Map

0. About IELTS Writing Task 1 Maps

On this page, you'll learn how to write **IELTS Writing Task 1 map** essays using a clear structure, high-band vocabulary, and a **Band 9 sample answer** based on the development of **Pentland** between 1950 and 2007. You'll see how to describe changes over time (from an industrial coastal area to a modern resort town) and how to meet the **four official IELTS Writing criteria**.

Subsection A | What does this task test?

In IELTS Academic Writing Task 1, map questions typically show:

- **the same place at two or more points in time** (e.g. 1950 vs 2007), or
- **two different plans** of a place (e.g. current layout vs proposed development).

A **map Task 1** tests whether you can:

- describe **physical changes** (what was added, removed or replaced)
- use **location language** (north, south, next to, along the road, on the coast)
- describe **functions** (industrial area, residential area, recreational facilities)
- summarise **overall trends** (e.g. became more residential and tourist-oriented)

For Pentland, the maps show how a small coastal town with grassland and an industrial area in 1950 was transformed into a more **residential and recreational** seaside town by 2007.

Subsection B | Timing & basic exam rules

- **Paper:** IELTS Academic Writing
- **Task:** Writing Task 1 (maps are one possible visual)
- **Recommended time:** about **20 minutes**
- **Minimum length:** at least **150 words**

A typical map prompt gives:

1. A brief description of what the maps show (place + years).
2. Two or more maps with labels and sometimes a **north arrow**.
3. The standard instruction:

Subsection C | Assessment criteria for Task 1 (Maps)

Examiners score **IELTS Writing Task 1 map** essays using four criteria:

1. **Task Achievement**

   - Did you **describe the main changes** rather than every minor detail?
   - Did you provide a **clear overview** of general trends (e.g. more housing, fewer factories)?
   - Did you avoid inventing features that are not shown on the maps?

2. **Coherence and Cohesion**

   - Is your answer split into **logical paragraphs** (Intro + Overview + 1–2 body paragraphs)?
   - Do you describe changes in a **systematic way** (e.g. by area: north → south, or by theme: housing, leisure, transport)?
   - Do you use linking expressions (e.g. *while, whereas, in contrast, meanwhile*)?

3. **Lexical Resource (Vocabulary)**

   - Do you use a range of **location phrases** (e.g. *in the north-west, along the seafront, on the eastern side*)?
   - Do you use **change verbs** (e.g. *was replaced by, was converted into, was extended, was added*)?
   - Is your spelling of place labels (e.g. *Pentland, marina, apartments*) accurate?

4. **Grammatical Range and Accuracy**

   - Do you use both **simple and complex sentences** to describe changes?
   - Do you use correct **tenses** (usually *past simple* + *passive forms* for "was replaced/was built")?
   - Are prepositions used correctly (e.g. *on the coast, at the southern end, to the west of the road*)?

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1. Useful Vocabulary & Sentence Patterns for Map Questions

To reach Band 7–9 in **IELTS map tasks**, you need precise **location language** and **change verbs**.

1.1 Location Language

Cardinal points and position

- in the north / south / east / west (of⋯)

- in the north-west corner, in the south-east

- along the coast / along the main road

- on the left-hand / right-hand side of the map

Examples (Pentland):

- *In 1950, an industrial area occupied the south-west of Pentland.*

- *By 2007, new houses had been built in the south-east corner of the town.*

Relative position

- to the north of, just south of, next to, adjacent to

- opposite, across from, at the end of, in front of, behind

Examples:

- *In 2007, a cinema was constructed to the west of the main road, opposite a row of shops.*

- *Apartments were added along the eastern side of the town, next to the sea.*

1.2 Change Verbs & Noun Phrases

Verbs for changes

- be built / constructed / added / introduced

- be replaced by, be converted into, be removed / demolished

- expand, extend, redevelop, transform

Examples:

- *The former industrial area was replaced by a park.*

- *A yacht marina was added to the northern coastline.*

Nouns for land use

- industrial area, grassland, farmland, residential area, housing estate

- apartments, houses, shops, cinema, park, car park, swimming pool, marina

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1.3 Core Sentence Patterns for Maps

Introducing the maps

- *The two maps compare the coastal town of Pentland in 1950 and 2007.*

- *The diagrams illustrate how Pentland changed over a period of 57 years.*

Overview patterns

- *Overall, Pentland was transformed from a largely industrial and rural area into a more residential and recreational seaside town.*

- *In general, there was a shift away from industry and open grassland towards housing, leisure facilities and tourism.*

Describing specific changes

- *In the south-west, the industrial area that existed in 1950 had been removed and replaced by a public park by 2007.*

- *The simple car park near the sea was redeveloped into a multi-storey car park and a cinema.*

Grouping by theme

- *As far as residential development is concerned, new houses were built in the south, and a row of apartments appeared along the eastern side of the town.*
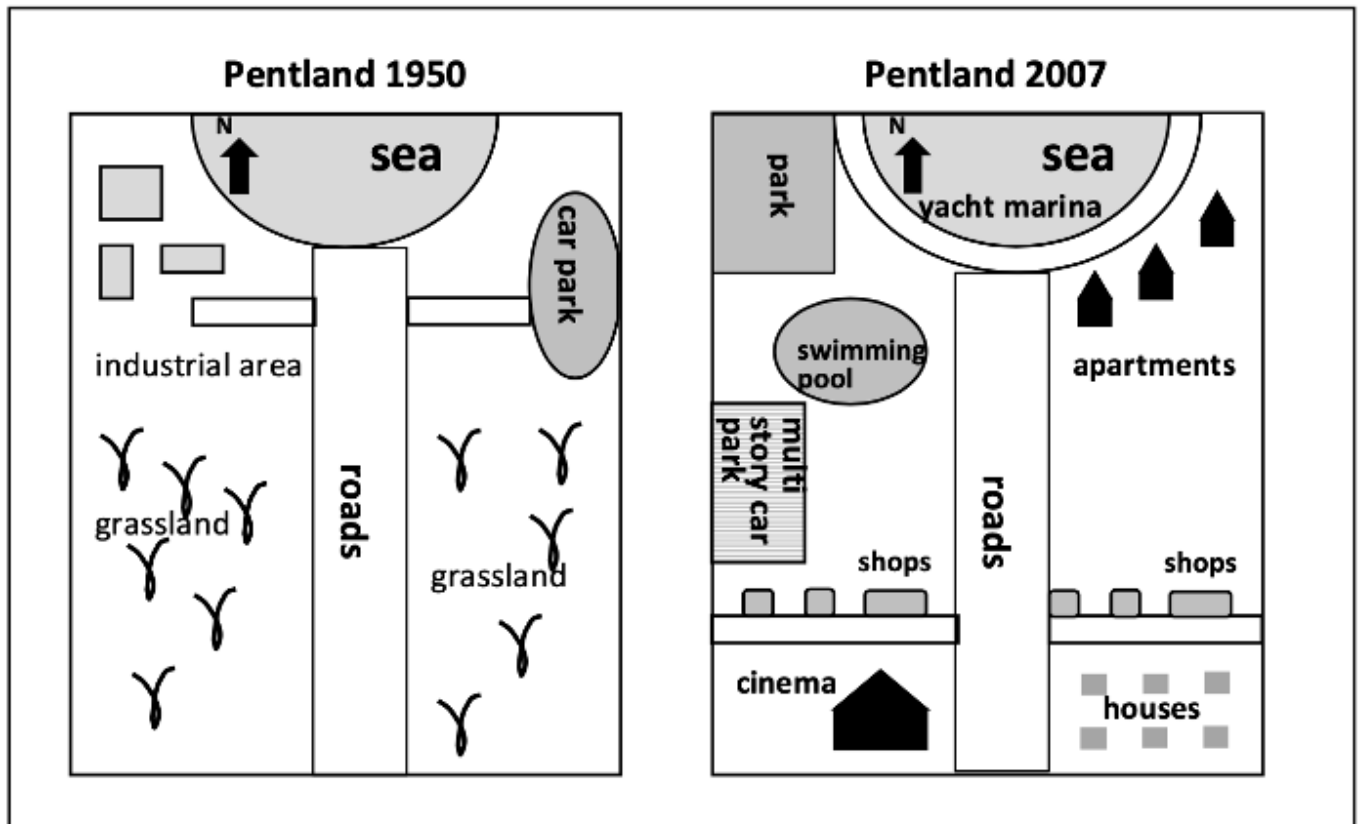
These patterns can be reused for any **IELTS Writing Task 1 map** by swapping in the correct place names and features.

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2. Band 9 Map Sample Answer (with Planning Notes)

2.1 Sample Question

> The maps below show the changes in the coastal town of Pentland between 1950 and 2007. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

In the first map, Pentland in 1950 consists mainly of grassland on both sides of a central road, an industrial area in the south-west and a car park by the sea. The 2007 map, by contrast, shows a much more developed town with new housing, leisure facilities and a yacht marina.

Pentland 1950

N

sea

car park

industrial area

roads

grassland

grassland

Pentland 2007

park

N

sea

yacht marina

swimming pool

multi story car park

apartments

roads

shops

shops

cinema

houses

2.2 Planning Notes

Step 1 | Identify main features

- Overall:
    - From **industrial + grassland** → **residential + leisure + tourism**.
- North near the sea:
    - 1950: simple car park.
    - 2007: **yacht marina** on the water, **park** to the north-west.
- West of main road:
    - 1950: industrial area + grassland.
    - 2007: **park**, **swimming pool**, **multi-storey car park**, **cinema**, **shops**.
- East of main road:
    - 1950: grassland only.
    - 2007: **apartments** along the coast, **shops** at the southern end, **housing estate** in south-east.

Step 2 | Plan paragraphs

- Intro – paraphrase maps.
- Overview – summarise key transformation (from industry/grass to tourism/residential).

- Body 1 – changes on **western side** (industrial area → park, cinema, car park, pool).
- Body 2 – changes on **eastern side + sea front** (grassland → apartments, houses, shops, marina).

2.3 Band 9 Sample Answer

The two maps illustrate how the coastal town of Pentland changed between 1950 and 2007. Overall, the town was transformed from a largely industrial and rural settlement into a much more residential and recreational resort, with several new facilities for both residents and visitors.

In 1950, the western side of Pentland was dominated by grassland and an industrial area in the south-west corner. By 2007, this industrial zone had disappeared and been replaced by a park, indicating a clear shift away from manufacturing. Just north of this, along the seafront, the original open car park had been redeveloped into a multi-storey car park, and a cinema had been constructed immediately to its south. A swimming pool was also added between the park and the car park, providing further leisure options.

Significant changes also occurred on the eastern side of the main road. Whereas this area consisted entirely of grassland in 1950, by 2007 it contained a row of apartments facing the sea in the north and a new housing estate in the south-east. In addition, shops were built along the southern section of the coastal road, creating a small commercial strip. Out at sea, a yacht marina was constructed, further reinforcing Pentland's new role as a tourist-oriented coastal town.

In summary, over the 57-year period Pentland underwent extensive redevelopment, with industrial land and open fields giving way to housing, shops and leisure facilities. These changes modernised the town and made it more attractive as a place to live and for holidaymakers.

(~210 words)

2.4 How Students Can Use This Sample

✅ **Step 1 – Copy the structure**

For any **IELTS map** question, use this plan:

1. **Introduction** – paraphrase what the maps show (place + time period).
2. **Overview** – describe the *main trends* (e.g. more housing, fewer factories, new transport links).
3. **Body 1** – describe changes in one part of the map (e.g. west side / city centre).
4. **Body 2** – describe changes in another part or another theme (e.g. east side / transport / leisure).

✅ **Step 2 – Reuse high-band expressions**

From the sample, students can underline phrases such as:

- *was transformed from… into…*
- *was dominated by grassland, had disappeared and been replaced by*
- *a clear shift away from manufacturing*
- *reinforcing Pentland's new role as a tourist-oriented coastal town*

These are very useful in other **IELTS Writing Task 1 map** answers.

✅ **Step 3 – Swap in new details**

When practising different map tasks:

- Keep the same **overall paragraph structure** and many of the sentence frames.
- Replace only the **place names, directions and facilities** according to the new maps.

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3. Writing Tips for IELTS Map Essays

3.1 Task Response

- Always mention **both time points** and describe **overall trends** (e.g. "more built-up / more residential / more green space").
- Avoid long stories about *why* changes happened; Task 1 focuses on **what** changed.

3.2 Coherence & Cohesion

- Decide on a **description strategy** before writing:
  - by **area** (west vs east), or
  - by **theme** (housing, industry, leisure, transport).
- Use linking phrases:
  - *while, whereas, in contrast, by 2007, over the period.*

3.3 Language Use

- Use **past simple passive** for most changes:
  - *was built, were added, was converted into, was removed.*
- Always include **location prepositions**:
  - *in the north-west, to the east of the road, along the coastline.*
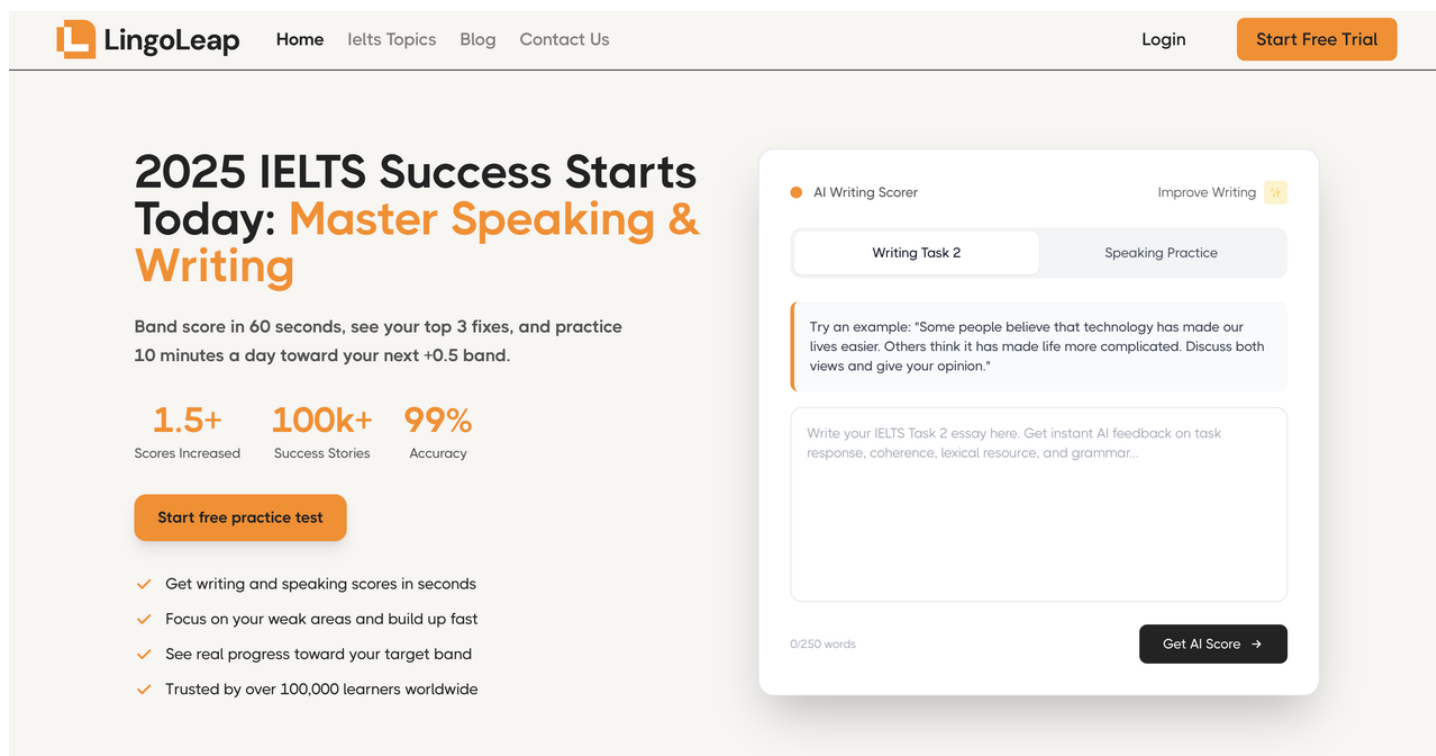
3.4 Data / Detail Selection

- You **don't** need to mention every tree or building.

- Focus on:
  - features that **disappeared**,
  - features that were **added**,
  - and any **major re-purposing** (e.g. *industrial area → park*).

3.5 Exam Technique

- Spend **2–3 minutes** tracing the maps with your pen:
  - mark big changes with arrows,
  - note directions (N/S/E/W).
- Aim for **170–200 words** for a full but efficient answer.
- Quickly double-check your **tenses and prepositions** at the end.

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🔊 **Speech Analysis**

● Pronunciation Issues (18)

Your Speech Transcript

Yes, I usually buy jewelry but it's for a specific color. I'm not uh, going to buy very expensive jewelry, but I would like to find a specific one like some antique jewelry.

Pronunciation Issues — 18 issues

49% "usually"

Syllable Breakdown:

yuw (56%) zhuw (26%) ax (58%) liy (92%)

Pronunciation Comparison:

Your Pronunciation ▶

yuw (56%) zhuw (26%) ax (58%) liy (92%)

Correct Pronunciation 🔊

/juːʒ(ʊə)li/

97% "buy"

Syllable Breakdown:

bay (92%)

Overall Pronunciation Scores:

Accuracy:	90.0%	Fluency:	83.0%
Completeness:	91.0%	Overall:	81.5%

📌 Preference

Positive influence of television on society

1 POINT 1
Educational Content

Supporting Example

Learning new things through documentaries and educational programs.

2 POINT 2
Exposure to Different Cultures

Supporting Example

Travel shows and international news coverage

3 POINT 3
Highlighting Social Issues

Supporting Example

Travel shows and international news coverage

☑ Conclusion

Television helps people become more open-minded, educated, and inspired to take action.

Essay Structure Guide

Introduction (50-60 words)

Hook + Background + Thesis Statement

"Television has transformed modern society in numerous ways, sparking debates about its overall impact..."

Body Paragraph 1 (80-100 words)

Educational Benefits
• Topic sentence
• Supporting evidence
• Example: documentaries
• Linking sentence

Body Paragraph 2 (80-100 words)

Cultural Exposure
• Topic sentence
• Supporting evidence
• Example: travel shows
• Linking sentence

Conclusion (40-50 words)

Restate thesis + Final thought

"In conclusion, television serves as a powerful tool for education and cultural awareness..."

Target: 250-280 words | **Time:** 40 minutes | **Structure:** 4 paragraphs

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	/dɪˌskrɪmɪˈneɪʃən/ �))	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	/ˌedʒuˈkeɪʃənl/ �))	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.uːz/ �))	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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Feedback coverage	Full 4-band descriptors • Task Response • Coherence & Cohesion • Lexical Resource • Grammatical Range & Accuracy	Primarily written comments; often incomplete or unbalanced across bands
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Rewrite capability	One-click "Reword" ➜ Band 7+ model answer	Requires extra fee or self-editing
Targeted improvement advice	Actionable tips at sentence, paragraph, and overall levels	General remarks only