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A GUIDE TO WRITING TASK 2

Includes 12 tasks with model
answers and explanatory notes

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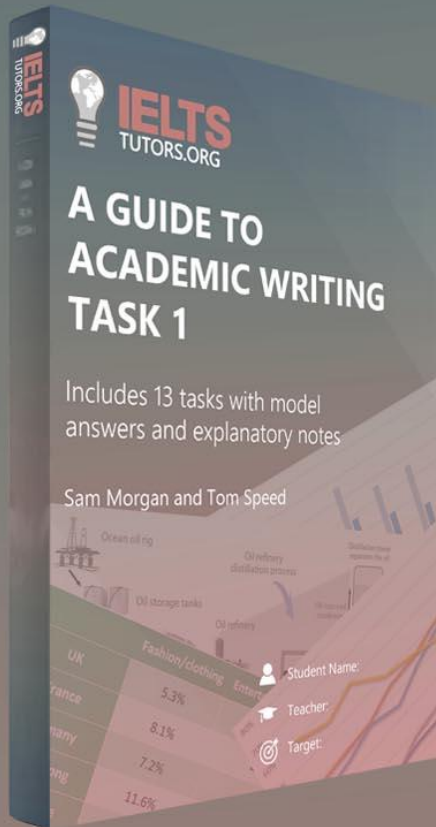


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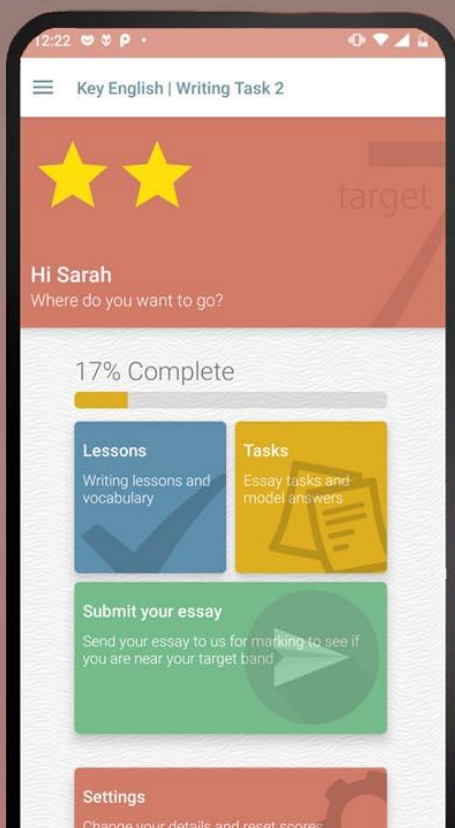
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HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK

1) With our Online Writing Course

(<https://www.ieltstutors.org/online-courses.html>)

This eBook contains example IELTS writing task 2 essays from our *[online task 2 writing course](https://www.ieltstutors.org/course-writing-task-2-preparation.html). We recommend that you use this book as a study aid while you complete the online course.

*<https://www.ieltstutors.org/course-writing-task-2-preparation.html>

The online course contains 47 lessons that cover all of the task 2 essay types. It provides in depth exploration of the language and strategies that are introduced in this eBook as well as providing you

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with tutor support through email, Skype and our learner forums. If you do not yet have access to the course, use the coupon code below at checkout to get **15% off**.

Use the code at checkout when you purchase the course. Follow the steps below.

1. Visit the [course page](https://www.ieltstutors.org/course-writing-task-2-preparation.html) (<https://www.ieltstutors.org/course-writing-task-2-preparation.html>)
2. Select 'Buy Now'
3. Apply coupon code 'WTAC2020' to receive your discount

2) As Standalone Material

Each of the 12 tasks in this eBook comes with a model answer (we refer to the model answers as essays). After each essay, notes explain the essay organization and structure, as well as important aspects of the language. Studying all 12 essays and the accompanying notes provides a good introduction to how to achieve a high band score in writing task 2.

To make the most of this book, we recommend that you write each essay before you read our model answer. Follow the steps below:

- 1) Begin with the first task of the book.
- 2) Read the task very carefully. What are the key words in the task? Key words tell you what the topic of the essay is.
- 3) Consider how many parts the question has. To get a good task response score, all parts of the question must be fully answered. For example, the following question has two parts: *'What are the problems of... and what are the solutions?'*. A roughly equal amount of space in the essay must be spent answering both parts of the question. Likewise, a *'discuss both views'* task has two parts, meaning that you must spend equal time discussing each of the two views. A task with one part, such as *'To what extent do you agree/disagree?'* means that you can write a one-sided argument if you wish.
- 4) Spend 5 to 10 minutes brainstorming ideas and planning how to organise them so you could write the essay yourself. As you will see, we recommend that you write 4 paragraphs. The first paragraph should introduce the topic and include a thesis statement (a sentence which states your opinion). The second and third paragraphs should include the main arguments of your essay. Make sure they are relevant to the topic and question!
- 5) Write your essay. To improve your time management, you may wish to time yourself (write at least 250 words in 40 minutes including planning time).
- 6) Compare your finished essay to our model and study our notes. Is there anything you can learn from our notes that you could have used to make your essay better?
- 7) Rewrite your essay using the lessons learned from our notes.
- 8) Repeat this process for all of the tasks in the book.

If you follow these steps correctly, by the end of the book you will have a good understanding of how to write a high quality task 2 essay. If you have any questions about the IELTS test or this eBook, send an email to us as ieltstutors.org@gmail.com

We hope you find this book and our courses useful and we wish you good luck on your IELTS journey!

Sam and Tom

Founders of IELTSTutors.org

ABOUT THE IELTS ACADEMIC WRITING TASK 2 TEST

The IELTS writing test is a 1-hour test which includes two tasks. Academic and General candidates complete very different tasks for task 1. However, task 2 is very similar for both candidates as it involves writing an essay.

In task 2 of the IELTS Writing test, the candidate is presented with an opinion, idea, argument or problem, which he/she must respond to. It is important for the ideas in the essay to be logical and well organised. The essay must be at least 250 words and should be completed in no more than 40 minutes. Learn more about the writing test on our website [here](#).

When examiners mark a task 2 essay, they award a band score (from 1, lowest; to 9, highest) for 4 different criteria: task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource and grammatical range and accuracy. Find out more about these criteria and how to achieve a good band score for each one below.

TASK RESPONSE

Task response is a measure of how well the essay question is answered. If all parts of the question are covered and the ideas are logical then task response will be high.

The key aspects of task response are:

Length - You must write a minimum of 250 words in 40 minutes. Writing below this may cause you to lose marks for task response.

Topic introduction - The first sentence of your essay should be a good quality paraphrase of the task 2 topic.

Position – A good writer makes his/her position (opinion) clear throughout the essay. Make sure that if the examiner only reads your introduction and conclusion, he/she knows exactly what your position is regarding the question. Not doing so makes it unlikely for you to reach a band 7.

Quality of main ideas - Each paragraph should begin with a main idea or argument, followed by supporting details. Are your main ideas easy to understand and relevant to the task? If they are not relevant you will not get above a band 5 for task response.

Support for ideas - Each paragraph should begin with a main idea or argument, followed by supporting details. Do you support your main ideas with clear explanations, examples and/or reasons?

COHERENCE AND COHESION

A coherent essay is one that is logical and well organised. Cohesion refers to the accurate use of grammar and vocabulary to link information. Correct use of linking words and reference words increase cohesion.

The key aspects of coherence and cohesion are:

Thesis statement - A thesis statement is usually the final sentence of the introduction. It should make your position clear regarding the question. A good thesis statement should also suggest how the essay is organized.

Here is an example: *'I believe that the issue of obesity should be tackled by introducing a sugar tax on unhealthy food and by improving health education in schools.'* This thesis statement indicates that body paragraph 1 (the next paragraph) will argue for a sugar tax and body paragraph 2 will argue for improving health education in schools.

Topic sentences - Topic sentences state the main idea or argument of a paragraph. The topic sentence should be the first sentence of the paragraph.

Progression of ideas - In good writing, ideas should be logical and flow smoothly. Do your ideas progress naturally and clearly from one to the next, or do they feel disconnected?

Linking ideas - Do you use a variety of words and phrases to link your ideas (i.e. 'however', 'secondly', 'furthermore', 'for instance').

Referencing and substitution - To avoid repetition of nouns we use referencing, such as 'he', 'this', 'it', and substitution, such as 'these ideas', 'such people'.

Paragraph unity – Each paragraph must have a clear purpose (to express a main idea/argument) that is separate from the other paragraphs. Is this true of your writing?

Within each paragraph, are all the sentences connected to the purpose of that paragraph?

Here is an example paragraph that has a sentence that does not logically fit it:

*'Advertising can have a number of harmful effects (**topic sentence**). Firstly, the way adverts depict the life of others can make viewers feel insecure about themselves (**first support**). For instance, when we see a beautiful couple on TV selling a new range of clothes, we may wonder why we are not as beautiful, or why we have not found similar love (**example of support**). Repeated viewing is likely to have a negative impact on our mental health (**consequence of support**). Students should be taught more about mental health in schools (**disconnected sentence - not about advertising - that should not be in the paragraph**). Secondly... (**second support**)... etc.'*

Conclusion - The conclusion should begin with a signal ('In conclusion,'). The conclusion should summarise the main arguments of your essay. You can finish the essay with a final comment (typically a warning, suggestion or a prediction). Here is a shortened example: *'In conclusion (**signal**), although *** can be useful (**one argument**), I believe that *** is better (**my position**) because.... (**strongest argument**). To move forward, we should... (**suggestion**)'*

LEXICAL RESOURCE

This refers to your use of vocabulary. The wider the range of vocabulary you use to accurately express yourself, then the higher your band score will be. Spelling and word formation are also important for a good lexical resource score.

The key aspects of lexical resource are:

Academic register - Use formal language which is suitable for essay writing (i.e. use academic vocabulary when possible, avoid contractions such as 'don't', and avoid a conversational, informal tone such as '*there is a lot of stuff that has got to get better*').

Precision - Use the appropriate vocabulary to clearly express your ideas.

For example, '*In recent years there has been a rise in the number of people buying cars*' ('a rise' does not give much detail). This sentence could be improved using more precise language. For example, '*In recent years there has been a significant and sustained rise in the number of people buying cars*' ('a significant and sustained rise' contains much more detail and is therefore a more precise use of vocabulary).

Range - Do you have a wide vocabulary or do you often repeat the same words? In general, try to avoid repeating the same word in the same sentence or group of sentences.

Word formation – As with people, words have families. Different forms of words (verb, noun, adjective) in the same family are formed and spelt differently. You need to choose the correct form of each word and consider how it is spelt (for example, '*People are always interested in stories*' rather than '*People are always interesting in stories*').

Collocation - Collocations are pairs of words that are found together. For example, '*I am preparing for an exam*' is a correct *verb preposition* collocation while '*I am preparing at an exam*' is an incorrect collocation. Do you use the correct collocations?

Spelling - Do you make many spelling mistakes?

GRAMMATICAL RANGE AND ACCURACY

Grammatical range is high if you use a wide variety of different grammatical structures and sentence types. Try to use a range of simple, compound and complex sentences. Grammatical accuracy is high if you make few grammar mistakes.

The key aspects of grammatical range and accuracy are:

Range of structures - Use a number different complex sentence types. A complex sentence must include at least one independent clause and one dependent clause. Some useful types of complex structures are conditionals, relative clauses, time clauses, noun clauses and contrast clauses. In your writing, do you use different complex structures?

Overall Accuracy – Good writing is grammatically accurate. How frequently do you make grammatical mistakes and do they make your writing difficult to understand?

Verb accuracy – Do you use verb tense effectively? Do you know when to use gerunds and infinitives?

Noun accuracy – Can you accurately form noun and complex noun phrases? Many IELTS candidates make errors with plural and singular nouns as well as with articles ('a', 'an' & 'the'). Can you add

more information to a noun using prepositional phrases and relative clauses in order to form complex nouns?

Punctuation - Do you use punctuation (capitals, commas & full stops) accurately? Be especially careful when using punctuation in long sentences that contain a number of clauses.

Study the marking criteria for the different bands by looking at the band descriptors on the following page.

If you would like a tutor to mark your reports and give you a detailed breakdown of your level based on these criteria, you can [order writing feedback on our website](https://www.ieltstutors.org/writing-marking.html).
(<https://www.ieltstutors.org/writing-marking.html>)

BAND DESCRIPTORS

Band	Task Response	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully addresses all parts of the task presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skilfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sufficiently addresses all parts of the task presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task presents a clear position throughout the response presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to overgeneralise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use presents a clear central topic within each paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately uses paragraphing, but not always logically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate range of vocabulary attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no conclusions drawn presents some main ideas but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression makes inadequate, inaccurate or over use of cohesive devices may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution may not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a limited range of structures attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate presents a position but this is unclear presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive may not write in paragraphs or their use may be confusing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not adequately address any part of the task does not express a clear position presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not organise ideas logically may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling errors may severely distort the message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> barely responds to the task does not express a position may attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has very little control of organisational features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answer is completely unrelated to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to communicate any message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can only use a few isolated words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot use sentence forms at all
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attend does not attempt the task in any way writes a totally memorised response 			

GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT TERMS

This is a small collection of important words and phrases that we use frequently in this book and when teaching. Make sure you are familiar with these terms before reading our task notes.

Body Paragraph	The paragraphs, usually 2, which contain the main arguments in your essay. The introduction paragraph is not a body paragraph.
Collocation	Two words that are often used together. For example, <i>account for & higher education</i> .
Clause	A group of words that contains a verb and usually a subject. A clause may be a whole sentence or a part of a sentence.
Independent Clause	A clause containing at least a subject and a verb. An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence. For example: <i>Most of them were satisfied</i> .
Dependent Clause	A group of words usually containing a subject and a verb but which does not express a complete thought and so cannot stand alone as a sentence. For example: <i>When people were questioned, most of them were satisfied</i> . <i>When people were questioned</i> is a dependent time clause and it must accompany an independent clause. If the dependent clause precedes the independent clause then the two are separate by a comma.
Complex noun phrase	A noun that is followed by extra information in the form of a relative clause, prepositional phrase or other structure (for example, <i>the vast majority of people who visited – majority is the head noun and more information is provided about it with the prepositional phrase <i>of people</i> and the relative clause <i>who visited</i></i>).
Paraphrase	A paraphrase is when a message is retold using different vocabulary and/or grammar. For example, <i>The number of homeowners rose significantly / There was a dramatic increase in the amount of people who owned homes</i> . The second sentence paraphrases the first, meaning it presents exactly the same meaning as the first, but with different vocabulary and grammar.
Phrase	A small group of words standing together as a conceptual unit. They typically form a part of a clause (for example: <i>Most of them were satisfied</i> . This sentence is formed of the noun phrase <i>Most of them</i> and the verb phrase <i>were satisfied</i>).
Topic Sentence	Usually placed at the beginning of a body paragraph. A sentence that tells the reader the topic of the paragraph.

GIFTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE | STRUCTURE

Study this task in our online course: Module 2 – Opinion Essays, [‘Structuring the Essay’](#)

Some people think that money is the best gift to give to young people while others think other types of gifts are better for young people.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

(Our notes: Make sure you discuss both views, not just the view that you agree with)

MODEL ESSAY

*It can be a struggle to select an appropriate gift for a young relative or the child of a friend. While some believe that money is the best type of gift, **I agree with** those who suggest other gifts are more suitable.*

Many people believe that money makes an excellent present. Proponents of this view may suggest that young people already have what they need in terms of toys and gadgets and so giving them more will not be of benefit. They also argue that the young may actually learn valuable skills from the process of choosing to save or spend their money. For example, if the young person chooses to spend the money, they will learn the value of things that they wish to buy and what they can or cannot afford. This could make them more financially mature and independent.

On the other hand, I am in agreement with those who believe that actual gifts are better than money. An important reason is that money is quite an impersonal gift since it shows no understanding of the interests of the receiver. It is therefore more appropriate to give something that shows the adult understands the desires of the young person, such as a piece of jewelry or the shirt of his/her favourite sports club. Furthermore, an educational gift, such as a book, or a useful gift, such as a watch, allows the young person to develop or improve his/her skills and so is directly beneficial.

*In conclusion, whereas many believe that financial gifts may increase independence and be popular, **I side with** those who suggest gifts showing an understanding of the young person or which are educational are more beneficial. It is clearly important to consider the needs and interests of young people when selecting gifts. (298 words)*

COLOUR KEY

Topic Introduction

Thesis Statement

Topic Sentences (outline the topic of the paragraph)

Conclusion Signal

Summary of Arguments

NOTES | STRUCTURE

This essay is very well structured and would receive a band 9 in the IELTS test. Below is an analysis of the structure of the essay.

The first thing we notice is that there are 4 paragraphs:

Paragraph 1

The introduction paragraph includes a sentence that introduces the topic and the thesis statement.

The thesis statement has two purposes. Firstly, it presents the writer's opinion regarding the essay question, and secondly, it outlines the arguments in the following paragraphs.

Here the thesis statement is: *'While some believe that money is the best type of gift, I agree with those who suggest other gifts are more suitable.*

From this, it is clear that the writer thinks that money is not the best gift and that he/she will first present a counter argument (the belief that 'money is the best type of gift'), and then present the main argument (that 'other gifts are more suitable').

This is a great way of using the thesis statement to organize the order of the essay.

Paragraph 1: *It can be a struggle to select an appropriate gift for a young relative or the child of a friend. While some believe that money is the best type of gift, I agree with those who suggest other gifts are more suitable.*

Paragraph 2

This is the first body (or argument) paragraph, which presents a counter argument (an argument which the writer disagrees with).

Paragraph 2 begins with a topic sentence. This sentence tells the reader what this paragraph is about. From this topic sentence, we know that the paragraph will explain why *'people believe that money makes an excellent present.'*

The writer introduces the details which support the topic sentence with the phrase *‘Proponents of this view may suggest...’*. ‘Proponents’ are ‘people who support (an idea)’. This cleverly shows that these supporting details are not the opinions of the writer.

The sentences following the topic sentence provide reasons and examples which support the topic sentence. The paragraph finishes with a possible positive consequence of giving money as a gift.

Paragraph 2: *Many people believe that money makes an excellent present. Proponents of this view may suggest that young people already have what they need in terms of toys and gadgets and so giving them more will not be of benefit. They also argue that the young may actually learn valuable skills from the process of choosing to save or spend their money. For example, if the young person chooses to spend the money, they will learn the value of things that they wish to buy and what they can or cannot afford. This could make them more financially mature and independent.*

Paragraph 3

This is the second body (or argument) paragraph, containing the writer’s main argument.

Paragraph 3 also begins with a **topic sentence**, so that we know it will argue that *‘actual gifts are better than money.’*

The paragraph then explains the reasons behind this and gives examples of gifts and their benefits.

Paragraph 3: *On the other hand, I am in agreement with those who believe that actual gifts are better than money. An important reason is that money is quite an impersonal gift since it shows no understanding of the interests of the receiver. It is therefore more appropriate to give something that shows the adult understands the desires of the young person, such as a piece of jewelry or the shirt of his/her favourite sports club. Furthermore, an educational gift, such as a book, or a useful gift, such as a watch, allows the young person to develop or improve his/her skills and so is directly beneficial.*

Paragraph 4

Paragraph 4 is the conclusion paragraph.

This paragraph starts with a **conclusion signal** *‘In conclusion,...’* to inform the reader that this is the final paragraph and summarises the main arguments found in the essay.

The summary of the arguments is in red, and also includes the writers position (his/her opinion).

The essay finishes with a piece of advice that is connected to the topic. Other finishing sentences could include a warning, a suggestion or a prediction.

Paragraph 4: *In conclusion, whereas many believe that financial gifts may increase independence and be popular, I side with those who suggest gifts showing an understanding of the young person or*

which are educational are more beneficial. It is clearly important to consider the needs and interests of young people when selecting gifts.

Vocabulary note: *I side with... = I agree with...*

Note that it is important to include **your opinion** both in the thesis statement in the introduction and in the summary sentence in the conclusion.

STATUS AND POSSESSIONS | RELEVANT IDEAS

Study this task in our online course: Module 2 – Opinion Essays, [‘Generating Ideas’](#)

A person’s worth nowadays seems to be judged according to social status and material possessions. Old-fashioned values, such as honour, kindness and trust, no longer seem important.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

(Our note: Both sentences are presented as opinions, so you should discuss both social status and material possessions, as well as old fashioned values. You could agree with the statement, disagree with the statement or have a balanced opinion (both agreeing and disagreeing) with the statement.)

MODEL ESSAY

Status and money are highly valued in today’s society and have certainly changed our values to some extent. However, in everyday life I don’t believe a person’s worth is judged that differently compared to in the past.

It is apparent that most celebrities today are admired or envied solely for their material wealth or position in various social hierarchies. Many of these people are known to turn their backs on friends, cheat on their spouses or spend their evenings over-indulging in alcohol and/or drugs. Things like owning a mansion, driving an expensive car and getting into A-list parties are exalted above old-fashioned values. Ultimately, though, it is the many readers of gossip magazines and celebrity blogs who reinforce these ideas.

Nevertheless, I do believe that in their day-to-day lives most people still believe in values such as honour, kindness and trust. In some way most of us want to form loving families, raise our children to be good citizens, stand up for the downtrodden and protect our communities from harm. We still form friendships, romances and business partnerships based on old-fashioned criteria. For example, when our trust is abused or we are unfairly treated, we see that as a major violation of our relationship and we judge the wrongdoer accordingly.

In conclusion, while status and possessions as a measure of a person’s worth have become more popular, the behavior of most ordinary people shows that the old values are still strong. It is unlikely that honour, kindness, and trust will ever be replaced while parents continue to teach their children to respect them. (263 words)

NOTES | RELEVANT IDEAS

For this task we will look at the relevance of ideas. When you generate arguments, it is important that they are directly connected to the task. This task asks you to discuss whether status and possessions rather than personal qualities such as kindness are more highly respected in today's society. Thus, our arguments should be based on evidence that supports these ideas.

In the model answer, the writer first presents evidence that some rich and famous people seem materialistic, which directly supports the 'status and possessions' argument. The writer uses this as a **counter argument** to his main argument which is that people still care more about traditional personal qualities. This is supported by examples of the way in which most societies and people function (*'most of us want to form loving families'*). Both arguments together address all parts of the task in a relevant and meaningful way. However, notice that the writer presents his strongest argument in the second body paragraph. This is a common convention of academic writing in English.

If you are finding it difficult to think of arguments, it helps to look at the topic from different perspectives. Here are some examples:

The perspective of the **individual**: What evidence is there that individual people are materialistic?

The perspective of the **culture/society**: What evidence is there that society is materialistic?

The perspective of the **environment**: Does the way we treat the environment suggest that we are materialistic and have lost kindness?

The perspective of **economics**: Does the way we think about money and growth suggest we are materialistic and have lost kindness?

Some of these perspectives may be easily applied to the task, and some might be more difficult, but thinking in this way will help you grow ideas.

Here are the main perspectives you may consider when planning:

Individual

Cultural/societal

Environmental

Economic

Technological

Political

Education Related

Health Related

Here is an example of a task that can be looked at from different perspectives:

Social Media has become a very popular way for people to communicate.

Is this a positive or a negative development?

Let's look at it from different perspectives. Think of your own ideas first, then compare them to ours.

Individual

People can effortlessly send messages or talk to any of their friends or colleagues.

People may feel envy or jealousy if they see others on social media with seemingly perfect lives.

Cultural/societal

Countries will be more connected as distant communication is very easy.

People may choose to socialize in real life less frequently, leading to an increase in loneliness across society.

Environmental

If people can socialize online, they may choose to do so rather than travelling somewhere, saving pollution from vehicle exhausts.

Building and running the phones, computers and servers needed for social media can damage the environment.

Economic

The popularity of social media has led to the growth of huge tech companies that employ thousands of people.

These multinational companies often pay very little tax on their income.

Technological

Due to the success of social media, it is important to keep researching newer technology to improve our phones, computers, servers, connection speeds etc. which can help other online and technology based sectors.

Political

Social media is sometimes used to influence our ideas about politics. This has helped create 'fake news'.

Education Related

Social media can be a useful source of information if we can separate what is true from what is fake.

Social media has led to online bullying.

Health Related

Sitting down and looking at a screen for hours a day can damage our posture and our eyes.

No enough face-to-face interaction may cause anxiety.

Notice how we can think of a great variety of ideas by thinking of different perspectives. Remember that we shouldn't include too many ideas in our essay because then we will not have time to develop them all. Instead, you should choose 2 of your favourite arguments / perspectives to write about (one body paragraph per argument/perspective). After you have chosen your main arguments, remember to support them with explanations and/or examples.

Next time you are planning an essay, try thinking about the topic from a number of these perspectives and see if they help you to generate interesting ideas.

LEARNING ENGLISH | PARAGRAPH UNITY

Studying the English language in an English speaking country is the best but not the only way to learn the language.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

MODEL ESSAY

These days, there are many effective ways to learn a foreign language. It is clear that a student can learn English to a high level in his/her home country; however, studying in an English speaking country can lead to faster language learning due to immersion in the culture.

These days, students in non-English-speaking countries commonly learn English to an acceptable level in high schools and universities in their own countries. Although their spoken English may not be that accurate or fluent, their knowledge of grammar is often quite good, which is extremely important when students come to an English speaking country to try and perfect their use of the language. In addition to this, studying the basics of English at secondary school in one's home country is less stressful than learning the language while overseas. This is because students living at home do not have the anxiety caused by problems such as finding accommodation, financing a foreign trip and trying to survive in a foreign country where day to day living away from support networks of friends and family may cause stress.

On the other hand, there are several obvious advantages to learning English in English speaking countries. Every day there are frequent chances to practice listening to and speaking with native speakers, which leads to faster learning. If a student chooses to live with a local host family which does not speak her first language, she can immerse herself in the language and experience the culture first-hand, helping to improve fluency. Furthermore, if students attend an English language school full-time, the teachers will be native speakers. In this case, not only do the student's speaking and listening skills improve, but attention can be given to developing reading and writing skills as well.

In conclusion, even though it is clearly desirable to study English in an English-speaking country, a reasonable level of English can be achieved at home if a student is hardworking and motivated to improve. Hopefully in the future, more students will have the opportunity to study languages abroad. (341 words)

NOTES | PARAGRAPH UNITY

What is paragraph unity? If a body paragraph has unity, all of the sentences in the paragraph support and expand on the topic sentence. This means that there should be no sentences in a paragraph that are not connected to the topic of that paragraph. This can be demonstrated with this sample essay.

This essay has two body paragraphs. We can see a **topic sentence** at the beginning of each one.

Body paragraph 1: *These days, students in non-English speaking countries commonly learn English to an acceptable level in high schools and universities in their own countries. Although their spoken English may not be that accurate or fluent, their knowledge of grammar is often quite good, which is extremely important when students come to an English speaking country to try and perfect their use of the language. In addition to this, studying the basics of English at secondary school in one's home country is less stressful than learning the language while overseas. This is because students living at home do not have the anxiety caused by problems such as finding accommodation, financing a foreign trip and trying to survive in a foreign country where day to day living away from support networks of friends and family may cause stress.*

The first topic sentence is '*These days, students in non-English-speaking countries commonly learn English to an acceptable level in high schools and universities in their own countries.*' This tells the reader that this paragraph discusses learning English in a student's home country. The paragraph explains what 'acceptable level' means (using knowledge of grammar as an example) and adds an argument that studying in your own country is less stressful. These ideas are all connected to the topic sentence and there are no sentences or ideas that do not belong.

Body paragraph 2: *On the other hand, there are several obvious advantages to learning English in English speaking countries. Every day there are frequent chances to practice listening to and speaking with native speakers, which leads to faster learning. If a student chooses to live with a local host family which does not speak his first language, he can immerse himself in the language and experience the culture first-hand, helping to improve fluency. Furthermore, if students attend an English language school full-time, the teachers will be native speakers. In this case, not only do the student's speaking and listening skills improve, but attention can be given to developing reading and writing skills as well.*

The topic sentence informs us that the topic of this paragraph is related to '*several obvious advantages to learning English in English speaking countries.*' The paragraph then describes these advantages with examples that are all connected to the topic.

Both body paragraphs have unity and contain arguments that are fully developed. When you write academic essays, make sure that the body paragraphs have unity and that all of the ideas which you present are relevant to the topic.

OBESITY | LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES

Study this task in our online course: Module 4 – Problem Solution Essays, [‘Vocabulary in Context 1’](#)

Obesity is a serious problem in many countries, especially in rich countries.

What causes obesity and how can it be solved?

MODEL ESSAY

*With the advent of urbanisation and the rise in popularity of fast food, there have been accompanying issues with rising obesity rates, **especially** in developed countries such as the UK and the USA. It is clear that obesity rates are higher in developed countries because their citizens are wealthier; however, there are **a number of ways** in which the obesity epidemic can be ameliorated.*

***To begin with**, it should be unsurprising that fast food is incredibly popular in wealthy countries. **Due to** the high levels of development in these countries, consumers possess more money and can **therefore** consume vast amounts of fast food without seriously diminishing their income. **For example**, the American Dietary Association found that compared to the average Indian household, the average American household has a six times larger budget for food per month. **Consequently, it is to be expected that** obesity rates are much higher in countries with larger amounts of wealth.*

***However, despite** the severity of the obesity problem, **there are a number of ways in which** developed countries could battle it more effectively. **Firstly**, developed governments could put far more pressure on fast food outlets to provide healthy alternatives to hamburgers, French fries and soft drinks. **Secondly**, public exercise initiatives could be advertised and promoted far more vigorously. **Lastly**, modules that inform teenagers about healthy dietary requirements could be taught at schools.*

***In conclusion, although** obesity is a serious issue in the developed world, if we can make fast food companies accountable for damage to health and promote exercise, the situation will surely improve in the coming years. (263 words)*

NOTES | LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES

In the model essay above, the words and phrases which link or introduce ideas have been highlighted. These are very useful tools to make your essays flow smoothly and give you a high **coherence and cohesion** band score.

The function of each linking word/phrase is discussed below.

*With the advent of urbanisation and the rise in popularity of fast food, there have been accompanying issues with rising obesity rates, **especially** in developed countries such as the UK and the USA. It is clear that obesity rates are higher in developed countries because their citizens are wealthier; however, there are **a number of ways** in which the obesity epidemic can be ameliorated.*

especially – used to highlight the high relevance or importance of the following countries.

a number of ways – this informs the reader that there will be more than one solution offered to the obesity problem.

***To begin with**, it should be unsurprising that fast food is incredibly popular in wealthy countries. **Due to** the high levels of development in these countries, consumers possess more money and can **therefore** consume vast amounts of fast food without seriously diminishing their income. **For example**, the American Dietary Association found that compared to the average Indian household, the average American household has a six times larger budget for food per month. **Consequently, it is to be expected that** obesity rates are much higher in countries with larger amounts of wealth.*

To begin with – this phrase introduces the first argument.

Due to – this is a useful phrase to introduce a cause. It is always followed by a noun or noun phrase and a comma.

therefore – this word introduces the result of a previously mentioned cause.

For example – this common phrase introduces an example. Alternative phrases you can use are ‘for instance’, ‘one example is’ and ‘this can be seen in/by/with’.

Consequently, it is to be expected that – this phrase introduces a result and informs the reader that the following statement is a likely (expected) outcome.

***However, despite** the severity of the obesity problem, **there are a number of ways in which** developed countries could battle it more effectively. **Firstly**, developed governments could put far more pressure on fast food outlets to provide healthy alternatives to hamburgers, French fries and soft drinks. **Secondly**, public exercise initiatives could be advertised and promoted far more vigorously. **Lastly**, modules that inform teenagers about healthy dietary requirements could be taught at schools.*

However – when it is used at the beginning of a paragraph, ‘however’ is a signal that the paragraph will offer a counter argument to the argument in the paragraph before.

despite – this introduces a contrast which links the negative obesity issue with the positive possible solutions.

Firstly, Secondly, Lastly – these words are used to sequence or organise a list of ideas or the steps of a process.

*In conclusion, **although** obesity is a serious issue in the developed world, if we can make fast food companies accountable for damage to health and promote exercise, the situation will surely improve in the coming years.*

In conclusion, - this conclusion signal informs the reader that the paragraph will conclude the essay.

although – this word introduces a contrast clause. It signals the contrast between obesity and the solutions in the conclusion.

Try using some of these words and phrases in your next essay to connect your ideas together.

PARENTS WHO WORK | GRAMMAR

Study this task in our online course: Module 3 - Discussion Essays, [‘Linking Words and Phrases 2’](#)

In today’s competitive world, many families find it necessary for both parents go out to work. While some say the children in these families benefit from the additional income, others feel they lack support because of their parents’ absence.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

(Our note: The first sentence ‘In today’s competitive world...’ is presented as a fact. Therefore, you are not expected to discuss this part of the task. The second sentence ‘While some say...’ contains the views that you need to discuss. In order to receive a high score for task response, both views must be discussed).

MODEL ESSAY

In the past, a typical family consisted of a father who went out to work and a mother who stayed at home and looked after the children; however, nowadays, it is the norm for both parents to work. This situation can affect children both positively and negatively.

Some people think that the children of working parents are in an advantageous position as their parents are able to afford more luxuries such as new clothes, video games or mobile phones. Proponents of this view argue that children are able to enjoy and experience more from life due to their parents’ extra wealth, for example, by going on foreign holidays.

On the other hand, there are those who claim that when both parents work, their children do not get enough support and attention. This may mean that these children might not do as well at school because there is no one at home to provide support with such things as homework or exam revision. Young people may procrastinate or play games if their parents are not there to make sure they study. The absence of parents at home could also make it easier for children to get involved in such things as drugs or underage drinking. A responsible guardian at home can make sure that the young person does not get involved in dangerous activities with the wrong people.

In conclusion, I believe that we cannot change the fact that both parents have to work nowadays; it is not an ideal situation, but if parents make time for their children in the evenings and at the weekends, then the children will not suffer in any way. It must be stated that the extra income generated by both parents working makes for a much higher standard of living which benefits the whole family. (300 words)

NOTES | GRAMMAR

A range of simple, compound and complex sentences are needed in order to attain a high grammatical range and accuracy band score. The writer of this sample essay uses grammar effectively and would receive a high grammatical range and accuracy band score.

In the introduction sentence we can see both the **present** and **past** tenses used correctly: *'In the past, a typical family **consisted** of a father **who went** out to work and a mother **who stayed** at home and **looked** after the children; however, nowadays, it **is** the norm for both parents to work.'*

Defining relative clauses are used to add details to the nouns 'father' and 'mother': 'a father *who went out to work* and a mother *who stayed at home*'.

What is a clause?

A clause is a group of words that includes a subject and a verb, but may not make up a complete sentence. There are two types of clauses in English, independent and dependent clauses. An independent clause is a complete idea and can form a sentence on its own. A dependent clause must accompany an independent clause. Complex sentences are formed of at least one independent clause and one dependent clause.

For example:

A typical family consisted of a father and a mother. (Independent clause)

who went out to work (dependent clause)

who stayed at home and looked after the children (dependent clause)

A typical family consisted of a father who went out to work and a mother who stayed at home and looked after the children. (a complex sentence formed of one independent clause and two dependent clauses)

In the first topic sentence we can see a **complex noun phrase 'the children of working parents'**. A noun phrase is a group of words that act as a single noun. A noun phrase has a head noun. **The other words in the phrase describe the head noun.**

Children (head noun)

the children

the children of parents

the children of working parents

In the second body paragraph, a conditional (if) sentence is used to explain the cause of a problem: *'Young people may procrastinate or play games if their parents are not there to make sure they study'*.

In the conclusion, the first conditional is used in the conclusion **to offer advice**: *'if parents make time for their children in the evenings and at the weekends, then the children will not suffer in any way'*.

The writer uses a number of reason clauses introduced with the words 'because and 'as' in the text. Can you spot these clauses?

In summary: The writer uses a range of complex sentence types formed of main and dependent clauses. For example, the writer uses high level conditional 'if' statements to offer advice and insight and reason clauses and noun clauses are used effectively. Defining relative clauses and complex noun phrases are used to add details to nouns which increase the sophistication of the writing. The writer forms complex noun phrases and so condenses a lot of information into each sentence.

Can you use grammar as effectively as this in your essay? In order to achieve a band 7, you should be able to produce both simple and complex sentences with a high degree of accuracy.

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM | VOCABULARY

Study this task in our online course: Module 2 - Opinion Essays, [‘Advantages / Disadvantages Essays’](#)

International tourism has brought enormous benefit to many places. At the same time, there is concern about its impact on local inhabitants and the environment.

Do the disadvantages of international tourism outweigh the advantages?

(Our note: To get a high score for task response, you need to discuss both advantages and disadvantages and make sure that you state your own opinion. You should also be sure to talk about the impact of tourism on local inhabitants and the environment, as they are mentioned in the task.)

MODEL ESSAY

The travel industry has experienced a major boom over recent decades, which has helped some economically weaker nations to improve their failing economies. While questions have been raised regarding the negative impacts that accompany the growth in the travel sector, these definitely do not outweigh the associated benefits.

On the one hand, the rising influx of holidaymakers is associated with increased incidences of crimes and antisocial activities like drugs, human trafficking and gambling, which affect the values of the indigenous society. The local population is also affected by the growth in property prices. Environmentalists are also concerned regarding environmental remodelling that is associated with increased tourist activities in natural reserves. In this context, it is worth mentioning that, by enforcing strict law and order and implementing strict legislation, governments can control most of these negative impacts of tourism.

On the other hand, the economic boost that accompanies a successful travel industry is quite well recognised. Thailand is a good example of the benefits of tourism as the Thai economy revolves around tourism and the country had been able to uplift its socio-economic status through its flourishing hospitality sector. Egypt is another nation that is heavily dependent on its hospitality sector. The growth in the number of incoming tourists leads to innumerable prospects in terms of local entrepreneurship and employment. This is also associated with international investment and infrastructure development. The national authorities, in order to ensure the safety of the international visitors, provide better law and order enforcement, improved transportation and healthcare facilities, which in turn benefit the local population.

In conclusion, it can be said that, even though growth in the travel industry has accompanying negative social and environmental impacts, these do not outweigh the contributions made by this sector towards social development. However, to be successful, the government must make sure that



*tourism development is regulated and **eco-friendly** and only then can it really benefit **the local community**. (320 words)*

NOTES | VOCABULARY

Avoid repeating vocabulary and grammar in your academic writing. To avoid repetition of vocabulary you should use a wide variety of different words. This writer of this sample essay makes good use of a wide range of vocabulary.

With a topic such as tourism, a lower level candidate is likely to repeat words like 'tourists', 'tourism', 'government', 'people', 'country', 'economy' and 'environment'. The writer of this essay uses many alternatives to these words (in the form of synonyms and paraphrases) to show the examiner that the writer has a wide vocabulary.

Words and phrases connected to **tourists:**

international visitors (meaning tourists)

holidaymakers (meaning tourists)

Words and phrases connected to **tourism:**

the travel industry (meaning tourism)

the travel sector (meaning tourism)

the hospitality sector (meaning tourism)

tourist activities (meaning tourism)

this sector (meaning tourism)

Words and phrases connected to **people:**

the local population (meaning local people)

the indigenous society (meaning local people)

the local community (meaning local people)

Words and phrases connected to **economy:**

economic boost (meaning growth in the economy)

socio-economic status (meaning the state of the economy)

local entrepreneurship (meaning local businesses)

employment

international investments (meaning international businesses)

infrastructure development (meaning development of roads, hospitals, schools etc.)

social development (meaning the development of society/the economy)

Words and phrases connected to environment:

environmentalists (meaning people who care about the state of the environment)

environmental remodelling (meaning changing a natural landscape into something more artificial)

natural reserves (meaning areas of natural land that are/should be protected – also known as ‘*nature reserves*’)

environmental impacts

eco-friendly (meaning good for the environment)

Other useful synonyms:

national authorities – governments

country - nation

You must use new words and phrases frequently so that you don't forget them. Add the new words and phrases on this page to your vocabulary book and practice using them so that you remember them.

ATTITUDE IN TESTS | REFERENCING

Study this task in our online course: Module 3 - Discussion Essays, [‘Linking Words and Phrases 1’](#)

Attitude is as important as knowledge in a test situation.

To what extent do you agree?

(Our notes: To what extent do you agree? Your position could be that you agree with the statement, disagree with the statement or partially agree with the statement.)

MODEL ESSAY

*Students react in different ways to different pressures; however, for many students, examinations and tests are a time of nervousness and panic. **For this reason, I believe that these kinds of assessments are not a true test of the candidate’s knowledge of a subject but also of his/her character.***

*Candidates taking a test with no understanding of the subject are unlikely to do very well. Without understanding what **they** are being asked to respond to, **they** are forced to rely only on common sense, presenting an answer that may or may not be correct. In comparison with studious and prepared candidates, it is obvious that **the latter** would perform better. Therefore, even if the candidate performs well in test situations, he/she is unlikely to do well without knowledge of the subject.*

*However, a counterargument can be made by considering knowledgeable but nervous candidates who lack confidence in their own abilities. **Such people** could find **themselves** sitting in the test but unable to organise any of their thoughts, finding that the time allotted for the test has gone before having time to write more than a few lines. Now compare the candidates who have written fluently and at length with candidates who have managed only a few lines, and **it** becomes considerably more difficult to assess whether attitude is as important as knowledge because knowledgeable candidates who lack confidence may significantly underperform.*

*It is clear that candidates with a confident attitude but a lack of knowledge as well as **others** who have knowledge but lack confidence are likely to perform poorly in examinations. It is up to the individual, the school and the parents to create students who are both knowledgeable and who have the right attitude to succeed in exams. (290 words)*

(Our notes: Notice that in the thesis statement, the writer states that examinations do not test only the student’s knowledge. From this, the reader can infer that the writer agrees to an extent with the statement in the question – that attitude is as important as knowledge in a test situation).

NOTES | REFERENCING AND SUBSTITUTION

In this essay we are focusing on referencing. Referencing is referring back (or sometimes forward) to a particular item. It is a technique used to reduce repetition of the same words.

For example, 'for this reason' refers back to the reason given in the previous sentence (for many students, examinations and tests are a time of nervousness and panic).

Consider what the underlined words and phrases in the essay refer to:

Students react in different ways to different pressures; however, for many students, examinations and tests are a time of nervousness and panic. For this reason, I believe that these kinds of assessments are not a true test of the candidate's knowledge of a subject but also of his/her character.

these kinds of assessments – examinations and tests

Candidates taking a test with no understanding of the subject are unlikely to do very well. Without understanding what they are being asked to respond to, they are forced to rely only on common sense, presenting an answer that may or may not be correct. In comparison with studious and prepared candidates, it is obvious that the latter would perform better. Therefore, even if the candidate performs well in test situations, he/she is unlikely to do well without knowledge of the subject.

they – candidates

the latter – studious and prepared candidates (note that 'the former' would refer to 'candidates taking a test with no understanding of the subject'. So 'latter' = the later item while 'former' = the earlier item.

However, a counterargument can be made by considering knowledgeable but nervous candidates who lack confidence in their own abilities. Such people could find themselves sitting in the test but unable to organise any of their thoughts, finding that the time allotted for the test has gone before having time to write more than a few lines. Now compare the candidates who have written fluently and at length with candidates who have managed only a few lines, and it becomes considerably more difficult to assess whether attitude is as important as knowledge because knowledgeable candidates who lack confidence may significantly underperform.

such people – nervous candidates (this is a phrase which is used to substitute for a previous noun phrase)

themselves – nervous candidates

it – assessment of whether attitude is as important as knowledge (an example of forward referencing)

It is clear that candidates with a confident attitude but a lack of knowledge as well as others who have knowledge but lack confidence are likely to perform poorly in examinations. It is up to the

individual, the school and the parents to create students who are both knowledgeable and who have the right attitude to succeed in exams.

others – different candidates

Use referencing to add variety and to make your writing more concise.

SPORTS AND PUBLIC HEALTH | INCLUDING YOUR OPINION

Study this task in our online course: Module 3 - Discussion Essays, [‘Using Articles’](#)

Some people say that the best way to improve public health is to increase the number of sports facilities. Others, however, say that this would have little effect on public health and that other measures are required.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

(Our note: we must discuss both views, not just the one we agree with!)

MODEL ESSAY

*Whether building more sport facilities and gyms is the best way to improve public health is debatable. **In my opinion**, it is important to build more sports centers but the government needs to take other measures too.*

There is no denying the fact that playing sports and games improves a person’s physical and mental health. When we engage ourselves in a sport, the circulation of blood through our body improves ensuring that every cell gets adequate oxygen. Sports and games also improve our mental health and intellectual skills. According to a famous Persian proverb, wisdom can only be found in a healthy body. Obviously if the body is not healthy, the mind cannot be healthy either. Lack of adequate facilities is one of the reasons that prevent people from playing sports. By building more sports facilities in towns and villages we can encourage more and more people to get physically active.

*On the flip side, there is very little we can achieve by simply increasing the number of sports clubs and gyms. Nutrition is as important as physical activity. If people do not eat right they will not be healthy even if they spend hours in the gym. Studies after studies have shown that unhealthy eating habits are on the rise among young people. There are also lots of people who cannot afford healthy food. They will not gain much from building more sports facilities. I am not saying that the government should not build more gyms or sports centers. However, **I believe** that ensuring everyone can afford healthy food and creating awareness about the importance of eating right are more important.*

*To conclude, while it is true that sports centers play an important role in improving public health, claiming that building more of them is the best way to achieve public health is a mistake. **I am not against** the government building more sports facilities; however, **it is my belief that** authorities must also ensure that everyone can afford nutritious food. (332 words)*

NOTES | INCLUDING YOUR OPINION

The band descriptors for Task Response (TR) state that without a clear position, the maximum TR band that can be achieved is 5. This means that your position (opinion) must be very clear throughout your essay. In the sample essay above, the writer's position is included in both the introduction and the conclusion:

In the introduction:

*Whether building more sport facilities and gyms is the best way to improve public health is debatable. **In my opinion**, it is important to build more sports centers but the government needs to take other measures too.*

In the conclusion:

I am not against** the government building more sports facilities; however, **it is my belief that authorities must also ensure that everyone can afford nutritious food.

Notice that the opinion statement in the conclusion goes into more detail than that of the introduction – the introduction mentions that ‘**the government needs to take other measures too**’ whereas in the conclusion it is ‘**authorities must also ensure that everyone can afford nutritious food**’.

You can also use opinion language in the body paragraphs if you wish (*‘however, **I believe** that ensuring everyone can afford healthy food...’*).

When you write essays in the future, make sure your opinion is clear in both the introduction and the conclusion.

ENDANGERED ANIMALS | PROBLEM SOLUTION ESSAY STRUCTURE

Study this task in our online course: Module 4 –Problem Solution Essays, '[Problems - Solutions Essays](#)'

More and more wild animals are on the verge of extinction and others are on the endangered list.

What are the reasons for this? What can be done to solve these problems?

MODEL ESSAY

*Many species today are becoming extinct or are at risk of becoming so. There are many reasons for this state of affairs and in this essay I will suggest solutions for the problem of habitat destruction due to **illegal logging** and **the degradation of waterways** by industrial waste.*

*A major factor leading to the extinction of species in tropical countries is the destruction of habitat due to **illegal logging**. Many tropical countries set aside large areas of forest as national parks, however, illegal loggers destroy these habitats to obtain rare hardwoods. The orangutan, found in Indonesia and Malaysia, is a prime example of an animal being pushed to extinction because of this. They are protected by law in both countries, but the jungle in which they live is cut down by unscrupulous businessmen, often with links to the government and security forces. It is essential that more money is spent on recruiting and training forest rangers whose duty it is to protect natural parks. However, this solution will be useless until the corrupt government officers and security forces who are involved in the trade in rare wood are prosecuted and handed harsher penalties in order to put off other would be corrupt officials.*

*Industrial **pollution in waterways** can poison the water and eventually lead to the death of most life in the affected river. Many rivers in Europe were declared dead in the early twentieth century due to the unregulated dumping of industrial waste. However, this was turned around by waste management laws being strictly enforced and polluting businesses being prosecuted, which clearly worked as fish have since returned to the waterways. Monitoring of waste and stricter laws need to be implemented in developing nations which are making the same mistakes that were made in Europe. Again, the key to improving the situation is investment in monitoring and harsher penalties for those found to be breaking the law.*

In summary, two major threats to wildlife are habitat destruction due to illegal logging, and the pollution of rivers by industry. Both of these problems can be solved if the government is willing to spend the money and hunt down those breaking the law. (362 words)

NOTES | PROBLEM SOLUTION ESSAY STRUCTURE

This is a problem solution essay. The essay is organized into four paragraphs as with any other type of IELTS essay. Below is an analysis of each paragraph:

Paragraph 1 (Introduction)

The first sentence presents the topic of the essay. The second sentence is the thesis statement. This sentence informs the reader that the essay will discuss causes of the problem (*'There are many reasons for this state of affairs'*) and solutions (*'I will suggest solutions for the problem of habitat destruction due to illegal logging and the degradation of waterways by industrial waste'*)

Notice that **illegal logging** is mentioned first, followed by **the degradation of waterways**. This suggests that the first body paragraph will be about illegal logging and the second body paragraph will be about the degradation of waterways. Remember that using the thesis statement to present the points for discussion in order is a great way of showing the examiner that you have thought about your essay structure.

Paragraph 2 (Body Paragraph 1)

This paragraph begins with a **topic sentence** to introduce the problem of **illegal logging**. It then describes the problem in detail with examples (orangutans in Indonesia and Malaysia). The second half of the paragraph describe solutions to this problem.

A major factor leading to the extinction of species in tropical countries is the destruction of habitat due to illegal logging. Many tropical countries set aside large areas of forest as national parks, however, illegal loggers destroy these habitats to obtain rare hardwoods. The orangutan, found in Indonesia and Malaysia, is a prime example of an animal being pushed to extinction because of this. They are protected by law in both countries, but the jungle in which they live is cut down by unscrupulous businessmen, often with links to the government and security forces. It is essential that more money is spent on recruiting and training forest rangers whose duty it is to protect natural parks. However, this solution will be useless until the corrupt government officers and security forces who are involved in the trade in rare wood are prosecuted and handed harsher penalties in order to put off other would be corrupt officials.

Paragraph 3 (Body Paragraph 2)

Paragraph 3 is constructed in the same way as paragraph 2, with a **topic sentence** about **waterway pollution**, then the problem described in detail, followed by potential solutions.

Industrial pollution in waterways can poison the water and eventually lead to the death of most life in the affected river. Many rivers in Europe were declared dead in the early twentieth century due to the unregulated dumping of industrial waste. However, this was turned around by waste management laws being strictly enforced and polluting businesses being prosecuted, which clearly worked as fish have since returned to the waterways. Monitoring of waste and stricter laws need to be implemented in developing nations which are making the same mistakes that were made in

Europe. Again, the key to improving the situation is investment in monitoring and harsher penalties for those found to be breaking the law.

Paragraph 4 (Conclusion)

The first sentence of the conclusion **restates what the causes of the problem are** (in the same order as the body paragraphs), while the second sentence **summarises the solutions** from the previous two body paragraphs. If you want, you could finish your essay with a final statement. This could be a warning, a suggestion or a prediction about the topic.

In summary, two major threats to wildlife are habitat destruction due to illegal logging, and the pollution of rivers by industry. Both of these problems can be solved if the government is willing to spend the money and hunt down those breaking the law.

An alternative way of organizing this essay would be to have paragraph 2 be just about both causes (illegal logging and waterway pollution), and paragraph 3 be about solutions to both causes.

Both ways of organizing this essay are equally suitable for this task. Which one would you use if you had to write a problem/solution essay?

VIOLENCE ON TV | DEVELOPING IDEAS

Study this task in our online course: Module 2 – Opinion Essays, [‘Structuring the Essay’](#)

Violence on television has a negative impact on children’s behaviour.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

(Our note: We can write an agree essay, a disagree essay or a balanced essay)

MODEL ESSAY

These days almost every house contains a television and it is reasonable to assume that television programs impact the behaviour of the young and impressionable. It is my belief that violence on television leads to violent behaviour for some children and fearful and withdrawn behaviour for others.

Watching violent programs leads some children to copy violent behaviour. Many programs contain extremely realistic scenes of violence and **it has been shown** that children who watch these types of programs may think violence is normal. **For example**, if a child watches a scene depicting violent bullying occurring in a school he/she may think it is acceptable and so copy the behaviour.

Additionally, after watching violent television, many children exhibit higher levels of aggression **which can result in** injuries or emotional problems. **For instance**, recently in the news there was the story of a child who broke his playmate’s back by replicating dangerous fighting moves that he had seen on television earlier that day.

Furthermore, if children witness television violence they may become withdrawn and afraid of others. **It has been shown** that while older children may copy violent behaviour, toddlers are more likely to become anxious, impacting their behaviour. **Such children may refuse to go outside for fear of violence, which could affect their social development as they will be less likely to mix with other children and learn social skills.**

In conclusion, TV violence clearly negatively affects the behaviour of children. While older children may become normalized to violent behaviour or even copy it, younger ones may become anxious and display fearful behaviour. Parents should carefully consider what they allow their children to watch on television and should not let children watch television unattended. (283 words)

NOTES | BODY PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

The introduction states the topic of the essay and contains a thesis statement which states the writer's opinion.

The two body paragraphs of the essay contain the arguments which support the writer's thesis statement.

A good body paragraph starts with a topic sentence. The **topic sentence** states the main idea or the main argument made in the paragraph. The following sentences in the paragraph support and explain the topic sentence.

There are a number of ways which you support the main idea/argument contained in the topic sentence:

1. Add details or explanations for why the argument might be fair / true.
2. *Give examples that support the argument.*

Here is an example:

(Topic sentence) *It can be argued that exercise improves mental health.* **(Explanation)** Research shows us that when we do any physical activity, the body burns calories and the brain creates dopamine, a chemical that makes us feel good. **(Example)** *A 5-year survey of 5000 people in the US showed that those who increased the length of their daily exercise routine were 38% less likely to develop depression. (Example 2) As a result of recent research like this, governments have been considering spending more money on promoting exercise in schools.*

Of course, you don't need to know the results of scientific studies to develop an argument, as you can see in the model essay.

From the topic sentence of the first body paragraph of the sample essay, you can see that the writer intends to argue that **'watching violent programs leads some children to copy violent behaviour'**. The writer then explains what they mean in more detail in the following sentence: 'Many programs contain extremely realistic scenes of violence and it has been shown that children who watch these types of programs may think violence is normal.' The writer supports this argument with an example: **'For example, if a child watches a scene depicting violent bullying occurring in a school he/she may think it is acceptable and so copy the behaviour.'**

A second supporting idea is also provided: **'Additionally, after watching violent television, many children exhibit higher levels of aggression which can result in injuries or emotional problems.'** This explanation is supported by another example to complete the paragraph: **'For instance, recently in the news there was the story of a child who broke his playmate's back by replicating dangerous fighting moves that he had seen on television earlier that day.'**

In the second body paragraph, the writer argues that TV can affect children's mental states: **'Furthermore, if children witness television violence they may become withdrawn and afraid of**

others.’ The writer then adds an explanation for the argument: ‘It has been shown that while older children may copy violent behaviour, toddlers are more likely to become anxious, impacting their behaviour.’ The argument is completed when the writer explains what is meant by ‘impacting their behaviour’: ‘Such children may refuse to go outside for fear of violence, which could affect their social development as they will be less likely to mix with other children and learn social skills.’

To help connect the ideas in the body paragraphs, a wide range of linking words and phrases are used:

leads to – to present a consequence (cause **leads to** effect)

which can result in – to present a consequence

it has been shown – to introduce results of studies

for instance – to add an example

for example – to add an example

additionally – to add an extra idea or argument

furthermore – to add an extra idea or argument

Do you develop your arguments logically, using linking words and phrases? Make sure you try this the next time you write an essay.

EXPLOITING ANIMALS | ESSAY STRUCTURE 2

Study this task in our online course: Module 3 – Discussion Essays, [‘How to Write Body Paragraphs’](#)

Some people say it is acceptable to use animals for our benefit, others say it is wrong to exploit them.

Discuss both points of view and give your opinion.

(Our note: To get a high score for task response you must make sure that you discuss both views.)

MODEL ESSAY

The exploitation of animals is an issue which is often in the western media these days. An increasing number of people believe it is wrong to use animals for any reason; however, I agree with those who accept the use of animals for certain purposes.

A growing number of people disagree with the exploitation of animals on ethical and environmental grounds. Many people believe that animals have the same rights as humans since animals think and feel emotion and pain as humans do. In the same way that people shouldn't be exploited because of this, neither should animals. Moreover, the exploitation of cattle and sheep for their meat creates a huge amount of methane from the animals themselves. Also, the shipping of meat around the world creates a lot of carbon dioxide. Both of these gases are increasing global warming and as responsible citizens of the earth we should try and limit global warming as it is a threat to everyone.

Although there are strong reasons against the use of animals, I believe that the use of animals for medical testing and the consumption of locally farmed animals is acceptable. Modern medicine, which saves countless lives, is tested on animals before humans. This is done in order not to endanger humans and without this, it is possible that many people would suffer. Furthermore, the consumption of locally sourced meat removes the concern of greenhouse gas emission from transportation. If the meat consumed is chicken or duck this further reduces the greenhouse emissions due to less methane being produced by these animals.

In conclusion, although there are ethical and environmental reasons for not exploiting animals, I believe that medical testing on animals benefits society and the consumption of locally produced meat does not have a negative environmental impact. Government and business should ensure that animals are responsibly used and that no abuse occurs. (312 words)

NOTES | STRUCTURE

This is a well-structured essay.

The essay begins with a sentence to introduce the topic: *'The exploitation of animals is an issue which is often in the western media these days.'*

This is followed by the thesis statement. Notice that the **opinion** of the writer is made clear, and that the order of the points is the same as the order of the arguments in the body paragraphs: *'An increasing number of people believe it is wrong to use animals for any reason, however, I agree with those who accept the use of animals for certain purposes.'*

From the thesis statement we can see that the first argument to be discussed is that *'it is wrong to use animals for any reason'* and the second argument is that *'(the writer) accepts the use of animals for certain purposes.'*

These arguments can be easily identified in the topic sentences of the body paragraphs:

Topic sentence 1: *'A growing number of people disagree with the exploitation of animals on ethical and environmental grounds.'*

Topic sentence 2: *'Although there are strong reasons against the use of animals, I believe that the use of animals for medical testing and the consumption of locally farmed animals is acceptable.'*

Both of these arguments are well-supported by explanations and examples. All of the sentences in the body paragraphs are connected to and expand upon the **topic sentences**, and therefore **paragraph unity** is high.

A growing number of people disagree with the exploitation of animals on ethical and environmental grounds. Many people believe that animals have the same rights as humans since animals think and feel emotion and pain as humans do. In the same way that people shouldn't be exploited because of this, neither should animals. Moreover, the exploitation of cattle and sheep for their meat creates a huge amount of methane from the animals themselves. Also, the shipping of meat around the world creates a lot of carbon dioxide. Both of these gases are increasing global warming and as responsible citizens of the earth we should try and limit global warming as it is a threat to everyone.

Although there are strong reasons against the use of animals, I believe that the use of animals for medical testing and the consumption of locally farmed animals is acceptable. Modern medicine, which saves countless lives, is tested on animals before humans. This is done in order not to endanger humans and without this, it is possible that many people would suffer. Furthermore, the consumption of locally sourced meat removes the concern of greenhouse gas emission from transportation. If the meat consumed is chicken or duck this further reduces the greenhouse emissions due to less methane being produced by these animals.

The conclusion paragraph begins with a **conclusion signal**, before a **summary of the main arguments** in the body paragraphs: *'In conclusion, although there are ethical and environmental reasons for not exploiting animals, I believe that medical testing on animals benefits society and the consumption of locally produced meat does not have a negative environmental impact.'*

Notice that the opinion of the writer is very clear (**'I believe...'**)

The essay finishes with a suggestion: *'Government and business should ensure that animals are responsibly used and that no abuse occurs.'* Other options are to finish with a prediction, or a warning.

If you haven't used a structure like this before, try it out for your next task and see if it helps you develop a well-organized essay.

STUDYING ABROAD | LINKING WORDS

Study this task in our online course: Module 2 – Opinion Essays, [‘Relevant Ideas 2’](#)

Many students today may study abroad for a part or for all of their course. Although studying abroad has many benefits for the individual student, it also has a number of disadvantages.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this?

(Our note: The first sentence here (‘*Many students today...*’) is written as a fact, so should not be discussed in the essay. The argument our essay should focus on is ‘*Although studying abroad has many benefits for the individual student, it also has a number of disadvantages.*’)

MODEL ESSAY

Recently a large increase can be seen in the number of students going abroad to study. This is partly because people are better off and partly due to the diverse range of different grants and scholarships which are available for overseas students. **Although** foreign study may not be advisable for some because of personal or financial reasons, **I believe** the majority of students benefit a great deal from overseas study.

Studying in a foreign country has a number of benefits. For example, it could give students access to knowledge and facilities such as libraries and science labs which are not found in the student’s country of origin. **Furthermore,** students may have access to a wider range of courses in foreign countries than they do at home, which could help them to find one that fits more closely with their individual interests and requirements. In studying these courses in a foreign tongue, the student is likely to develop their language skills very quickly.

On the other hand, studying abroad can have certain drawbacks. These can be categorized into personal and professional. **Firstly,** studying abroad **obviously** requires the student to leave their family and friends for a long period, which may make the student lonely if they are unused to spending time away from their support network. **Secondly,** studying in a foreign country is almost always more expensive than studying in the student’s home country. Studying in a foreign country, **moreover,** means the student will probably be studying in a foreign language, which may limit their performance and make studying and exams more stressful. These effects, however, are usually only temporary since the student will typically return home after a year or two.

Overall, students who study abroad usually become proficient in the language quickly and they have lots of experiences and opportunities that they would not encounter at home. For these reasons students should seriously consider studying in a foreign country. (322 words)

NOTES | LINKING WORDS AND REFERENCING

Linking Words

Linking words and phrases signal the logical connections between ideas and tell the reader what type of information will follow.

Look at the descriptions of the linking words below, then see how they are used in the essay.

although – used to introduce a contrast clause (a type of dependent clause which must be used with an independent clause. If the contrast clause precedes the independent clause then the two must be separated by a comma.)

Although foreign study may not be advisable for some because of personal or financial reasons, I believe the majority of students benefit a great deal from overseas study.

I believe – presents the writer's opinion

for example – presents an example

Studying in a foreign country has a number of benefits. For example, it could give students access to knowledge and facilities such as libraries and science labs which are not found in the student's country of origin.

furthermore – presents an additional supporting idea which agrees with or supports a previous idea

Furthermore, students may have access to a wider range of courses in foreign countries than they do at home

moreover – presents an additional supporting idea which agrees with or supports a previous idea

...studying in a foreign country is almost always more expensive than studying in the student's home country. Studying in a foreign country, moreover, means the student will probably be studying in a foreign language

on the other hand – presents a contrasting idea or argument

Studying in a foreign country has a number of benefits... On the other hand, studying abroad can have certain drawbacks.

firstly – presents the first idea in a list or sequence

secondly – presents the second idea in a list or sequence

obviously – presents an idea that should be easy to understand

Firstly, studying abroad **obviously** requires the student to leave their family and friends for a long period, which may make the student lonely if they are unused to spending time away from their support network. **Secondly**, studying in a foreign country is almost always more expensive than studying in the student's home country.

overall – presents a summary of the main ideas in the essay

Overall, students who study abroad usually become proficient in the language quickly and they have lots of experiences and opportunities that they would not encounter at home.

Referencing and Substitution

This writer makes good use of referencing to reduce repetition of nouns. Notice how each reference word refers back to a previously mentioned idea.

For example, the second sentence begins with 'This is partly...' But what does this refer to? The answer is that this refers to 'a large increase in the number of students going abroad to study.'

this is often used to refer back to the last noun or noun phrase mentioned in the previous sentence (a noun phrase is a group of words that describe a noun - 'a large increase in the number of students going abroad to study' is a noun phrase). this can sometimes also refer to a complete sentence.

Here are the other uses of referencing:

For example, it could give... | it = studying in a foreign country

help them to find one that fits... | one = a course in a foreign country (this is an example of noun substitution in which the noun 'one' is used instead of a previously mentioned noun or noun phrase).

In studying these courses... | these courses = a wide range of courses in a foreign country

to develop their language skills... | their language skills = students' language skills

These can be categorized... | these = drawbacks

to leave their family... | their family = the student's family

if they are unused to spending time... | they = the student

may limit their performance... | their performance = the student's performance

These effects, however, are... | these effects = the effects of 1) loneliness, 2) high price and 3) stress

For these reasons... | these reasons = the reasons 1) learning the language quickly and 2) having better experiences and opportunities



Notice that you can use *'they'* and *'their...'* for a single person if you don't want to use a pronoun for a specific gender *'he'*, *'his...'* or *'she'*, *'her...'*

Use linking words and referencing to help bring your ideas together and get a good band score for coherence and cohesion.

Good luck!

FINAL COMMENTS

We hope this book has given you some useful tools to write great reports. Here are our top tips for continuing your IELTS writing journey.

- You must practice what you have studied. With repetition, correct use of language will become automatic. This may take time, so be patient with yourself.
- Help your memory by putting important language notes on the walls of your bedroom/office/living room/ kitchen etc.
- [Get feedback](#) on your writing from an experienced tutor. Analyse the mistakes that you make and think about how you can do better in the future.
- Read in English. People who are good readers are generally better writers. From the texts that you read, make sure that you learn interesting vocabulary and think about the way that each text is structured.
- Find out what time of day you will take the test and get into a habit of using English at that time in the weeks leading up to the day of the exam. Also make sure that you get a good night's sleep before the test.