Writing Task 1: task achievement overview / purpose

Look at the band descriptors for task achievement (academic and general task 1), and watch the video to how I explain them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Task achievement</th>
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</table>
| 9    | - fully satisfies all the requirements of the task  
      | - clearly presents a fully developed response |
| 8    | - covers all requirements of the task sufficiently  
      | - presents, highlights and illustrates key features/ bullet points clearly and appropriately |
| 7    | - covers the requirements of the task  
      | - (A) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages  
      | - (GT) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriate  
      | - clearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended |
| 6    | - addresses the requirements of the task  
      | - (A) presents an overview with information appropriately selected  
      | - (GT) presents a purpose that is generally clear; there may be inconsistencies in tone  
      | - presents and adequately highlights key features/ bullet points but details may be irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate |
| 5    | - generally addresses the task; the format may be inappropriate in places  
      | - (A) recounts detail mechanically with no clear overview; there may be no data to support the description  
      | - (GT) may present a purpose for the letter that is unclear at times; the tone may be variable and sometimes inappropriate  
      | - presents, but inadequately covers, key features/bullet points; there may be a tendency to focus on details |

In this lesson, we'll focus on the parts where you see (A) and (GT):

**A = Academic:** you need to give a clear overview of the information.

**GT = General Training:** you need to express a clear purpose and get the tone right.
1) The overview (academic IELTS):

Here’s the overview from the student’s report that I showed you in lesson 7:

Overall, sole parents had the maximum proportion of people living in poverty in Australia. However, aged couples had the minimum.

Compare that with my overview for the same task:

It is noticeable that levels of poverty were higher for single people than for couples, and people with children were more likely to be poor than those without. Poverty rates were considerably lower among elderly people.

Analysis:

• The student put the overview at the end of the report, whereas I put my overview straight after the introduction. I explain in the video why I recommend putting the overview near the beginning of your answer, not at the end.

• The student’s overview attempts to tell us about the highest and lowest categories. This is a very basic form of overview.

• My overview, by contrast, tells us about the poverty trends in terms of singles vs couples, parents vs people without children, and elderly (vs younger) people. This is “a clear overview of main trends” (band 7 descriptor).

• The student needed to spend more time on the overview, put it after the introduction, and compare the categories in terms of main trends or differences, rather than just highest and lowest.

Score: In terms of the overview requirement, the student is at band 5 or maybe band 6.

The other aspects of task achievement will decide which score the examiner gives.
2) The purpose and tone (general IELTS):

Here's how the student introduced the purpose of the letter in lesson 7:

I am writing this letter to tell you that I have a ticket participating in a music concert this weekend. It is one of the big music events sponsored by the MTV Entertainment Company.

Then, later in the letter (paragraph 3) we finally see the purpose:

I would like to give you my ticket.

Compare that to the opening sentence of my letter:

I hope you're well. I'm just writing to offer you a concert ticket that I won't be able to use.

Analysis:

- The student didn't make the main purpose of the letter clear in the opening sentence. Finally, in paragraph 3 we found out that the purpose of the letter was to offer the ticket.
- By contrast, I made the purpose super clear in just one sentence.
- In lesson 7, I also pointed out a ‘tone’ problem. The student used the word ‘Thus’, which is too formal for this type of letter to a friend.
- My letter had a consistently informal tone.

Score: In terms of the purpose and tone, the student’s letter is at band 5 or 6.

The other aspects of task achievement will decide which score the examiner gives.

Summary:

The overview paragraph (academic) and purpose sentence (general) are very important. With practice, it should be easy to get these elements right! Copy my writing method and style as closely as possible.