three connected underground compartments arranged below ground level.*
- *A covered trench leads from the air inlet to the central fire pit.*

1.4 Core Sentence Patterns for Flow Charts

Introducing the diagram

- *The diagram illustrates how a home smokery is constructed and how it functions.*
- *The flow chart shows the main stages involved in smoking food using a simple underground system.*

Describing the overall purpose

- *Overall, the system uses a small wood fire to produce smoke, which is then directed into a box where food is preserved and flavoured.*

Describing a particular stage

- *In the first stage, fresh air is drawn into a shallow trench covered by a lid.*
- *In the central compartment, logs are burned to create smoke, which then travels along a pipe.*

Linking stages together

- *After passing over the fire, the smoke moves through a pipe towards the final chamber.*
- *Once the smoke reaches the box, it surrounds the hanging food items.*

Highlighting efficiency or simplicity

- *The design is relatively simple yet efficient, relying only on natural airflow and a small fire.*

You can adapt these patterns to any IELTS Writing Task 1 flow chart or process diagram by changing the nouns and verbs.

2. Band 9 Flow Chart Sample Answer (with Writing Tips)

High-scoring IELTS Task 1 responses to flow charts usually follow a predictable pattern: an introduction, a clear overview, and two body paragraphs that describe the stages in sequence.

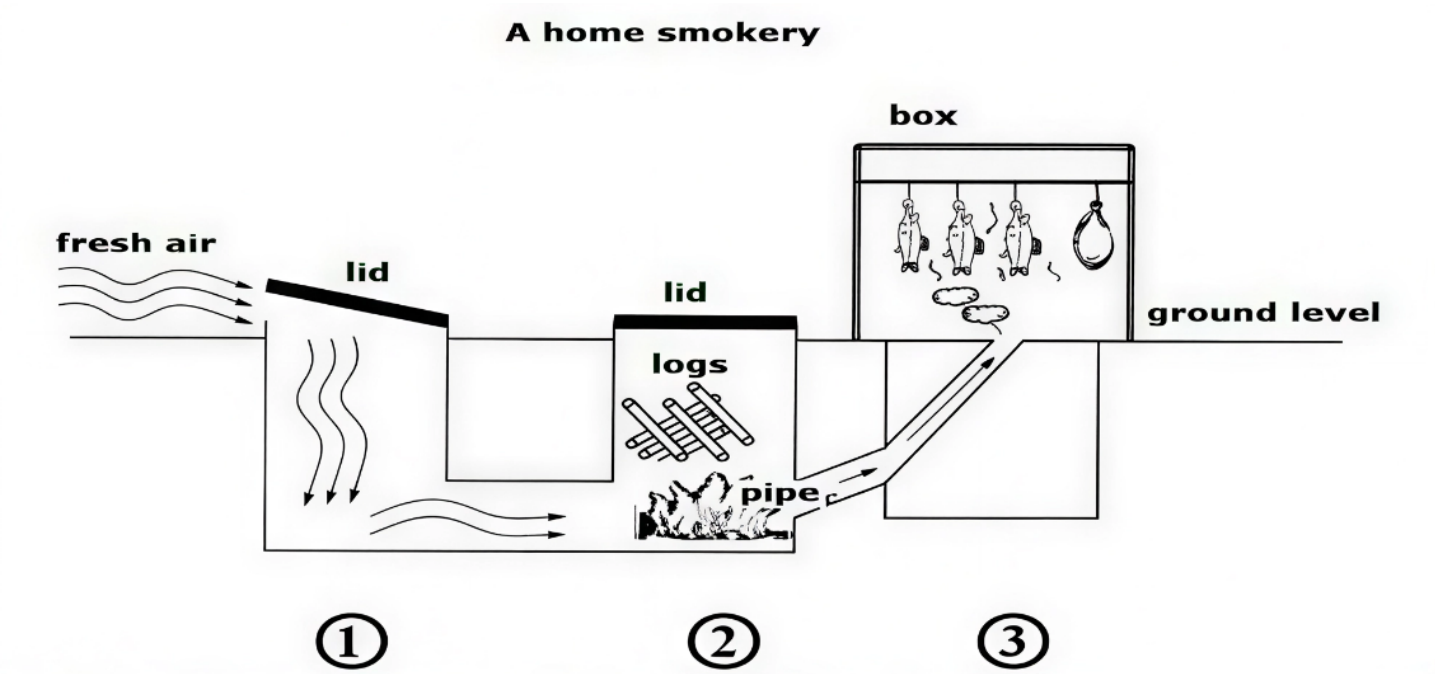
2.1 Sample Question

Flow Chart Question

The diagram below describes the structure of a home smokery and how it works.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

The diagram shows a simple home smokery consisting of three connected underground sections and a box above ground where food is smoked.



2.2 Planning Notes

Step 1 | Identify main features

- **Overall purpose:** a device for smoking food at home.
- **Structure:**
  - an underground air-inlet trench with a lid
  - a central pit where logs are burned
  - a covered passage leading to a box above ground level, where food is hung

- **Process:**
  - Fresh air enters the first compartment and flows through the system.
  - In the middle section, logs are burned to create heat and smoke.
  - Smoke is carried through a pipe into the box, where food is exposed to it and becomes smoked.

Step 2 | Mindmap for Band 9 Response

- **Thesis Statement**
  - Overall description of the smokery’ s structure and its function of smoking food.
- **Body Paragraph 1: Structure and early stages**
  - Outline the three underground sections.
  - Explain how air is drawn in and passes over the fire.
- **Body Paragraph 2: Final stage and outcome**
  - Describe how smoke reaches the box and surrounds the food.
  - Mention the continuous circulation of smoke and the result (preserved, flavoured food).
- **Conclusion**
  - Short comment on the simplicity and efficiency of the design.

2.3 Band 9 Sample Answer

The diagram illustrates a simple home smokery used to preserve food such as fish or meat. Overall, the system relies on a small wood fire built below ground level to generate smoke, which is then channelled into a box above ground where the food is exposed to it.

In the first stage, fresh air enters an underground trench on the left-hand side. This shallow compartment is covered by a lid and leads to a second, slightly deeper section in the centre. Here, logs are placed and burned, producing heat and smoke. The trench layout ensures that air is drawn steadily through the system towards the fire, allowing the combustion to continue.

From this central fire pit, the smoke flows along a covered passage towards the final chamber. A pipe carries it up into a box positioned at ground level, inside which pieces of food are hung from the roof. Once the smoke reaches this box, it circulates around the food before escaping, gradually flavouring and preserving the contents.

In summary, the home smokery is a straightforward yet effective device that uses natural airflow and an underground fire to direct smoke into a container, where it can be used to smoke food safely and efficiently.

(~185 words)

2.4 How Students Can Use This Sample

- ✅ **Step 1 – Copy the structure**
  Use the same four-part plan in your own IELTS Writing Task 1 process-diagram answers:
  Introduction – paraphrase the question in one sentence
  Overview – explain the overall purpose and number of main stages
  Body 1 – describe the physical layout or early stages
  Body 2 – explain later stages and the final outcome
- ✅ **Step 2 – Highlight useful process phrases**
  Underline phrases such as:
  relies on a small wood fire, is channelled into, enters an underground trench, produces heat and smoke, flows along a covered passage, is hung from the roof, circulates around the food.
- ✅ **Step 3 – Reuse the patterns with other diagrams**
  For other processes (e.g. water treatment, recycling, electricity generation):
  - keep the same paragraph structure,
  - replace the nouns and verbs with ones matching the new diagram,
  - reuse sequencing phrases: *first, next, afterwards, finally, as a result*.

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3. Writing Tips for IELTS Flow Chart Essays

3.1 Task Response

- Always include an **overview**.
  - Put it after the introduction.
  - Explain the overall purpose of the process and how many main stages or components there are.
- Do not give reasons or opinions in detail.
  - Task 1 is about describing **what the diagram shows**, not why it was designed that way.
  - A very short comment like *This simple arrangement allows food to be smoked efficiently* is fine, but avoid long discussions.

3.2 Coherence & Cohesion

- Group information logically.
  - Paragraph 1: overall description + structure / early stages.

    - Paragraph 2: later stages and final output.
- Use clear sequencing phrases:
    - *first, then, next, afterwards, in the final stage*
    - plus cause–effect linkers like *as a result, therefore, consequently*.
- Always follow the direction of arrows.
    - In a flow chart, describe stages in the same order shown in the diagram.

3.3 Language Use

- Use **present simple** when describing how a device works or a process operates:
    - *The system uses a small fire to produce smoke.*
- Use the **passive voice** when the performer is not important:
    - *Logs are burned in the central compartment.*
    - *Food is hung inside the box and is surrounded by smoke.*
- Use precise but not over-technical vocabulary:
    - words such as *chamber, pipe, compartment, smoke, heat, airflow* are enough for Band 7–9.

3.4 Data / Stage Selection

- You do not need to describe every tiny detail or label.
- Focus on:
    - the **main components** (e.g. air inlet, fire pit, smoking box),
    - the **sequence** from start to finish,
    - any repeated or continuous actions (e.g. smoke circulating, air flowing).
- Use grouped sentences:
    - *In the first two stages, air is drawn into the system and heated, while in the final stage it is used to preserve the food.*

3.5 Exam Technique

- Spend the first **2–3 minutes**:
    - tracing the arrows/stages with your eyes,

    - counting how many main stages or components there are,
    - deciding how to group them into paragraphs.
- Aim for about **160–190 words**.
    - This is usually enough to describe all key stages without wasting time for Task 2.
- Reserve **1 minute** at the end to check:
    - verb tenses (mostly present simple),
    - sequencing words (*first, then, finally*),
    - spelling of any technical words (e.g. *chamber, chimney* if present).

4. Practise IELTS Writing Task 1 with Lingoleap

If you would like to practise IELTS Writing Task 1 -2 with instant AI feedback, you can use **Lingoleap**, an AI-powered platform designed for IELTS and TOEFL learners.

On Lingoleap’ s IELTS page, you can:

- generate and practise **Writing Task 1** and **Task 2** questions
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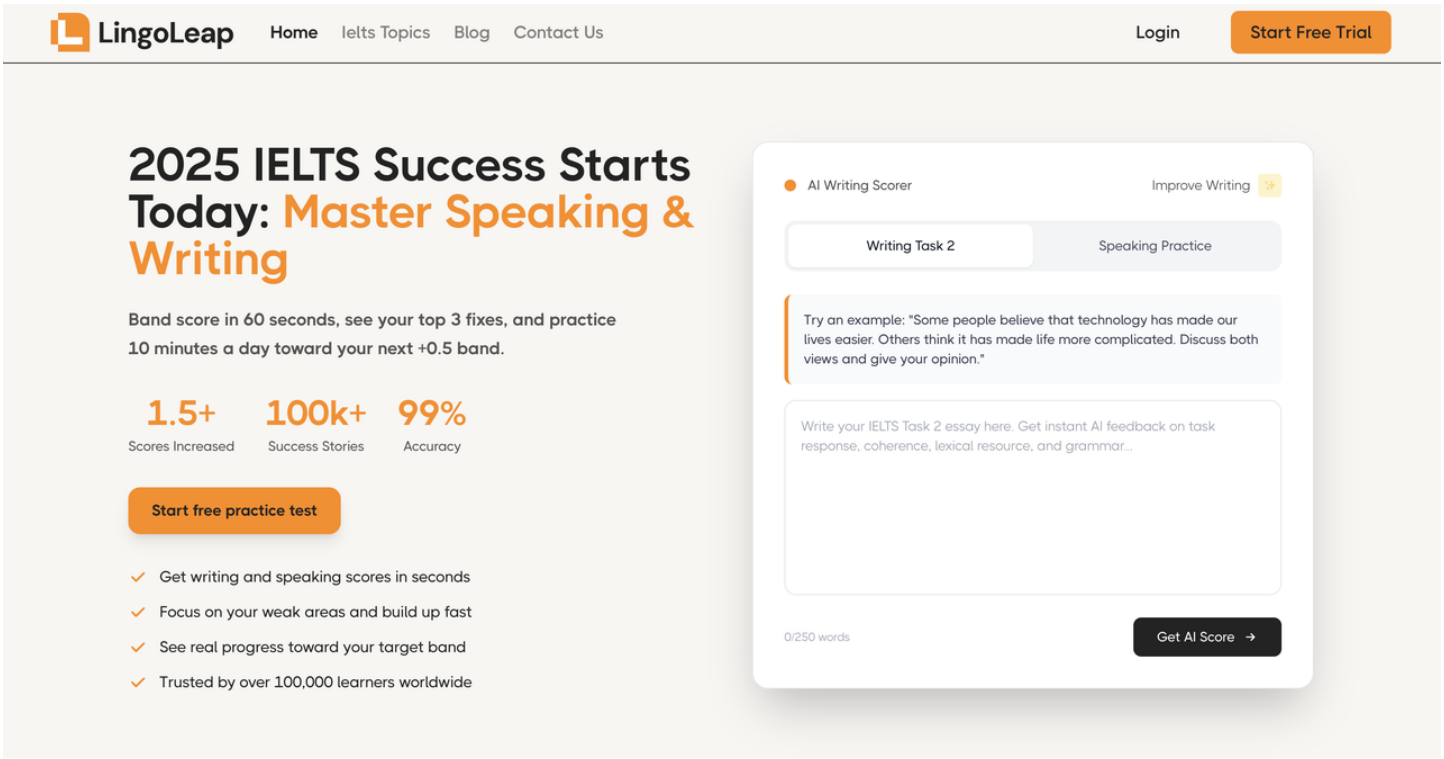
💻 **Website:** https://lingoleap.ai/ielts



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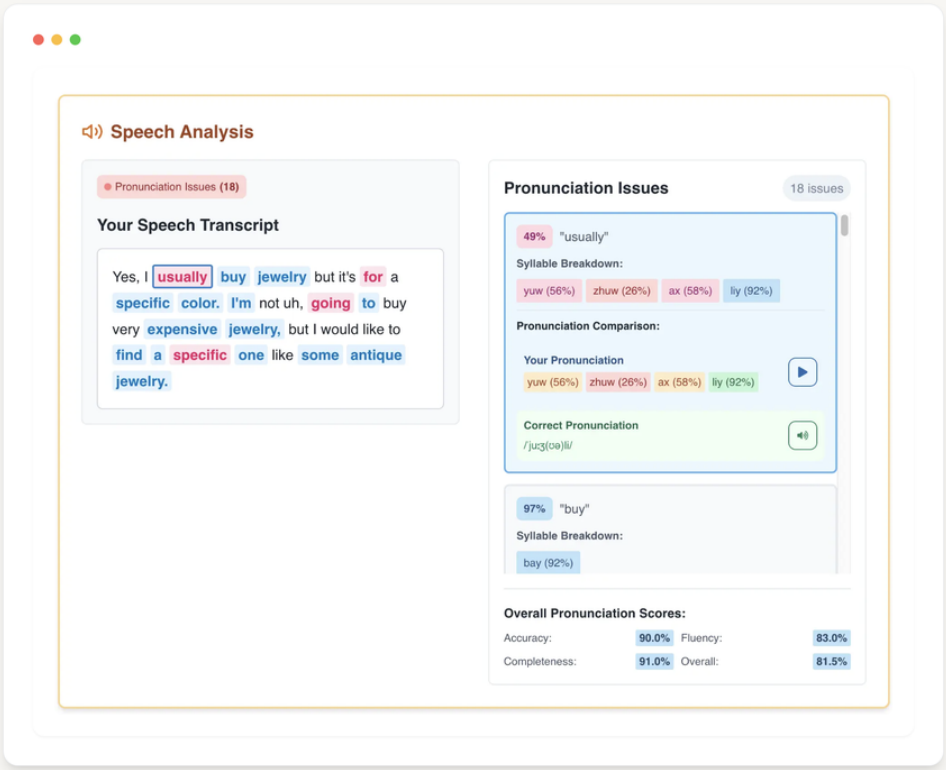

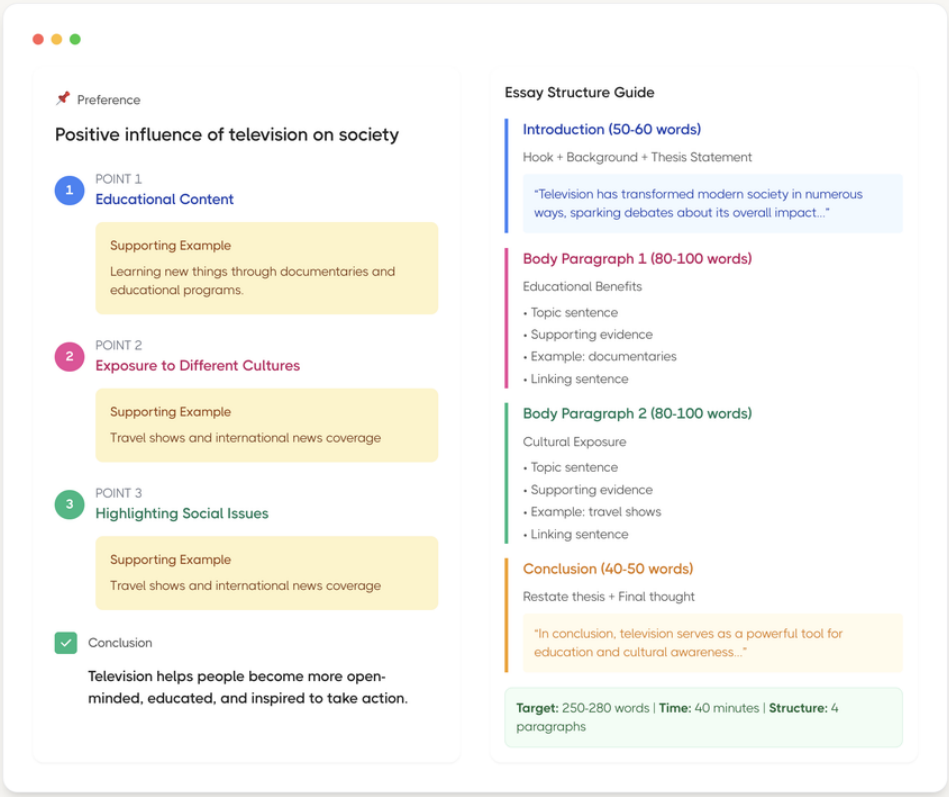

🔤 Vocabulary Builder

WORD	PHONETIC SYMBOL	PART OF SPEECH	ENGLISH DEFINITION	SAMPLE SENTENCE
Influence	/ˈɪnfluəns/	Noun	The power to change or affect someone or something	Television has a positive **influence** on society by
Open-minded	/ˌəʊ.pən ˈmaɪn.dɪd/	Adjective	Willing to consider new ideas	Watching television makes people more **open-minded** as they learn about various cultures and ways of life.
Discrimination	/dɪˌskrɪmɪ ˈneɪʃən/	Noun	The unjust treatment of different categories of people	Television programs can help raise awareness about **discrimination** and inspire people to fight against it.
Educational	/ˌedʒu ˈkeɪʃənl/	Adjective	Relating to the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction	**Educational** content on television helps people learn new things and expand their knowledge.
Social issues	/ˈsəʊ.ʃəl ˈɪʃ.uː.z/	Noun	Problems that affect many people within a society	Television highlights important **social issues** like poverty, inspiring viewers to take action and make a difference.

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