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The 14-Day Polish

Already holding a real 7.5? A fortnight is enough time to run the precision loop twice, find one repeated error, and prove you have removed it — plus a printable 14-day error log.

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The 14-Day Polish

A Fortnight Plan from 7.5 to 8.0

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What this book is

Fourteen days cannot teach you anything new. It does not need to. This book's whole method is that a fortnight is long enough to run one precision loop — measure, find the pattern, fix it, re-test — twice, and removing one repeated error is what actually moves this band. *The Band 8.0 Blueprint* lays that loop out in its own §7.2; this book turns it into a fourteen-day schedule.

Who this book is for. A candidate who already holds a real 7.5, from a sat test, with per-skill results in hand — not an estimate, and not a guess. If that is not you yet, this is not the right book: read on below for where to go instead.

What this book is not

It does not teach Listening, Reading, Writing or Speaking. Every technique it points to already has a full treatment elsewhere on this site, and the band logic behind the plan — why one skill can cap the whole result at this level, what changes and what does not between band 7 and band 8, why an error you keep making is invisible to you — belongs to *The Band 8.0 Blueprint*, cited by name throughout. This book's own content is the fourteen-day sequencing decision: how many precision

cycles a fortnight buys, which skill to spend them on, and what each week is for.

It does not own the error-log method. A fuller book on that subject is planned for this site and is not yet written. What follows here is the minimum log a fortnight actually needs — four columns, no more.

A plain note on which skills this fortnight suits best. Listening and Reading are marked by an answer key, so the log this book asks you to keep is exact and the re-test at the end gives you a number. Writing and Speaking are marked by a person, so the same log measures what you *noticed*, which is a weaker instrument — the whole reason this plan exists is that a systematic error is invisible to the person making it. If Writing or Speaking is your chosen skill, Part 6 says plainly what a fortnight can still do for you and what it cannot.

It does not cover the final 48 hours in its own words. From Day 2, you are in exactly the position *The 7-Day Emergency Plan's* reader is in during their own final days — consolidating, not fixing — so Part 7 points to that book's own Parts 5, 6 and 7 by name, rather than repeating material that book already covers well.

It does not decide whether 8.0 is the target you actually need, or whether you need it overall or in one skill only. *The Band 8.0 Blueprint's* own §7.1 already asks that question, including the per-skill-versus-overall distinction that costs readers real months when they get it wrong — read that section first if you have not already.

Who this is for

Someone holding a genuine 7.5 from a test they have already sat, who knows their per-skill results and wants the next half-band without a program of new study. Not someone estimating their level, and not someone with a skill still meaningfully below 7 — that is a different book's job.

If you are not there yet: a skill genuinely below band 7 needs *The 21-Day System* instead, built for rebuilding a weak skill rather than polishing a strong one. If your gap looks like a full band rather than a half, the longer plans in this category are the better fit once they are published — not yet, as of this edition.

How to use it

Part 3 covers Days 14 and 13 — your baseline and the log you will keep for the rest of the fortnight. Part 4 is the first precision cycle, Days 12 through 8. Part 5 is the second cycle, Days 7 through 3, at full length and under real conditions. Part 6 tells you how to read what the second cycle actually showed. Part 7 hands off to *The 7-Day Emergency Plan* for the final two days and the test morning itself. Part 8 is the printable log the whole plan runs on. Read Parts 1 through 3 once, in order, before you start; after that, the log itself tells you what today's task is.

One honest note

Nothing in this book claims that following it produces a specific score, and no number in it is invented. The band logic and the four-skill diagnostics are credited to the books that actually teach them; this book's only original content is the fourteen-day sequencing decision — how

many cycles a fortnight buys, and what each one is for. A fortnight will not close a full band, and it will not turn a weak skill into a strong one; it is built for removing one repeated error from a skill that is already close. Only an official test result tells you your actual band.

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Part 1 — Why a fortnight is a precision window, not a learning window



1.1 Fourteen days buys two cycles, not a curriculum

The Band 8.0 Blueprint's own §7.2 lays out a method rather than a calendar: establish a timed baseline, log every error by type across at least three attempts, find the pattern, fix the pattern rather than the single instance, then re-test and repeat. That book explicitly does not turn this into a schedule — it says a study calendar is a different book's job. This is that book.

The reason this plan runs the loop exactly twice, and not once or three times, is arithmetic rather than preference. A pattern is not reliably visible in fewer than about three logged attempts — one essay, one interview, one Listening section tells you almost nothing about whether an error repeats or was simply bad luck that day. Three attempts, spread across five or six days with time to log and reflect between them, is the

smallest run that shows a pattern honestly. Two runs of three, plus a short taper into the final days, is what fourteen days actually holds. This is the whole shape of the book: Part 4 is the first three-attempt cycle, Part 5 is the second, and everything else exists to support those two cycles or hand off cleanly once they are done.

This is stated once, here, because nothing later in this book is a new idea — Parts 3 through 6 are the mechanics of running two precision cycles well, not a reason to add a third or to stretch the loop into something it was not built to be.

1.2 Why removing one error beats improving four skills

The Band 8.0 Blueprint's §1.1 draws the distinction this whole plan rests on: band 7 tolerates errors that are not frequent, and band 8 tolerates errors that are not patterned. A candidate who keeps making the same small mistake is demonstrating a system, and a system is what holds a score down no matter how strong everything else in the answer is. Removing one such pattern is a bounded, finishable project. Getting generally better across four skills in two weeks is not — there is not enough time in a fortnight to move four skills meaningfully, and trying to spreads the same fourteen days over four smaller, shallower attempts instead of one that can actually finish.

The same book's §6.3 names the trap this plan is built to avoid: spending a month polishing an already-strong skill while a weaker one sits untouched, and the overall average not moving at all, because it was never the strong skill holding the score down. This plan commits early, in

Part 3, to the one skill that is actually the cheapest half-band to close — and holds to that commitment for the full fourteen days, rather than drifting back toward whichever skill feels most comfortable to practise.

Part 2 — Which half-band you are actually buying

2.1 The arithmetic, in brief

The Band 8.0 Blueprint's §1.2 covers the rounding rule in full and is not repeated here. The one consequence worth stating for a fourteen-day plan: overall 8.0 needs an average of 7.75, which leaves almost no room for a weak skill to hide behind a strong one the way it can at band 7. From a real 7.5, the gap to 8.0 is very often a single subscore's half-band, not a general lift across all four — which is exactly why this plan builds one skill, not four.

Delivery mode is confirmed the same way that book's §1.4 lineage describes: check now, once, and run every full-length attempt in Parts 4 and 5 under the mode you will actually sit, computer or paper. A fortnight is too short to discover a mismatch during Week 2.

2.2 The entry condition, stated plainly

This plan is for a reader holding a real 7.5, from a test already sat, with per-skill results already in hand. That is not a stylistic preference — the whole method depends on knowing which subscore is the cheapest half-band to close, and an estimate cannot answer that question reliably enough to commit fourteen days to one skill.

If you have not sat the test yet, or you do not have per-skill results, start with *The Band 8.0 Blueprint's* own §7.1 diagnostic — the honest question of whether 8.0 is even the target you need, and whether you need it overall or in one skill — before opening this book at all.

If a skill is genuinely below band 7, this is the wrong book. *The 21-Day System* is built for rebuilding a weak skill from a real gap, with three weeks rather than a fortnight because that is what rebuilding actually takes. Using this book's tighter, precision-only method on a from-scratch gap wastes the fourteen days on a problem they cannot solve.

If the gap looks like a full band rather than a half, the longer plans this category is expected to add — a month, two months, three — are the better fit once they exist. Not yet published, as of this edition. Forcing this book's two-cycle shape onto a full-band gap is the same mismatch in the other direction: not enough time for what a full band actually requires.

Part 3 — Days 14–13: Baseline, and a log worth keeping



3.1 Two timed baselines, then commit to one skill

A fortnight cannot afford to test all four skills properly, so narrow to the two most likely candidates first — usually the two your last sat test scored lowest, or the two you already suspect carry a repeating mistake. Run one full timed attempt in each, using that skill's own diagnostic:

If the candidate skill is	Run this diagnostic
Listening	<i>Listening 7.0's own diagnostic</i>
Reading	<i>Reading 7.0's own diagnostic</i>
Writing	<i>Band 7 Writing Task 2's Part 1 self-check</i>
Speaking	<i>IELTS Speaking: Parts 1, 2 and 3's own self-test</i>

Two attempts, across Days 14 and 13, not one rushed attempt in each on the same day — a self-test taken tired is a worse baseline than one taken fresh. Then commit to one of the two for the full fourteen days. The commitment itself is the point: switching skills on Day 8 because progress feels slow spends the fortnight without finishing either cycle, and a cycle interrupted partway through tells you nothing about whether the pattern it was chasing is actually gone.

A worked example, carried through the rest of this book. Say a candidate's two baselines come back with Reading showing three repeated question-type misses and Listening showing only one-off slips with no pattern between them. Reading is the pick — not because Reading is easier to fix in general, but because this candidate's own baseline shows a real pattern to chase, where the Listening result does not yet show one worth committing a fortnight to. Parts 4 through 6 follow this same candidate's Reading cycle, as the running illustration for whichever skill your own baselines actually flag.

3.2 The four-column log

Everything in Parts 4 and 5 runs on one log, kept the same way for both cycles:

What got marked wrong	Which type of error	Patterned or one-off	The one-line fix
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Four columns, because a log abandoned by Day 5 measures nothing, and this book is not the dedicated error-log method some of the questions you'll have about grouping errors deserve — that is a fuller treatment this

site plans to add and has not yet published. What follows in Part 4.2 is the minimum version that works inside a fortnight.

For the worked example: after the Day 13 Reading baseline, the candidate logs each wrong answer, notes it as True/False/Not Given confusion, Matching Headings, or something else, marks whether it looks like it has come up before, and leaves the fix column blank until Part 4.3 — no fixing yet, only counting.

3.3 You are your own second reader, and that is a weaker instrument

The Band 8.0 Blueprint's §6.1 is direct about what this plan is up against: a systematic error is invisible to the person making it, because the same blind spot that produces the mistake is doing the checking. The honest answer for a fortnight spent alone, without a tutor or a second examiner, is two weaker substitutes — genuinely weaker, not equivalent, but the two that a solo plan can actually offer:

Count, do not judge. Marking an error as "patterned or one-off" is closer to a tally than an opinion, and a tally does not need another person to be reliable. Resist the urge to explain the error away in the moment ("I knew that one, I was just rushing") — write down what happened, not why you think it happened.

Review on delay, not the same day. Reading your own attempt back immediately finds the errors you would have noticed anyway. Reading it back two or three days later, once the memory of writing or saying it has faded, comes closer to reading a stranger's work — close enough to catch a genuine pattern, though still not the same as a real second reader.

This plan does not pretend these substitutes are as reliable as another person's eyes. They are what a fortnight spent alone can honestly offer, and Part 6.2 returns to exactly how much weaker they are for the skills that are judged rather than marked by an answer key.

Part 4 — Days 12–8: Cycle 1 — find the pattern, fix the pattern

4.1 Three logged attempts before drawing any conclusion

Five days, three full timed attempts in your committed skill, every attempt logged in the same four columns from Part 3.2. No fixing yet. A fix applied after one attempt is a guess about a pattern that has not been shown to exist — the whole reason three attempts, not one, is the minimum this book asks for.

The technique for each attempt is not this book's to teach. Use the committed skill's own deep-dive book for the actual drilling: *Listening 7.0's* Part 4, *Reading 7.0's* Parts 4 and 5, *Band 7 Writing Task 2's* Part 3, or *IELTS Speaking: Parts 1, 2 and 3's* technique chapters, whichever matches the skill you committed to in Part 3.1. This book's only job across these five days is the logging discipline, not the technique.

For the worked example, the candidate runs three full Reading sections across Days 12, 10 and 8 — spaced, not back-to-back, so each attempt is logged and reviewed on delay before the next one, per Part 3.3 — logging every wrong answer's question type and whether it repeats.

4.2 Reading the log: what counts as one error type

Grouping decides whether a pattern is visible at all. Too fine, and every wrong answer looks unique. Too coarse, and everything gets grouped under "careless," which is not a pattern you can fix. A workable grouping sits at the level of the skill's own named categories — a question type in

Reading or Listening, a criterion in Writing or Speaking — not narrower than that, and not looser.

For the worked example: after three attempts, the log shows five wrong answers total. Three of them are True/False/Not Given questions where the candidate mistook "Not Given" for "False." That is one error type, appearing three times across three attempts — a pattern. The other two wrong answers are a Matching Headings slip and a vocabulary-in-context miss, each appearing once, with nothing to connect them — one-offs, not patterns, and not this cycle's target.

4.3 One fix, chosen on evidence

Pick the single highest-count pattern from the log and choose one fix for it — not three fixes for three different error types, even if all three appear tempting. Two simultaneous fixes cannot be told apart by Cycle 2's re-test in Part 5: if the error count falls, you will not know which fix caused it, and if it does not fall, you will not know which fix to abandon. One fix, written into the log as a testable claim: if this is fixed, this specific count falls.

The Band 8.0 Blueprint's §6.2 names the common case where the fix is to *stop* doing something rather than to add something — reaching for language you are not fully sure of, when the plainer version would have been safer. The same shape often applies outside Writing: for the worked example, the fix for True/False/Not Given confusion is not new vocabulary but a stricter rule — treat "Not Given" as the default answer whenever the passage does not state the claim outright, and only mark True or False when the text says so directly. One rule, one testable claim, carried into Part 5.

Part 5 — Days 7–3: Cycle 2 — prove the fix under full conditions

5.1 The re-test, at full length and under the real delivery mode

Same skill, same log, but now at full section length and in the delivery mode confirmed back in Part 2.1 — computer or paper, whichever you will actually sit. A fix that holds up in a short, isolated drill and disappears in the last ten minutes of a full section has not actually been fixed; this book only counts a fix as proven under the conditions of the real test, not a shortened version of it.

Run this cycle's three attempts across Days 7, 5 and 3 — spaced the same way Cycle 1 was, with review on delay between each. For the worked example, the candidate runs three full-length Reading sections under real time pressure, applying the "Not Given is the default" rule from Part 4.3 throughout, and logs every wrong answer exactly as before.

5.2 Did the count fall?

The verdict is the tally, not a feeling. Compare Cycle 1's count for the targeted pattern against Cycle 2's count for the same pattern. For an objectively marked skill — Listening or Reading — this comparison is exact: three occurrences became one, or became zero, or stayed at three. For a judged skill — Writing or Speaking — the same comparison is weaker, because counting relies on the same self-review Part 3.3 already named as a lesser instrument than a real second reader. Part 6.2 returns to exactly what that weaker read is still worth.

For the worked example: Cycle 1 showed the True/False/Not Given pattern three times across three attempts. Cycle 2 shows it once. That is real, visible movement — not a guarantee the pattern is gone for good, but strong enough evidence that the fix is working to carry into the final days rather than abandon it.

5.3 Holding the other three skills still for a fortnight

Over fourteen days, the risk of a genuinely strong skill slipping is small — nowhere near *The 21-Day System's* own three-week maintenance concern, which exists because three weeks is enough time for a skill to drift. One short, defined touch per untouched skill across the whole fortnight is enough: a single self-test-style set from that skill's own book, done once, not weekly. *The 21-Day System's* Part 3.3 covers the full maintenance argument for a longer plan; this book only needs its lighter fourteen-day version.

If fitting even that light touch in would cost time from either cycle, skip it. Protecting the two precision cycles this whole plan is built around matters more than a token touch on a skill that was never this fortnight's job.

Part 6 — Reading the second re-test honestly



6.1 A flat count three days out is information, not a verdict

If the targeted pattern did not fall — three occurrences in Cycle 1, three again in Cycle 2 — that means the fix was wrong, or the pattern was grouped too broadly or too narrowly back in Part 4.2, not that 8.0 is out of reach. With three days left, the right response is not to start a third cycle: there is no longer time to log three fresh attempts and act honestly on what they show. The right response is to stop changing technique and consolidate what you already know how to do, which Part 7 covers.

A flat result is worth carrying into the next attempt at this book, later, with a different grouping or a different fix — not a reason to conclude the method failed. One cycle pair testing one guess about one pattern is a small sample, and small samples sometimes miss.

6.2 Where this fortnight is strong, and where it is weak

Be honest about which kind of result you actually got, because the two skill groups do not give the same kind of evidence.

Listening and Reading are marked against an answer key. The Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 counts in Part 5.2 are exact numbers, and a fall from three to one is real, verifiable movement in exactly the pattern you targeted. This is where the fourteen-day method works closest to how it is described: measure, fix, re-test, get an honest answer.

Writing and Speaking are marked by a person, and here you are marking yourself. The count you log for Cycle 2 depends on the same self-review Part 3.3 already flagged as weaker than a real second reader — you are counting your own instances of your own blind spot, which is exactly the situation *The Band 8.0 Blueprint's* §6.1 warns is unreliable by nature. A falling count in Writing or Speaking is encouraging, but it is not the same strength of evidence a falling Reading count is, and this book will not claim otherwise.

What a fortnight can still do for a Writing or Speaking reader, honestly: remove one *mechanical, countable* habit — a specific grammatical slip, a memorised opening phrase used regardless of the question, the overwriting habit *The Band 8.0 Blueprint's* §6.2 names, where reaching for an impressive word costs more than it gains. Those are countable even without a second reader. What a fortnight cannot reliably do alone is verify a genuinely subtle judgement-level improvement — for that, a second reader, even an informal one, is worth more than another week of solo logging.

Part 7 — Days 2–1 and test morning

7.1 You are now where *The 7-Day Emergency Plan's* reader is

From Day 2, the work still left to do is consolidation, not fixing — exactly the position *The 7-Day Emergency Plan's* own reader is in during their final days. That book's Parts 5, 6 and 7 cover this in full: why new material now costs more than it gives, logistics over study the day before, sleep over one more practice attempt, and a short morning routine for test day itself. None of that is repeated here — read those three parts directly.

The one thing that differs at this point in a fourteen-day plan, worth a single sentence: your log is finished, not reopened. Whatever Part 5.2's re-test showed, the two cycles are done, and the final two days are not the moment to start questioning the fix or logging a third attempt. Close the log, and hand the rest of the preparation to the book built for exactly these final hours.

Part 8 — The printable 14-Day Error Log

Print these two pages, or copy both grids onto paper. The day grid tracks what you did each day; the error log underneath it is where the actual method lives — fill it in after every timed attempt, not at the end of the fortnight.

The 14-day grid

Day	Attempt or rest	Cycle	Confidence (1–5)
Day 14			
Day 13			
Day 12			
Day 11			
Day 10			
Day 9			
Day 8			
Day 7			
Day 6			
Day 5			
Day 4			
Day 3			
Day 2			
Day 1			

The error log

Fill in one row per wrong answer or noted slip, for every attempt in both cycles. Leave the fix column blank until Cycle 1's three attempts are all logged — no fixing before Part 4.3.

What got marked wrong	Which type of error	Patterned or one-off	The one-line fix

A confidence rating that has not moved between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 is worth noticing on its own — it is a sign the fix chosen in Part 4.3 did not target the right pattern, the same honest read Part 6.1 gives a flat error count, checked here against how the fortnight actually felt rather than only the tally.

The end

You started with fourteen days and a real 7.5, and one question: which repeated error was actually costing you the last half-band. If you followed the plan, Days 14 and 13 answered that question with a baseline instead of a guess, two cycles of measuring and fixing gave that error a chance to actually disappear, and from Day 2 you handed off to *The 7-Day Emergency Plan* for the final stretch and the test morning itself.

None of this replaces the work that got you to 7.5 in the first place. What it does is spend a short, bounded amount of time on the one thing most likely to move the last half-band, instead of a general review that touches everything and fixes nothing in particular.

About the pointers. Nothing in this book teaches a technique from scratch — every pointer sends you to a full treatment already published on this site, and the band logic behind the whole method belongs to *The Band 8.0 Blueprint*. If a pointer did not make sense on its own, the book it names is where the explanation actually lives.

About the promise. Nothing here is a guarantee. A fortnight is stated plainly, throughout this book, as enough time to remove one repeated error from a skill that was already close — not enough time to close a full band, and not a method for a skill still meaningfully below 7. The log you kept is evidence of what changed for you; only an official test result determines your actual band.

Good luck with the test, and with whatever it is a step toward.

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