

The Word Count Question

字数到底怎么回事

Everyone tells you there is a penalty. Nobody can show you where it is written.

所有人都告诉你有惩罚。但没有人能告诉你它写在哪里。

This brief is different from the others. It does not end with a clear answer, because there is not one.

这份简报和其他几份不同。它没有一个明确的结论——因为本来就没有。

What is certain is the instruction on the paper: **at least** 150 words for Task 1, and **at least** 250 for Task 2. That is published, and it is the same for Academic and General Training.

确定的只有题目上的说明：Task 1 **至少** 150 词，Task 2 **至少** 250 词。这是公开的，学术类与培训类相同。

What is not published is any penalty schedule. And when I went looking, the sources contradicted each other flatly.

没有公开的，是任何扣分规则。而当我去查的时候，各个来源彼此矛盾。

The short version

简短版本

There is no published penalty for writing under the word count. There does not need to be. The band descriptors already do the work: **Band 5 Task Response describes ideas that are limited and not sufficiently developed**, and a short essay cannot escape that description. ^[1] Write enough to develop your points. The word count is a symptom, not the target.

字数不足并没有公开的扣分规则。也不需要。评分标准本身已经完成了这件事：**5 分的任务响应描述的就是“观点有限、展开不足”**，而一篇太短的文章逃不出这个描述。^[1] 写到足以展开你的观点。字数是症状，不是目标。

PART ONE • 第一部分

What four sources say, and how they disagree

四个来源怎么说，以及它们如何矛盾

All four are widely read. All four are talking about the same rule. I am not naming them, because the point is the disagreement, not the authors.

这四个来源都很多人看，讲的也是同一条规则。我不点名，因为重点在于分歧本身，而不是作者。

A well-known teacher site:

A fixed penalty existed and was removed in mid-2018 — adding that there was no official announcement, and the information was supposed to be sensitive.

一个知名教师网站：

曾经有固定扣分，2018 年中取消了——并补充说：官方从未公告，这个信息本来属于敏感内容。

A former examiner:

The explicit penalty structure has changed, but the outcome is the same — you still lose marks, because you cannot satisfy the descriptors in too few words.

一位前考官：

明文的扣分规则变了，但结果一样——你依然会扣分，因为字数太少就满足不了评分标准。

Several agency sites:

An automatic deduction is described as current fact, sometimes with a specific figure attached.

多个中介网站：

把自动扣分当作当前事实描述，有时还附上一个具体数字。

Others still:

An upper limit is asserted — that writing too much is penalised. For this there is no basis at all. The instruction says ‘at least’.

还有一些：

声称有上限——写太多也扣分。这一条完全没有依据。题目写的是“至少”。

Notice what the first source is really saying: that a rule was changed, that it was never announced, and that we are supposed to know about it anyway. That should make you cautious about all four.

注意第一个来源实际上在说什么：规则改了，从未公告，但我们又理应知道。这应该让你对四个来源都保持警惕。

PART TWO • 第二部分

The mechanism nobody argues about

没有人争议的那个机制

Set the penalty question aside. There is something published, free, and not disputed by anyone, and it answers the practical question completely.

把“到底扣不扣分”放在一边。有一份公开的、免费的、没有任何人争议的文件，它完全回答了实际问题。

1. Band 5 Task Response describes ideas that are **limited and not sufficiently developed**. Band 7 requires that main ideas are presented, **extended and supported**. ^[1]

5 分的任务响应，描述的是“观点有限、展开不足”。7 分要求主要观点得到**展开与支撑**。 ^[1]

2. So the question is not “how many words am I allowed to lose?” It is: **can you extend and support three or four ideas in fewer than 250 words?** In practice, no. Not because a rule forbids it, but because there is not room.

所以问题不是“少写多少词会扣多少分”，而是：**你能用不到 250 词，把三四个观点展开并支撑起来吗？**实际上做不到。不是因为规则禁止，而是因为篇幅不够。

3. This is why I do not teach word counting. A student who is counting is not developing, and the counting itself costs time that developing would have used better.

这就是我不教数字数的原因。一个在数字数的学生，此刻没在展开观点；而数字数本身花掉的时间，本可以用来展开。

PART THREE • 第三部分

What to actually do 实际怎么做

Four practical points, none of which require you to resolve the penalty argument.

四条实用建议。没有一条需要你先搞清楚那场关于扣分的争论。

1. Write a buffer, not a target. Aim comfortably above the minimum so that a miscount or a crossed-out line cannot drop you under. Never aim for exactly 250.

1. 给自己留余量，而不是卡线。写得比下限宽裕一些，这样数错一次或划掉一行都不会让你跌到线下。永远不要正好写 250 词。

2. On screen, the machine counts for you. From 1 September 2026 mainland China is computer-only, and a live word count is on the screen. That removes the estimating problem entirely — and removes the excuse for spending exam time counting.

2. 机考会替你数。2026 年 9 月 1 日起中国大陆全面机考，屏幕上有实时字数。估算的问题就此消失——同时也消失了在考场上数数字的借口。

3. Protect Task 2. It is worth twice as much as Task 1. If time is short, an under-developed Task 2 costs far more than a short Task 1.

3. 优先保 Task 2。它的分值是 Task 1 的两倍。时间不够时，Task 2 展开不足的代价，远高于 Task 1 写短了。

4. If you are consistently short, the problem is planning. Students who run out of words have run out of ideas, and that is decided in the first five minutes, not the last five.

4. 如果你总是写不够，问题在审题与构思。词穷的人是意穷；而这件事决定于前五分钟，不是最后五分钟。

And on the upper limit. There is no maximum. But a very long essay is usually a padded one, and padding costs marks in Coherence and Task Response. Long is not the same as developed.

关于上限。没有上限。但非常长的文章通常是注水的，而注水会在连贯性与任务响应上扣分。长，不等于展开。

IN SHORT • 一句话总结

What to do with this 这份文件怎么用

Stop asking whether there is a penalty. Nobody can show you the document, and it does not change what you should do.

别再问“到底扣不扣分”了。没有人能把那份文件拿给你看，而且它也不改变你该怎么做。

Write enough to extend and support your ideas, and the count looks after itself. That is not a trick — it is what the descriptors are asking for.

把观点展开、支撑好，字数自然就够了。这不是技巧——这就是评分标准要的东西。

And notice what this brief did not do: it did not invent an answer to a question that has no published answer. Be suspicious of anything that does.

还请注意本文没做的事：它没有为一个没有公开答案的问题编一个答案。凡是这么做的，都请保持怀疑。

SOURCES • 参考来源

Check every one of these yourself

每一条都请你自己核对

Information correct as of 8 August 2026. The four conflicting positions in Part One are summarised from live sources and are not quoted verbatim; I have not named them because the disagreement is the point, not the authors. If an official penalty schedule is published, or if you can locate one, please write and tell me and I will correct this brief.

信息截至 2026 年 8 月 8 日。第一部分的四种矛盾说法来自在线来源的概括，非逐字引用；不点名，是因为重点在分歧本身而非作者。如果官方公布了扣分规则，或你能找到一份，请告诉我，我会修正本文。

Cited in this brief

本文引用

- [1] IELTS Writing Band Descriptors (public version), Task 1 and Task 2. Jointly published by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge English Language Assessment.
- [2] 雅思考试中文官方网站 — mainland China computer-delivered transition, confirmed 31 July 2026. chinaielts.org

Where to verify anything else

其他信息核对处

- [3] IELTS Partners — test format, task instructions and published band descriptors. ielts.org
- [4] 报名与考场信息: ielts.neea.cn

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