Worksheet: The Inconvenient Truths about reaching Band 9 – Part 1

- *The table below contains 6 extracts from the video (there are timestamps for these in the video description box). Compare the learning approach in the 'mechanical' and 'meaningful' columns based on the extracts. Which column matches your own study approach?*
- *Answer any questions in the 'Meaningful' column to help you develop this approach.*

Mechanical	Meaningful
1) *'…but remain stuck at Band 6 or, more **frustratingly,** at the in-between stage of 6.5.'*	
• Learns C1 words and synonyms (e.g., *Frustrating = defensive)* then uses them without understanding they do not mean exactly the same: *Many people remain stuck at Band 6 or, more defensively, at the in-between stage of 6.5.*	• Sees words in context and thinks about deeper meaning, e.g.: ○ *What does frustratingly mean here?* ○ *Is the tone positive or negative?* ○ *Thinks about the deeper meaning. Is this statement T/F or NG: The speaker suggests that being stuck at Band 6.5 can feel worse than being stuck at Band 6.* • *Considers how and when to use the word appropriately.*
2) *'You can see these as common threads running through all of my Key to IELTS videos.'*	
• Learns lists of 'idioms' (e.g. 'once in a blue moon'). • In reading and listening, understands words only through their literal meaning. • Can't understand 'thread' without the image in the video.	• Recognizes when a word is being used idiomatically. ○ What clues are there that 'threads' is being used idiomatically in this sentence? ○ Which **two** of the following are closest to the meaning of 'threads' here? A) materials, B) themes, C) ideas, D) content, E) cottons
3) '*But writing and speaking, where you need to produce the content, present different challenges.'*	
• In Listening, focuses on individual words and often misses the main idea or point in Part 3 /4 • In Speaking, use of word stress is often confusing (my speaking book explains why), lowering your Pron score.	• In listening, recognizes that a speaker will highlight a key word by adding stress to it and, when speaking, is able to do the same. ○ Which words are highlighted (stressed) in this extract? Can you explain why?
4) '*Instead, people tend to fall back on old-fashioned methods and look online for model answers and free materials, which don't reflect the real test, and won't help you reach the highest levels, no matter how hard you try.'*	
• Tries to use so-called 'high-level' grammatical structures to boost their score. • Believes the simple present and the simple future are 'basic' and show you are at a low level.	• Recognizes the tone of auxiliary verbs and modals and uses them when appropriate. ○ Choose 1 option: This extract tells you that I think that free test materials are A) extremely helpful, B) a little helpful, C) sometimes helpful, D) not at all helpful.
5) '*Another important feature of IELTS is that it tests **all** levels. However, as the data on the official website shows, the average test taker is at this intermediate Band 6-6.5 level. Consequently, this level is seen as the main market for IELTS, and most advice is aimed here.'*	
• Relies on paragraph templates to create 'cohesion' (e.g.: *Another …. However, …. Consequently, …..)* but the ideas in between do not make sense, lowering the CC score. (e.g.: *Another problem with studying abroad is expensive. However, most people don't have enough money. Consequently, study abroad is a problem.)*	• Is able to follow and produce a logical argument and connect ideas by using the appropriate cohesive devices in a meaningful way as they write. (My Key to IELTS Writing Task 2 teaches you how to do this). ○ What contrast is being made here? ○ What **2** things result from the fact that most test takers are at Band 6-6.5?
6) '*…see grammar …in terms of the impact it has on your tone and how clear your **message is**.'*	
• In listening, the focus is on individual words so hears, '*how clear your messages*', and so would write this as a plural in a listening test – they are also likely confused here, waiting to hear the end of this idea.	• Is able to follow the main message and overall meaning and will hear this as, '*how clear your message is'*.

Answers

1) *'…but remain stuck at Band 6 or, more **frustratingly,** at the in-between stage of 6.5.'*

- *What does frustratingly mean here? It means feeling annoyed that you can't achieve something.*
- *Is the tone positive or negative? It has a negative tone (it isn't nice to feel this way).*
- *The statement is True.*

2) *'You can see these as common threads running through all of my Key to IELTS videos.'*

- What clues are there that 'threads' is being used idiomatically in this sentence? The phrase 'see these as' shows 'threads' is being used figuratively, as a comparison to help create a visual image of this idea.
- Which **two** of the following is closest to the meaning of 'threads' here?
  B) themes, C) ideas,

3) '*But writing and speaking, where you need to produce the content, present different challenges.'*

- Which words are highlighted (stressed) in this extract? Can you explain why?
  The words 'writing', 'speaking', 'you', and 'different,' are stressed here. They are all highlighted to show contrast with the previous idea. You can learn about this in The Key to IELTS Speaking.

4) '*Instead, people tend to fall back on old-fashioned methods and look online for model answers and free materials, which don't reflect the real test, and won't help you reach the highest levels, no matter how hard you try.'*

- This sentence makes it clear that I think that free test materials are, D) not at all helpful. ('don't' and 'won't' make my position clear). You can learn about this in The Key to IELTS Writing Task 2.

5) '*Another important feature of IELTS is that it tests **all** levels. However, as the data on the official website shows, the average test taker is at this intermediate Band 6-6.5 level. Consequently, this level is seen as the main market for IELTS, and most advice is aimed here*.'

- '*However*' is used to show a contrast between '*All*' levels and the specific level mentioned (Band 6-6.5), which is the most common level.
- The result of this is that 1) Band 6-6.5 is seen as the main market and, 2) most advice is aimed at Band 6-6.5. '*Consequently*' tells you this. You can learn about writing clear paragraphs in The Key to IELTS Writing Task 2.

6) If you heard 'messages', listen again to this extract. Use the ideas in the Listening chapter of The Key to IELTS Success to develop your listening skills.