

## TRANSITION SIGNALS

Process description is a possible IELTS Writing Task 1. Processes can describe how something works, how something happened or how to do something.

Although these descriptions have different purposes, they all use **transitional signals** to connect ideas. These study notes focus on the various types of transitional signals that may be used, and also look at the differences between Australia English, British English and American English.

### STUDY TIPS

When describing processes in IELTS Writing Task 1, it is important to identify clearly the sequence and order of the stages using a variety of Transition Signals, including participial phrases of time.

These provide variety in sentence structure and coherence in your writing.

It is important to be familiar with the main varieties of English since they are all used in the listening section of the IELTS test. In addition, examiners come from many different parts of the world, and may speak a variety of English with which you may not be familiar.

## TRANSITION SIGNALS - PROCESS DESCRIPTION

There are several grammatical features, which are used when describing a process.

- a topic sentence with a controlling idea
- present passive verb forms
- **transition signals for sequencing and ordering**

### Transition Signals

Transition signals are used to connect ideas logically and establish a relationship between them. These provide cohesion in your paragraph. When a paragraph is coherent, the sentences are logically arranged, the ideas are in a logical order, and they flow smoothly.

There are several ways to arrange information in a process description to achieve coherence in your writing. Processes are organised chronologically, using:

1. **time sequence markers**
2. **adverbial clauses of time and participial phrases of time**

Time Sequence Markers	
Types	Examples
ordering	first(ly), first of all, second(ly), third(ly), next, then, finally, last, subsequently, now NB: be consistent in word form – if you choose <i>first</i> then choose <i>second, third, last</i> etc; if you choose <i>firstly</i> , then choose <i>secondly, thirdly</i> etc.
prepositions of time (clause connectors)	after, before, during (the process), at(this stage), when, until, while, as soon as, since, eventually, earlier, soon afterward, later
<p><b>Examples of sentence structures using time sequence markers</b></p> <p><b>First</b>, the glass is heated. <b>Then</b> it is shaped into a vase.                      (two independent sentences)</p> <p><b>After</b> the glass is heated, it is shaped into a vase.                      (adverbial clause + independent clause)</p>	

**Adverbial Clauses of Time (Participial Phrases of Time)**

Adverbial clauses of time provide another means of making your writing more coherent. Reducing adverbial clauses of time to a participial form by making one of the independent clauses a subordinate clause, allows you to indicate the sequence of actions between the clauses. Remember, the subject of the adverbial clause of time needs to be the same as the subject in the independent clause. For example:

**First**, the glass is heated. **Then** the glass is shaped into a vase.  
*subject* *subject*  
 (two independent sentences)



**After heating** *the glass*, it is shaped into a vase.  
 (participial phrase of time + independent clause)  
 or

**Having heated** *the glass*, it is shaped into a vase.  
 (participial phrase of time + independent clause)

To summarise, there are 3 choices:

- **adverbial clause**  
 After the glass is heated, it is shaped into a vase.
- **present participle**  
 After **heating** the glass, it is shaped into a vase.
- **perfect participle**  
**Having heated** the glass, it is shaped into a vase.

Using participial phrases in your writing not only adds variety in sentence structures, but also makes your writing more sophisticated.

Two of the most common types of **participial phrases** formed from adverbial clauses of time are:

- the present participle
- the perfect participle

Present Participle	
dependent (subordinate) clause	independent clause
<b>after</b> <b>before</b> verb    +    ing    , <b>while</b>	subject    +    verb
Example: <b>Before transporting</b> the trees to the sawmill, <b>the branches and leaves are removed.</b>	
Meaning: the action in the subordinate clause takes place before, after or at the same time of the action in the independent clause; here, the branches and leaves are removed, and then the trees are transported to the sawmill.	

Perfect Participle	
dependent (subordinate) clause	independent clause
having verb    +    ed    ,	subject    +    verb
Example: <b>Having transported</b> the trees to the sawmill, <b>the branches and leaves were removed.</b>	
Meaning: the action in the participial clause takes place before the action in the independent clause; here the trees are transported to the sawmill, and then the branches and leaves removed.	

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH, BRITISH ENGLISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

There are a number of varieties of English used around the world, including Australian English, British English, American English, Canadian English, New Zealand English, Indian English, Singaporean English and others.

When sitting the IELTS test, and, in particular, the Listening Module, you will need to be familiar with the **main varieties** of English.

The table below lists some of the differences between **Australian English** (AusE), **British English** (BE) and **American English** (AE) usage. The notes focus on spelling, grammar, vocabulary and, weights and measures.

SPELLING		
Australian English	British English	American English
AusE and BE <b>-re</b> , AE <b>-er</b>		
theatre	theatre	theater
centre	centre	center
metre	metre	meter
AusE and BE <b>-our</b> , AE <b>-or</b>		
favourite	favourite	favorite
humour	humour	humor
colour	colour	color
neighbour	neighbour	neighbor
AusE and BE <b>-ce</b> , AE <b>-se</b> In AusE and BE, <i>practice</i> and <i>licence</i> are <b>nouns</b> , and <i>practise</i> and <i>license</i> are <b>verbs</b> . In AE, <i>practice</i> and <i>license</i> are <b>both nouns and verbs</b> .		
Offence	offence	offense
defence	defence	defense
Department of Defence	Ministry of Defence	Defense Department
AusE and BE <b>-ae- ~ -oe-</b> , AE <b>-e-</b>		
encyclopaedia ~ encyclopedia	encyclopaedia	encyclopedia
archaeology	archaeology	archeology
haemoglobin	haemoglobin	hemoglobin
AusE <b>-ise</b> , BE <b>-ise ~ -ize</b> AE <b>-ize</b>		
criticise	criticise ~ criticize	criticize
modernise	modernise ~ modernize	modernize
AusE and BE <b>-ll-, -pp-, -tt-</b> AE <b>-l-, -p-, -t-</b>		
cancelled	cancelled	canceled
travelling/traveller	travelling/traveller	traveling/traveler
kidnapped	kidnapped	kidnapped ~ kidnaped
AusE and BE <b>-l-, -l</b> AE <b>-ll-, -ll-, -t-</b>		
wilful	wilful	willful
skilful	skilful	skillful
enrol	enrol	enroll
AusE and BE <b>-oul-</b> AE <b>-ol</b>		
mould	mould	mold
AusE and BE <b>-mme</b> AE <b>-m</b>		
programme	programme	program

AusE and BE <b>-ement</b> AE <b>-ment</b>		
judgement	judgement	judgment
acknowledgement	acknowledgement	acknowledgment

Spelling of Common Words		
aluminium	aluminium	aluminum
cheque	cheque	check
grey	grey	gray
kerb	kerb	curb
pyjamas	pyjamas	pajamas
speciality	speciality	specialty
tyre	tyre	tire

GRAMMAR		
a quarter past five	a quarter past five	a quarter after five
at school	at school	in school
fill in a form	fill in a form	fill out a form
AusE and BE <b>-t</b> AE <b>-ed</b> past tense ending		
<b>burnt</b>	<b>burnt</b>	<b>burned</b>
<b>learnt</b>	<b>learnt</b>	<b>learned</b>
<b>spelt</b>	<b>spelt</b>	<b>spelled</b>

VOCABULARY		
aeroplane	aeroplane	airplane
anticlockwise	anticlockwise	counterclockwise
aubergine ~ eggplant	aubergine	eggplant
autumn	autumn	fall
banknote/note	banknote/note	bill
barrister, solicitor	barrister, solicitor	attorney
bath	bath	bathtub
bill (restaurant)	bill	check
biscuit	biscuit	cookie
bonnet (car)	bonnet (car)	hood
bookshop	bookshop	bookstore
bucket	bucket	pail
bumper (car)	bumper	fender
car park	car park	parking lot
chemist's	chemist's	drugstore
cupboard	cupboard	closet
chips	chips	french fries
cinema	cinema	movie theater
cot	cot	crib
courgette/zucchini	courgette	zucchini
driving licence	driving licence	driver's license
film (at cinema)	film	movie
flat	flat	apartment
footpath	pavement	sidewalk
garden	garden	yard



# STUDY ENGLISH

## IELTS PREPARATION

ground floor	ground floor	first floor
hand bag	hand bag	purse
jug	jug	pitcher
jumper (clothing)	jumper	sweater
lift	lift	elevator
expressway, freeway	motorway	expressway, freeway
nappy	nappy	diaper
petrol	petrol	gas, gasoline
post	post	mail
primary school	primary school	elementary school
railway	railway	railroad
single ticket	single ticket	one-way ticket
sweets	sweets	candy
tin	tin	can
torch	torch	flashlight
trousers	trousers	pants
windscreen	windscreen	windshield

### WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Length and Distance	centimetre (cm)	centimetre (cm) and inch (in or ") <b>[1 cm = .394 in]</b>	inch (in or ")
	metre (m)	metre (m) and foot (ft or ') and yard (yd) <b>[1 m = 3.28 ft]</b> <b>[1 m = 1.098 yd]</b>	foot (ft or ') yard (yd)
	kilometre (km)	mile (m) <b>[1km = 0.621 miles]</b>	mile (m)
Weight and Volume	gram (g)	gram (g) and ounce (oz) <b>[1 g = 0.0353oz]</b>	ounce (oz)
	kilogram (kg)	kilogram (kg) and pound (lb) <b>[1kg = 2.20 lbs]</b>	pound (lb)
	millilitre (ml)	millilitre (ml) and fluid ounce (fl oz) <b>[1mL = 0.0352 fl oz]</b>	fluid ounce (fl oz)
	litre (l)	litre (l) and pint (pt) <b>[1L = 1.76 pts]</b>	pint (pt)
Temperature	Celsius temp (°C)	Celsius temp (°C) and Fahrenheit temp (°F)	Fahrenheit temp (°F)
	0 °C	0 °C = 32 °F	32 °F