

## IELTS Academic Writing Task 2

In the second part of the IELTS Academic Writing Test, you have to write 250 words. You should spend 40 minutes on this task. Writing Task 2 is worth more than Task 1, so you need to do it well.

For IELTS Writing Task 2, you have to write an essay discussing a topic. You will be given an opinion/ argument, different points of view or a problem to discuss.

Most students prepare phrases for introducing and linking ideas. However, not many students prepare good ideas and opinions for IELTS topics.

We'll work on these areas:

- How to structure a good Task 2 essay.
- Preparation of ideas, opinions and good vocabulary for each IELTS topic.
- How to build and link sentences to create coherent paragraphs.
- Common mistakes in grammar and word usage.

Some hard work on these areas can make a big difference to your writing score.

## IELTS Writing Task 2: another example

Here's another example of a "firstly, secondly, finally" paragraph that I wrote with my students:

1. Firstly, Secondly, Finally
2. One problem is that, Urban areas **also** tend to, Other drawbacks are that
3. The main disadvantage is that, Another issue is that, Also,

Three main factors are affecting health in modern societies. One problem is the lack of awareness among many people of the negative consequences of an unhealthy diet. This is made worse by the prevalence of fast food and processed food, which are full of fat, salt and sugar. Another key factor is the changing trend in lifestyles. For example, children's hobbies now involve much less outdoor activity, and adults are less active as jobs have shifted towards sedentary office work instead of manual labour. In addition to this, time-saving technologies, such as cars, elevators, dishwashers and washing machines, have made people lazier.

Analyse the paragraph by answering the following questions.

- 1.What is the main topic of the paragraph?
- 2.Which phrases are used instead of "firstly, secondly, finally"?
- 3.What examples of 'band 7-9' vocabulary can you find?

## IELTS Writing Task 2: 'while' introductions

If you want to mention both sides of the argument for an "agree or disagree" question, try including a 'while' sentence in your introduction.

Here's the 'while' sentence formula:

**"While I accept argument A, I favour argument B"**

Here's an example question:

***Early technological developments helped ordinary people and changed their lives more than recent developments. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

Here's my introduction:

*Technological progress has taken place throughout the course of human history. While early technologies certainly changed the lives of normal people, I believe that recent breakthroughs have had an even greater impact.*

**Note:**

The 'while' sentence makes it clear that I favour one side of the argument, but it allows me to mention both sides in the main body of my essay.

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: strong or balanced opinion**

The following question asks for your opinion. You can either have a strong opinion or a more balanced opinion, but you should definitely make your opinion clear in your introduction.

***Governments should not have to provide care or financial support for elderly people because it is the responsibility of each person to prepare for retirement and support him or herself.***

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

Introduction (strong opinion):

People have different views about whether or not governments should help senior citizens. I completely disagree with the idea that elderly people should receive no support from the state.

Introduction (more balanced opinion):

People have different views about whether or not governments should help senior citizens. Although I accept that we all have a responsibility to save money for retirement, I disagree with the idea that elderly people should receive no support from the state.

**Note:**

After the first introduction, I'd advise you to write 2 paragraphs that both explain why you disagree. The second introduction allows you to discuss both sides (which might be easier).

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: short, clear introduction**

My colleague, Peter, wrote an essay about last week's [credit card](#) question - to read the full essay, look for the comment by Peter Walton below the lesson.

**For today, I want to focus on the introduction that Peter wrote:**

*It is all too easy to obtain a credit card and then to run up debts which are difficult to repay. In my opinion, the disadvantages of credit cards far outweigh the advantages.*

It might seem easy, but for me this is the perfect introduction: it's short, clear, and it answers the question directly.

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: really short conclusion!**

It's fine to write a really short conclusion for IELTS writing task 2. You don't need to say anything new; just paraphrase what you wrote in your introduction or summarise your overall answer to the question. For example, read [last week's](#) question and my introduction, then read my short conclusion below.

*In conclusion, I disagree with the idea that early technologies had more of an effect on ordinary people than recent ones.*

## IELTS Writing Task 2: 'perfect society' paragraph

Last week I made a video lesson to show you how I would do an essay plan. Today I want to show you how I turned part of that plan into a full paragraph.

- **Paragraph topic:** The most important element of a perfect society.
- **Planned ideas:** Safety = No crime, trust our neighbours, feel part of a community, able to leave doors unlocked. Trust institutions (police, government), feel protected by the law. Safety is the most basic freedom.

### Here's my paragraph using the ideas above:

If I had to choose the one, most desirable element of an ideal society, it would have to be safety. A safe society would be one in which crime did not exist, and in which all citizens trusted their neighbours, felt part of a community, and were even able to leave their doors unlocked without fear. A broader definition of safety could also include belief in the integrity of state institutions, such as governments or police forces, and confidence that we are all protected by fair laws. In this sense, safety could be described as the most basic freedom and the starting point for the creation of a perfect society.

## IELTS Writing Task 2: consumer society

A few days ago, I looked at the question in [this lesson](#) with my students here in Manchester. The phrase 'consumer society' is a negative one because it suggests that our lives revolve around money and possessions.

### Here's part of an essay that my students helped me to write:

It is true that many people criticize modern society because it seems to be too materialistic. I agree with this to some extent, but I do not think it is the case that everyone is a victim of consumer culture.

On the one hand, many people do seem to focus too much on money and possessions. Wherever we go, we are bombarded with advertising to sell us products and services, many of which we do not need. For example, people may be persuaded to purchase the latest model of iPhone, when their old phone is still perfectly functional. This could be seen as a demonstration that we are obsessive consumers; we buy things based on fashion and branding, and shopping has become a hobby or even an addiction.

### Task:

Which phrases in the paragraphs would you highlight as 'band 7-9 vocabulary'?

People often ask me how to give a balanced answer for "agree or disagree" questions. Take this question for example:

***Many people say that we now live in 'consumer societies' where money and possessions are given too much importance. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

A clear introduction is vital when giving a balanced answer:

***It is sometimes argued that we live in a materialistic world and that we value money too highly. In my opinion, some people are extremely money oriented, but many of us place more importance on other values.***

The big mistake that students make when trying to give a balanced answer is that they write about what "some people" and "other people" think. This question asks for your views, not the views of other people. Notice how my introduction makes it clear that the essay is about my own views.

## IELTS Writing Task 2: 'foreign tourists' essay

***Foreign visitors should pay more than local visitors for cultural and historical attractions. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?***

It is sometimes argued that tourists from overseas should be charged more than local residents to visit important sites and monuments. I completely disagree with this idea.

The argument in favour of higher prices for foreign tourists would be that cultural or historical attractions often depend on state subsidies to keep them going, which means that the resident population already pays money to these sites through the tax system. However, I believe this to be a very shortsighted view. Foreign tourists contribute to the economy of the host country with the money they spend on a wide range of goods and services, including food, souvenirs, accommodation and travel. The governments and inhabitants of every country should be happy to subsidise important tourist sites and encourage people from the rest of the world to visit them.

If travellers realised that they would have to pay more to visit historical and cultural attractions in a particular nation, they would perhaps decide not to go to that country on holiday. To take the UK as an example, the tourism industry and many related jobs rely on visitors coming to the country to see places like Windsor Castle or Saint Paul's Cathedral. These two sites charge the same price regardless of nationality, and this helps to promote the nation's cultural heritage. If overseas tourists stopped coming due to higher prices, there would be a risk of insufficient funding for the maintenance of these important buildings.

In conclusion, I believe that every effort should be made to attract tourists from overseas, and it would be counterproductive to make them pay more than local residents.

(269 words, band 9)

Last week I said that we needed a 'strong opinion' answer to the question above. Here's my suggested outline for a 4-paragraph essay:

- 1.Introduction: make your opinion clear (e.g. I completely disagree)
- 2.First reason why you disagree
- 3.Second reason why you disagree
- 4.Conclusion: repeat / summarise your opinion

Note: It is possible to mention the opposite view in one of the main paragraphs, but you should make it very clear that you disagree with it.

In [this lesson](#) I wrote an introduction for a 'balanced opinion' answer. Today we're going to look at a question which I think requires a 'strong opinion' answer:

I think it would become confusing if you tried to explain a balanced view for this question. The choice of opinion is simple: either foreign visitors should pay more, or they shouldn't.

I'll show you how I would write an essay for this question next week. For the moment, just compare the question above with the question [here](#). Make sure you understand why I'm suggesting a strong answer for one and a balanced answer for the other.

## IELTS Writing Task 2: from plan to paragraph

Let's plan and then write one main paragraph for the question below.

***Economic progress is often used to measure a country's success. However, some people believe that other factors are more important. What other factors should also be considered when measuring a country's success? Do you think one factor is more important than others?***

Here's a plan I wrote with my students:

Paragraph about other factors:

1) Education for development of the country, providing future workforce. 2) Good health system, living standards, life expectancy. 3) Personal freedom / rights / equality e.g. equal opportunities for both genders.

Here's our full paragraph using the plan above:

Standards of education, health and individual human rights should certainly be considered when measuring a country's status. A good education system is vital for the development of any nation, with schools, colleges and universities bearing the responsibility for the quality of future generations of workers. Healthcare provision is also an indicator of the standard of living within a country, and this can be measured by looking at average life expectancy rates or availability of medical services. Finally, human rights and levels of equality could be taken into account. For example, a country in which women do not have the same opportunities as men might be considered less successful than a country with better gender equality.

## IELTS Writing Task 2: introduction and conclusion

***Economic progress is often used to measure a country's success. However, some people believe that other factors are more important. What other factors should also be considered when measuring a country's success? Do you think one factor is more important than others?***

**Introduction:** Introduce the topic and give a general answer to both questions.

The relative success of different countries is usually defined in economic terms. There are several other factors, apart from the economy, that could be used to assess a country, and in my opinion education is the most important of all.

**Conclusion:** Repeat / summarise your answer.

In conclusion, nations can be assessed and compared in a variety of ways, but I would argue that the standard of a country's education system is the best indicator of its success.

## IELTS Writing Task 2: argument or discussion?

Many people ask me about the difference between an 'argument' (opinion) essay and a 'discussion' essay. Here's an easy way to think about the difference:

- When you argue, you are trying to persuade the other person to agree with your point of view. You might even get angry!
- When you discuss, you consider different points of view, and nobody gets angry.

The question should make it very clear what it wants you to do. If it asks you to "discuss", you should write about both sides or two views.

If the question asks whether you "agree or disagree", it's asking for **your** view. For this type of question, give your opinion in the introduction and support it in the rest of the essay. Develop an

argument that persuades the reader to agree with you. Note: you can have a strong view or a balanced view - it's your choice.

### IELTS Writing Task 2: children's upbringing

***Children who are brought up in families that do not have large amounts of money are better prepared to deal with the problems of adult life than children brought up by wealthy parents.***

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

Here are two quick tasks related to the question above.

#### **1) Vocabulary: fill the gaps in the following paragraph:**

On the one hand, I agree that some children from less wealthy \_\_\_\_\_ might be in a better position to \_\_\_\_\_ adult life. Children whose parents have less money learn to fight, struggle and solve problems on a daily \_\_\_\_\_. They are forced to rely on \_\_\_\_\_ because they have less financial help from parents and cannot get what they want as soon as they want it. For example, poorer children may have to wait until a birthday to receive a toy or game that they have asked for, and this encourages them to learn patience. These children will also learn the importance of managing money and the value of hard \_\_\_\_\_, which will be vital \_\_\_\_\_ in later life.

#### **2) Opinions: think of some ideas to support the opposite point of view.**

### IELTS Writing Task 2: better linking

Most students learn simple linking words (firstly, secondly, furthermore etc.). But did you know that there are other, more sophisticated ways to link your ideas? Here are some of them:

- Use **this** or **these** to refer to the idea in the previous sentence.
- Use pronouns like **it** and **they** to refer to nouns you have already used.
- Repeat a key word throughout the paragraph.
- Repeat a key idea in different ways.
- Develop an idea from 'general' to 'specific'.

You might not notice this type of linking because it seems so natural. [Click here](#) to see a paragraph that demonstrates the 5 techniques described above.

#### Better linking

Linking isn't just about using words like 'firstly', 'furthermore' and 'moreover'. There are more sophisticated ways to hold a paragraph together. Here's a good example:

Some **art projects** definitely require help from **the state**. In **the UK**, there are many **works of art** in public spaces, such as streets or squares in **city centres**. In **Liverpool**, for example, there are several new **statues and sculptures** in the **docks area of the city**, **which** has been redeveloped recently. **These artworks** represent culture, heritage and history. **They** serve to educate people about the city, and act as landmarks or talking points for visitors and tourists. Governments and local councils should pay creative **artists** to produce **this kind of art**, because without **their** funding our cities would be much less interesting and attractive.

these, this = refer back to a previous idea

which, they = pronouns refer back to a noun or noun phrase (e.g. they = artworks)

art = key word repeated because it is the main theme of the paragraph

art projects = key idea that is repeated in different ways, showing variety of vocabulary

the state, the UK = general to specific: general idea which is developed in greater detail

Many IELTS students become obsessed with 'linkers' - words or phrases that link ideas together in a paragraph e.g. firstly, secondly, furthermore, moreover. There is nothing wrong with using linkers, and they can certainly help you to write good paragraphs.

However, linkers become a problem when they are the only thing that students care about. Examiners care much more about the content between the linkers.

Task:

Here's a useful exercise to get you focusing on content rather than linking: Try writing a coherent paragraph without using any linking words or phrases at all.

1) family 2) deal 3) basis 4) problems 5) work 6) lesson

1)family2)deal3)basis4)money5)hardwork6)role

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: 'artists' essay](#)

Here's a full essay that I wrote with my students about the topic below.

***Some people think that governments should give financial support to creative artists such as painters and musicians. Others believe that creative artists should be funded by alternative sources. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.***

People have different views about the funding of creative artists. While some people disagree with the idea of government support for artists, I believe that money for art projects should come from both governments and other sources.

Some art projects definitely require help from the state. In the UK, there are many works of art in public spaces, such as streets or squares in city centres. In Liverpool, for example, there are several new statues and sculptures in the docks area of the city, which has been redeveloped recently. These artworks represent culture, heritage and history. They serve to educate people about the city, and act as landmarks or talking points for visitors and tourists. Governments and local councils should pay creative artists to produce this kind of art, because without their funding our cities would be much less interesting and attractive.

On the other hand, I can understand the arguments against government funding for art. The main reason for this view is that governments have more important concerns. For example, state budgets need to be spent on education, healthcare, infrastructure and security, among other areas. These public services are vital for a country to function properly, whereas the work of creative artists, even in public places, is a luxury. Another reason for this opinion is that artists do a job like any other professional, and they should therefore earn their own money by selling their work.

In conclusion, there are good reasons why artists should rely on alternative sources of financial support, but in my opinion government help is sometimes necessary.

Last week I asked you to try rewriting the third paragraph in [this essay](#). The paragraph below is an edited compilation of students' ideas. I think it's good enough for a band 9.

*On the other hand, I can understand the view taken by many people that artists should not expect the state to fund their work. Most musicians and the majority of painters make a living by performing or selling their artistic creations to fans or collectors; they would not expect to receive any help from their governments. Industry sponsorships can be another useful source of revenue for creative artists. For example, media companies like the mobile giant Apple are often willing to pay huge fees to inspirational designers who work on their advertising campaigns, product packaging, and even the appearance of their electronic devices. Finally, some artists may be lucky enough to receive donations from wealthy individuals.*

## **IELTS Writing Task 2: main paragraph methods**

I always tell my students to choose a method and stick to it. For main paragraphs, I teach them two easy ways to organise their ideas:

**1. Idea, explain, example: If you have one main idea, this easy format will help you to build a good paragraph. Click [here](#) and [here](#) to see how I use this method.**

A good way to write main body paragraphs is this:

### **Start with an idea; Explain it in detail; Give an example**

Here's an example of how I 'build' a paragraph using the above method:

A sense of competition is necessary for success in life, and should therefore be encouraged. Competition motivates children to get good grades at school or become better at sports, while adults compete to climb the career ladder. In a job interview, for example, candidates compete to show that they are the most qualified, hard-working and competent person for the post.

### **Note:**

What's the topic of the paragraph above? What do you think the question was?

The "idea, explain, example" format is a good way to organise your main paragraphs. Start with the main idea of the paragraph, explain it in more detail, then give an example.

A variation on this format is "idea, example, explain". Here's a paragraph that I wrote with my students about [last week's topic](#):

*Some art projects definitely require help from the state. In the UK, there are many works of art in public spaces, such as streets or squares in city centres. In Liverpool, for example, there are several new statues and sculptures in the docks area of the city, which has been redeveloped recently. These artworks represent culture, heritage and history. They serve to educate people about the city, and act as landmarks or talking points for visitors and tourists. Governments and local councils should pay creative artists to produce this kind of art, because without their funding our cities would be much less interesting and attractive.*

**Task:** Analyse the paragraph. What role does each sentence play?

**2. Firstly, secondly, finally: If you have two or three ideas, just use this format. Miss the "finally" if you only have two ideas, and remember that you can use alternative words for the same structure (e.g. The main reason, another reason, also, furthermore). Click [here](#) and [here](#).**

The paragraph I wrote for [last week's lesson](#) (repeated below) is structured in the following way:

1. Topic sentence
2. Firstly
3. Example

4. Secondly

5. Finally

I think this is a good way to organise a paragraph. However, it's best not to use the same structure twice in one essay. Compare the two paragraphs below. How did I structure the second one to avoid repeating "Firstly, Secondly, Finally"?

#### First main paragraph

There are good reasons why some people feel the need to make significant changes to their lives from time to time. **Firstly**, any new situation that a person encounters can be an opportunity to learn and grow as a person. A new job, for instance, might present challenges that push the person to adapt, acquire new knowledge, or add to his or her skill set. **Secondly**, a change can represent a break with the past and an old routine which has become boring and predictable. **Finally**, as well as making life more fun and interesting, new experiences can be good for our physical and mental health.

#### Second main paragraph

On the other hand, it is understandable why people might avoid change. Whenever people are forced to change their lifestyles, jobs or even to move house, they are likely to experience stress and worry as they try to adapt to the new situation. By contrast, we feel comfortable and confident when we stay with what we know. The decision to persist with a course of action or stick to one chosen path often leads to greater success in life. For example, by staying in the same job for many years, a person can become an expert in his or her field, which will lead to better opportunities for promotions and career progression.

A few people have asked me whether using "firstly, secondly, finally" to organise a paragraph is too *easy*.

My answer is that using easy organising language like "firstly, secondly, finally" allows you to focus on the **real content** of what you are writing - topic vocabulary, collocations, examples. This is what the examiner wants to see. You can get a band 9 using "firstly, secondly, finally" if the ideas between these linking words are good.

Some simple alternatives to "firstly, secondly, finally" could be:

- The main reason why I believe... is... / Another argument is... / Also,...
  - One problem is that... / Furthermore,... / Another drawback is that...
  - From a business perspective,... / In terms of education,... / From a social point of view,...
- (this could work for the paragraph in [last week's lesson](#))

#### [IELTS Writing Task 2: how to write faster](#)

A student asked me for some tips about how to write task 2 essays faster. Here's my advice:

1. The first step is to write **better**, not faster. If you can't get the score you need when it takes you 2 hours to write an essay, you won't be able to write a good essay in 40 minutes.
2. [Click here](#) to read about a student who started slowly and got faster with practice.
3. The next step is to break the 40 minutes into smaller parts. For example, you could practise writing introductions in only 5 minutes. Don't work on full essays yet; just practise the parts according to my advice in [this lesson](#).

4. Separate the 'thinking' from the 'writing'. I do all my thinking (planning or brainstorming) in the first 10 minutes. When I'm happy with my essay plan, I start writing. I try to stick to my plan so that I can focus on writing rather than more thinking.
5. Finally, remember that improvements happen **gradually**. You have to be prepared to do the hard work: practising lots of essays and parts of essays, preparing ideas and opinions for topics, building your vocabulary [repertoire](#), and learning from mistakes. Do the work and you'll get better **and** faster!

### **IELTS Advice: the "four-hour essay"**

One of my students was worried that it took her 4 hours to write a band 7 essay for homework. In my opinion, spending 4 hours to write an essay is a good idea. This kind of hard work leads to great results! The important thing is to be able to write your first band 7 essay. At first it might take you 4 hours, but you will get faster with practice.

PS. The student I mentioned got a band 7 in her exam about 6 weeks later!

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: how to use your 40 minutes**

You have 40 minutes for task 2, so try organising your time in the following way. Please note that these are suggestions, not rules.

#### **First 10 minutes**

Read the question and make sure you understand what it is asking you to do. Write a plan for a 4-paragraph essay (introduction, 2 main paragraphs, conclusion) and spend most of the 10 minutes thinking of ideas for the 2 main paragraphs.

#### **5 minutes**

Write your introduction: 2 sentences are enough.

#### **20 minutes**

Spend 10 minutes on each of your main body paragraphs. These are the most important part of your essay, and the key to a high score.

#### **Last 5 minutes**

Write a quick conclusion then check your work.

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: 'animal testing' essay**

***Nowadays animal experiments are widely used to develop new medicines and to test the safety of other products. Some people argue that these experiments should be banned because it is morally wrong to cause animals to suffer, while others are in favour of them because of their benefits to humanity.***

***Discuss both views and give your own opinion.***

It is true that medicines and other products are routinely tested on animals before they are cleared for human use. While I tend towards the viewpoint that animal testing is morally wrong, I would have to support a limited amount of animal experimentation for the development of medicines.

On the one hand, there are clear ethical arguments against animal experimentation. To use a common example of this practice, laboratory mice may be given an illness so that the effectiveness of a new drug can be measured. Opponents of such research argue that humans have no right to subject animals to this kind of trauma, and that the lives of all creatures should

be respected. They believe that the benefits to humans do not justify the suffering caused, and that scientists should use alternative methods of research.

On the other hand, reliable alternatives to animal experimentation may not always be available. Supporters of the use of animals in medical research believe that a certain amount of suffering on the part of mice or rats can be justified if human lives are saved. They argue that opponents of such research might feel differently if a member of their own families needed a medical treatment that had been developed through the use of animal experimentation. Personally, I agree with the banning of animal testing for non-medical products, but I feel that it may be a necessary evil where new drugs and medical procedures are concerned.

In conclusion, it seems to me that it would be wrong to ban testing on animals for vital medical research until equally effective alternatives have been developed.

(270 words, band 9)

**Wednesday, June 12, 2013**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: discuss both views](#)

Last week I asked you to share your "discuss both views" questions. I've chosen a question shared by JK:

***Nowadays animal experiments are widely used to develop new medicines and to test the safety of other products. Some people argue that these experiments should be banned because it is morally wrong to cause animals to suffer, while others are in favour of them because of their benefits to humanity.***

***Discuss both views and give your own opinion.***

Here are the steps I would take to answer this question:

- First we need **ideas**. I would start by writing down some arguments for and against animal testing. I covered this topic in my [ebook](#) (chapter 2), so I already have some good ideas in my head.
- Next we can decide on our **own view**. Looking at the ideas you wrote down, you need to make a decision. A good 'middle point' might be that animal experiments should only be used for the most important medical research.
- Now we need to **organise** our ideas. Always stick to the 4-paragraph structure; you don't need an extra paragraph for your own view because you agree with elements of the two views stated in the question.
- Finally we're ready to **write** the essay. Keep your introduction and conclusion short. Spend most of your time on the main body paragraphs.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(30\)](#)

**Wednesday, June 05, 2013**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: discuss both views](#)

Task 2 questions often ask you to **Discuss both views and give your own opinion**. Here's how I structure a 4-paragraph essay for this kind of question:

1. Introduction (2 sentences):

- First introduce the topic. I often begin with the phrase "People have different views about...".

- In the second sentence, mention both views **and** your own opinion. I often use the word "although" in this sentence e.g. Although there are good arguments in favour of..., I personally believe that...

2. The first view

3. The second view (I make it clear that I agree with this view)

4. Conclusion: summarise both views and your own opinion

Please share any 'discuss both views' questions that you find difficult in the comments area below. I'll choose one question to look at next week.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(42\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 29, 2013**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: find the good vocabulary](#)

In [last week's lesson](#) I explained what I mean by 'band 7 vocabulary'. Read the lesson again, then study the paragraph below.

***Which words or phrases in the following paragraph might be considered 'band 7 or higher'?***

It is true that there are some disadvantages to learning a foreign language at primary school age. The main problem is that young children need to study other subjects which can be considered as more important than a second language. The core subjects in most primary schools are the mother tongue language, mathematics and science, and it can be argued that lessons in a new language take valuable study time away from these key disciplines, as well as causing confusion in the young learners. In particular, some people might worry that lessons in the new language could delay the development of a child's first language.

**Note:**

The paragraph above would be part of my answer to [this question](#).

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(32\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 22, 2013**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'band 7 vocabulary'](#)

I sometimes use the term 'band 7 vocabulary' and several people have asked me to explain what I mean by this. Here goes:

1. First, when I say 'band 7 vocabulary', I'm talking about vocabulary that could help you to get a band 7 **or higher**.
2. There is no list of band 7 vocabulary that you can use in any essay.
3. 'Band 7 vocabulary' refers to words and phrases that **relate to the question topic**. For example, a phrase like "delay the development of a child's first language" would be band 7 vocabulary, but a linking word like "moreover" would not.
4. Examiners are looking for 'less common' vocabulary. They wouldn't expect many students to write "delay the development of a child's first language", so this phrase would impress them.
5. Remember that we are **not** looking for 'big' words that are difficult to understand. We are looking for groups of words used naturally and accurately together. The phrase "delay the development of a child's first language" is easy to understand, but not many students would think to use it.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(21\)](#)

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'language learning' topic](#)

My students and I worked on this question from Cambridge IELTS 9:

***Some experts believe that it is better for children to begin learning a foreign language at primary school rather than secondary school. Do the advantages of this outweigh the disadvantages?***

Here's our plan for a 4-paragraph essay:

1. Introduction: Topic = best age to learn a foreign language. Our opinion = better to learn at primary school age.
2. Disadvantages of learning languages at primary age: other subjects are more important at that age (maths, mother tongue language, science), learning a new language is confusing and wastes time, could delay development of child's first language.
3. Advantages of learning languages at primary age: young children learn faster, they are less self-conscious or shy, they pick up the pronunciation better, they enjoy copying and learning through games, nowadays languages are just as important as maths etc.
4. Conclusion: repeat / summarise our answer.

The plan took us 10 minutes to write. With a plan like this, it should be easy to write a good essay in 30 minutes.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(46\)](#)

Wednesday, May 08, 2013

[IELTS Writing Task 2: when to give your opinion](#)

Do the following questions ask for your opinion or not?

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree?
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages.
3. Discuss both views and give your opinion.
4. Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?
5. Is this a positive or negative development?
6. What are the benefits and drawbacks?

**Answers:**

- Numbers 2 and 6 are discussion questions. Discuss both sides of the issue, but don't give an opinion about which side you agree with.
- Numbers 1 and 5 are opinion questions. Give your opinion and support it. If you have a strong opinion, you don't need to mention the other side of the argument.
- Numbers 3 and 4 can be called discussion + opinion questions. Discuss both sides and make your opinion clear too.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

Wednesday, May 01, 2013

[IELTS Writing Task 2: quick conclusions](#)

The easiest way to write a short, effective conclusion is to paraphrase what you wrote in your introduction. Let's try this with the introduction I wrote last week.

### Introduction

It is true that the top sports people earn incredibly high salaries. Although reasons can be given to justify this, I personally believe that sports stars should be paid much less.

### Conclusion (loosely paraphrasing the introduction)

In conclusion, I do not accept the argument that sports professionals deserve to be paid so much more than people who do other important jobs.

#### **Note:**

Notice that I wrote "loosely paraphrasing" (I paraphrased the overall idea, rather than word for word).

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(14\)](#)

**Wednesday, April 24, 2013**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: ideas and planning](#)

Here's a question that my students and I looked at recently:

***Successful sports professionals can earn a great deal more money than people in other important professions. Some people think this is fully justified while others think it is unfair. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.***

*We spent 10 minutes planning, then we wrote half of the essay together:*

It is true that the top sports people earn incredibly high salaries. Although reasons can be given to justify this, I personally believe that sports stars should be paid much less.

There are several reasons why some people support high incomes in sport. Firstly, people who reach the highest levels in any sport must be uniquely talented. For example, it is rare to find someone with the football skills of Messi or Ronaldo, and it can be argued that these players deserve salaries that reflect their abilities. Secondly, even the most talented sports professionals must undergo many years of training to develop the skills and fitness required, and this takes great commitment, dedication and passion. Finally, sports salaries are only high because audiences and fans are willing to pay to watch their favourite stars.

#### **Note:**

The main reason why these two paragraphs are good is that we planned them carefully. We spent time thinking about the question, making notes, and organising our ideas in a logical way.

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: two common mistakes](#)

Here are two mistakes that students often make:

- Using "although" wrongly
- Always putting a comma after "that"

Look at these **incorrect** sentences:

1. Although, tourism has many benefits, but it also has some drawbacks.
2. Many people believe that, parents should be strict.

Now look at the **correct** sentences:

1. Although tourism has many benefits, it also has some drawbacks.
2. Many people believe that parents should be strict.

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: ways to prepare](#)

Many students only do one thing to prepare for writing task 2: they write lots of full essays. Although it's obviously important to practise writing full essays, there are other things that I think you should be doing.

Here are some study ideas for writing task 2:

### **1) Break the task into parts**

Instead of writing a full essay today, why not try writing 5 different introductions using my [2-sentence technique](#)? Or challenge yourself to write 3 different main-body paragraphs about "advantages" (e.g. advantages of mobile phones, homeschooling and immigration) - use [this lesson](#) to help you. Or write 5 different conclusions - just one sentence each, summarising your response to 5 different questions.

### **2) Do some research**

Instead of worrying about one particular question, try to find 10 recent exam questions (maybe using [this page](#)). Write the questions on a piece of paper, decide what the general topic is for each one (e.g. advertising, prisons, life expectancy) and do some research about those topics. Don't worry about the exact question, just try to "collect" good ideas and vocabulary for the overall topic. A quick search on Google or Wikipedia should give you what you need.

### **3) What do you believe?**

A big problem for some students is that they don't have well-formed opinions. They're not sure what to write about topics like homeschooling, immigration or gun control. The good news is that there is no 'correct' opinion - the examiner is only looking at how well you express your opinions in English. So, after doing some research (see point 2 above), make sure you have an opinion of your own.

## **[IELTS Writing Task 2: problem/solution essay](#)**

Here's my full essay for the question we've been working on.

***In the developed world, average life expectancy is increasing. What problems will this cause for individuals and society? Suggest some measures that could be taken to reduce the impact of ageing populations.***

It is true that people in industrialised nations can expect to live longer than ever before.

Although there will undoubtedly be some negative consequences of this trend, societies can take steps to mitigate these potential problems.

As people live longer and the populations of developed countries grow older, several related problems can be anticipated. The main issue is that there will obviously be more people of retirement age who will be eligible to receive a pension. The proportion of younger, working adults will be smaller, and governments will therefore receive less money in taxes in relation to the size of the population. In other words, an ageing population will mean a greater tax burden for working adults. Further pressures will include a rise in the demand for healthcare, and the fact young adults will increasingly have to look after their elderly relatives.

There are several actions that governments could take to solve the problems described above.

Firstly, a simple solution would be to increase the retirement age for working adults, perhaps from 65 to 70. Nowadays, people of this age tend to be healthy enough to continue a productive working life. A second measure would be for governments to encourage immigration in order to

increase the number of working adults who pay taxes. Finally, money from national budgets will need to be taken from other areas and spent on vital healthcare, accommodation and transport facilities for the rising numbers of older citizens.

In conclusion, various measures can be taken to tackle the problems that are certain to arise as the populations of countries grow older.

(265 words, band 9)

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: from plan to paragraph](#)

Let's try writing a full paragraph using the essay plan from [this lesson](#). The topic of this paragraph is "the problems caused by increasing life expectancy". Here's the plan I wrote:

#### Problems

- an increase in the number of retired people who will receive a pension
- a smaller proportion of young adults = smaller working populations
- a greater tax burden on working adults
- demand for healthcare will rise
- young adults will have to look after elderly relatives

#### ***Here's my paragraph using the ideas above:***

As people live longer and the populations of developed countries grow older, several related problems can be anticipated. The main issue is that there will obviously be more people of retirement age who will be eligible to receive a pension. The proportion of younger, working adults will be smaller, and governments will therefore receive less money in taxes in relation to the size of the population. In other words, an ageing population will mean a greater tax burden for working adults. Further pressures will include a rise in the demand for healthcare, and the fact young adults will increasingly have to look after their elderly relatives.

**Note:** It would be easy to write more by adding an example (such as healthcare costs like more hospital beds and medical staff), but I've already written 106 words, which is enough for one main paragraph.

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: 'ageing population' topic](#)

***In the developed world, average life expectancy is increasing. What problems will this cause for individuals and society? Suggest some measures that could be taken to reduce the impact of ageing populations.***

#### **Some advice:**

- Write 4 paragraphs: introduction, problems, solutions, conclusion.
- You don't need to separate ideas about individuals and ideas about society. Just mention something about both in your paragraphs.

#### **Some ideas:**

#### Problems

- an increase in the number of retired people who will receive a pension
- a smaller proportion of young adults = smaller working populations
- a greater tax burden on working adults
- demand for healthcare will rise
- young adults will have to look after elderly relatives

### Solutions

- people may have to retire later; the state pension age will rise
- medical advances and health programmes might allow elderly people to stay healthy and work for longer
- people should be encouraged to have more children
- governments could encourage immigration (in order to increase the number of younger adults)

### IELTS Writing Task 2: 'capital punishment' topic

Here are some ideas from my [ebook](#) about the topic of capital punishment. Remember that you won't be able to write a good essay unless you have good ideas. Also, you should always try to prepare both sides of the argument.

#### **Arguments for capital punishment:**

- Supporters say that capital punishment deters crime.
- Fear of the death penalty stops people from committing offences.
- The death penalty shows that crime is not tolerated.
- It is a form of revenge.
- The cost of imprisonment is avoided.
- The offender cannot pose a threat to others.

#### **Arguments against capital punishment:**

- Innocent people could be wrongly convicted and executed.
- Crime rates are not necessarily reduced.
- Many criminals do not think they will be caught.
- Capital punishment is not a good deterrent.
- Executing prisoners creates a violent culture and encourages revenge.
- We have no right to take another human life.

### IELTS Writing Task 2: 'petrol price' introduction

The following question comes from Cambridge IELTS book 8.

***Increasing the price of petrol is the best way to solve growing traffic and pollution problems.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

***What other measures do you think might be effective?***

My students wrote the introduction below. Notice that it addresses all parts of the question so that the examiner knows exactly what our position is.

*Traffic and pollution are growing problems in today's society. Personally, I disagree with the idea that higher petrol prices could solve these problems, and I believe that various other measures would be more constructive.*

PS. Don't waste time writing a longer introduction than this. The main body paragraphs are much more important!

### IELTS Writing Task 2: 'video games' essay

***Some people regard video games as harmless fun, or even as a useful educational tool. Others, however, believe that videos games are having an adverse effect on the people who play them. In your opinion, do the drawbacks of video games outweigh the benefits?***

Many people, and children in particular, enjoy playing computer games. While I accept that these games can sometimes have a positive effect on the user, I believe that they are more likely to have a harmful impact.

On the one hand, video games can be both entertaining and educational. Users, or gamers, are transported into virtual worlds which are often more exciting and engaging than real-life pastimes. From an educational perspective, these games encourage imagination and creativity, as well as concentration, logical thinking and problem solving, all of which are useful skills outside the gaming context. Furthermore, it has been shown that computer simulation games can improve users' motor skills and help to prepare them for real-world tasks, such as flying a plane.

However, I would argue that these benefits are outweighed by the drawbacks. Gaming can be highly addictive because users are constantly given scores, new targets and frequent rewards to keep them playing. Many children now spend hours each day trying to progress through the levels of a game or to get a higher score than their friends. This type of addiction can have effects ranging from lack of sleep to problems at school, when homework is sacrificed for a few more hours on the computer or console. The rise in obesity in recent years has also been linked in part to the sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercise that often accompany gaming addiction.

In conclusion, it seems to me that the potential dangers of video games are more significant than the possible benefits.

(258 words, band 9)

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: are you stuck?**

Students often tell me that they are stuck on the same writing score. For example, they keep getting 6.5 in every test they take. If you are [stuck in a rut](#) like this, perhaps the most effective way to get out of it is to give more importance to your essay plan.

I tell my students to spend around 3 minutes making notes for each main body paragraph. So, for the [housing topic](#) we've been looking at recently, we would spend 3 minutes thinking about why we shouldn't build more houses in cities, and 3 more minutes thinking about the benefits of developing new towns.

The act of planning helps you to separate the task of idea generation from the task of writing. It's extremely difficult to do both of these things at the same time.

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: 'music' essay**

***There are many different types of music in the world today. Why do we need music? Is the traditional music of a country more important than the international music that is heard everywhere nowadays?***

It is true that a rich variety of musical styles can be found around the world. Music is a vital part of all human cultures for a range of reasons, and I would argue that traditional music is more important than modern, international music.

Music is something that accompanies all of us throughout our lives. As children, we are taught songs by our parents and teachers as a means of learning language, or simply as a form of enjoyment. Children delight in singing with others, and it would appear that the act of singing in a group creates a connection between participants, regardless of their age. Later in life, people's musical preferences develop, and we come to see our favourite songs as part of our life stories. Music both expresses and arouses emotions in a way that words alone cannot. In short, it is difficult to imagine life without it.

In my opinion, traditional music should be valued over the international music that has become so popular. International pop music is often catchy and fun, but it is essentially a commercial product that is marketed and sold by business people. Traditional music, by contrast, expresses the culture, customs and history of a country. Traditional styles, such as ...(example)..., connect us to the past and form part of our cultural identity. It would be a real pity if pop music became so predominant that these national styles disappeared.

In conclusion, music is a necessary part of human existence, and I believe that traditional music should be given more importance than international music.

(261 words, band 9)

### IELTS Writing Task 2: correct the mistakes

Several people tried writing about the [music topic](#) in last week's lesson. Try to correct the mistakes that they made in the sentences below. I'll share my full essay next week.

1. We have different types of music all over the world, we need music for various reasons.
2. The first I think we need music almost for enjoyment.
3. People listening to a variety of music is due to a number of reasons.
4. It is clear cut evidence why we need for music.
5. Traditional music of a country has more weight that the famous international music.
6. At a glance, we need music for enjoyment.
7. The people is more happier listening all kind the rhythms and sounds than without it.
8. It helps to make relaxed from any sort of strain.
9. If the international music would replace it then the whole historical experience of a country will die.

### IELTS Writing Task 2: answer all parts of the question

A student sent me the following question:

***The role of prisons should be to punish criminals who have committed serious crimes. Training courses and education offered to prisoners are a waste of taxpayer's money. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

The student who sent me this question noticed that it contains two sub-topics:

1. Should the role of prisons be to punish serious criminals, not petty criminals (less serious criminals)?
2. Are training courses and education a waste of money?

Apparently there is a model essay for this question which only addresses the second sub-topic. I think that would be a mistake; you should try to answer all parts of the question.

In this case, the two sub-topics help you because they tell you what you should write about in your two main body paragraphs. Always study the question carefully, and make sure you know exactly what it is asking you to do!

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: the 10-minute plan](#)

If you are struggling to improve your score for writing task 2, the solution might be to spend more time planning before you start writing.

I asked the students on my most recent [one-day course](#) to spend 10 minutes planning a question about whether the only purpose of prisons is to punish people. Here are the ideas that my students had:

#### **Paragraph 2: prisons do punish offenders**

Punishment makes offenders think, reflect, feel sorry, understand the consequences (that we have choices about the actions we take), suffering, revenge / justice for victims, debt to society, taking away freedom and privileges, miss family, deter people from committing crimes in future - fear of prison

#### **Paragraph 3: other purposes of prisons**

Reflection time, rehabilitation - help the prisoner to prepare for normal life: new skills, education, courses, qualifications, treatment - reform, reeducate, find employment, re-enter society - address the root causes of crime

With a plan like this, you should find it easier to write a great essay.

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: advantages and disadvantages](#)

Albert sent me this recent exam question:

***In many countries nowadays, young single people no longer stay with their parents until they are married, but leave to study or work somewhere else.***

***Do you think this trend has more advantages or disadvantages?***

Here are some tips to help with this kind of question:

1. Notice that the question includes the words "do you think". This tells you that you need to give your own opinion, as well as discussing both the advantages and disadvantages. Put your opinion in the introduction and conclusion, and don't be afraid to use the word "I" (e.g. I believe) to make it clear what **you** think.
2. You won't be able to write a good essay if you don't plan your ideas first. Spend 2-3 minutes noting down ideas for the advantages of leaving home before marriage, then 2-3 minutes writing notes for the disadvantages. Then decide what your opinion is, according to whether you have more advantages or disadvantages.
3. If you can't think of any ideas, start by thinking of some examples e.g. Did you or any of your friends leave home before getting married? Do you know anyone who lived with their parents until they got married? What were the reasons and benefits or drawbacks of each decision?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(56\)](#)

**Wednesday, August 01, 2012**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'discussion' introduction](#)

Last week we looked at a 'problem and solution' introduction. Today I'll use the same technique (2 sentences: topic + basic answer) to write a 'discussion and opinion' introduction.

Here's a question (from Cambridge IELTS 6):

***Successful sports professionals can earn a great deal more money than people in other important professions. Some people think this is fully justified while others think it is unfair. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.***

Here's my 2-sentence introduction:

It is true that sports stars often earn huge salaries. While there are some good reasons why this is the case, I personally believe that it is wrong for these people to be paid more than other professionals.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(28\)](#)

**Wednesday, July 25, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: problem & solution introduction](#)**

My advice for task 2 introductions is to write them very quickly. Just write 2 sentences: one to introduce the topic, and one to give a basic answer. Let's look at how to do this for a "problem and solution" question:

***The number of plants and animals is declining. Describe some reasons for this problem and suggest some solutions.***

Here's my introduction:

It is undeniable that wildlife habitats are being destroyed and whole species of plants and animals are disappearing. There are several causes of this alarming trend, but measures could certainly be taken to tackle the problem.

**Note:**

In the second sentence you don't need to give any causes or solutions; save your ideas for the main paragraphs.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(22\)](#)

**Wednesday, July 18, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: idea and paragraph](#)**

My students and I followed the advice in [last week's lesson](#) to write a paragraph for the topic below.

***The number of plants and animals is declining. Describe the problem and suggest some solutions.***

Ideas for describing the problem:

- over-farming, land needed for crops and animals
- cutting down trees destroys natural habitats, animals become extinct
- industrial waste in rivers, sea
- chemicals kill fish and plants, interrupt natural cycles / food chain

It seemed that we had 2 main ideas, so we wrote a 2-idea paragraph:

There are two main reasons why plants and animals are disappearing. Firstly, in many parts of the world trees are being cut down to make way for farmland on which to grow crops and keep animals. The result of this is that natural habitats are being destroyed, and in some cases whole

species of animals are becoming extinct. Secondly, human activity is also responsible for the destruction of aquatic life as domestic and industrial waste is pumped into rivers and seas. This chemical waste kills plants and fish, interrupting natural cycles and having a devastating effect on food chains.

(99 words)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(35\)](#)

Wednesday, July 11, 2012

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: from ideas to paragraph](#)

I always tell my students to plan ideas for their main body paragraphs. Let's look at how to put some ideas together to make a paragraph. Here's the question:

***The main reason people go to work is to earn money.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

Ideas for one main paragraph:

- agree that money is the main reason people work
- people look at salary first, they rarely take a salary cut
- need to live, pay bills, food etc.
- look after our families, save for the future
- otherwise, most people would probably choose not to work

Full paragraph using the ideas above:

I agree that the majority of people work in order to earn money. Before taking any other factors into account, it is normal to first consider the salary that a particular post offers, and it is rare to hear of a person who happily takes a cut in pay when beginning a new job. We all need money to pay for our basic necessities, such as accommodation, bills and food. Many adults also have families who depend on the wages they earn, and at the same time they are conscious of the need to save for the future. If we no longer needed money, I doubt most of us would choose to continue in our jobs.

(116 words)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(30\)](#)

Wednesday, July 04, 2012

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: before you start writing](#)

Before you start writing your task 2 essay, you need to do two things:

1. Plan your overall essay structure (ideally 4 paragraphs)
2. Spend some time thinking of ideas for the main body paragraphs

Here are two recent exam questions that you could try writing a plan for:

***The main reason people go to work is to earn money.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

***Many people prefer to rent a house rather than buying one. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of renting.***

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(35\)](#)

Wednesday, June 27, 2012

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: 'unpaid work' essay](#)

***Some people think that all teenagers should be required to do unpaid work in their free time to help the local community. They believe this would benefit both the individual teenager and society as a whole.***

***Do you agree or disagree?***

Many young people work on a volunteer basis, and this can only be beneficial for both the individual and society as a whole. However, I do not agree that we should therefore force all teenagers to do unpaid work.

Most young people are already under enough pressure with their studies, without being given the added responsibility of working in their spare time. School is just as demanding as a full-time job, and teachers expect their students to do homework and exam revision on top of attending lessons every day. When young people do have some free time, we should encourage them to enjoy it with their friends or to spend it doing sports and other leisure activities. They have many years of work ahead of them when they finish their studies.

At the same time, I do not believe that society has anything to gain from obliging young people to do unpaid work. In fact, I would argue that it goes against the values of a free and fair society to force a group of people to do something against their will. Doing this can only lead to resentment amongst young people, who would feel that they were being used, and parents, who would not want to be told how to raise their children. Currently, nobody is forced to volunteer, and this is surely the best system.

In conclusion, teenagers may choose to work for free and help others, but in my opinion we should not make this compulsory.

(250 words, band 9)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(33\)](#)

**Wednesday, June 20, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: completely disagree](#)**

When you completely agree or completely disagree with the question statement, you don't need to write about the other side of the argument. Just state your opinion and give reasons. Today I'll show you how to write a 'disagree' essay for this question:

***Some people think that all teenagers should be required to do unpaid work in their free time to help the local community. They believe this would benefit both the individual teenager and society as a whole.***

***Do you agree or disagree?***

Here's my 4-paragraph plan:

1. Introduction: introduce the topic of unpaid work for teenagers, and make it clear that you completely disagree with the idea of requiring (forcing) young people to do this.
2. First reason: explain why this idea would not benefit teenagers e.g. they are already busy with school work, they should be allowed to enjoy being young, they have many years of work ahead of them when they finish their studies.
3. Second reason: explain why this idea would not benefit society e.g. forcing young people to work goes against the values of a free society, the current system of volunteering is better, this idea would be impossible to enforce.
4. Conclusion: repeat your opinion that requiring teenagers to work benefits neither the teenagers nor society as a whole.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(21\)](#)

Wednesday, June 13, 2012

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: fully respond to the question](#)

One of the things that the examiner will check carefully is whether or not you have fully responded to the question. Here's a question that a student sent me:

***Some people think that all teenagers should be required to do unpaid work in their free time to help the local community. They believe this would benefit both the individual teenager and society as a whole.***

***Do you agree or disagree?***

The student who sent me this question wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of unpaid work for teenagers, but completely forgot to mention the benefits and/or drawbacks for society as a whole.

If you don't fully answer the question, it's extremely difficult to get a band 7.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(27\)](#)

Wednesday, June 06, 2012

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: introduction without opinion](#)

My normal advice for task 2 introductions is this: write two sentences - one to introduce the essay topic, and one to give a basic answer to the question. But what should you put in the second sentence (basic answer) if the question doesn't ask for your opinion?

**Here are two example questions:**

1. Many people believe that an effective public transport system is a key component of a modern city. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of public transport.
2. Crime rates tend to be higher in cities than in smaller towns. Explain some possible reasons for this problem, and suggest some solutions.

**Here are two sample introductions:**

1. Officials in many cities are keen to develop efficient public transport systems. While public transport has many benefits, there are also some drawbacks which are worth considering.
2. Cities generally experience higher levels of criminality than towns or villages. There are various reasons for this, but measures could be taken to tackle the problem.

Hopefully you can see that it's quite easy to write an introduction for these types of question. The approach is the same (topic + basic answer) whether the question asks for your opinion or not.

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: 'food technology' topic](#)

Here are some ideas for last week's topic. The ideas are adapted from the 'genetic engineering' chapter in my [ebook](#).

***The range and quality of food that we can buy has changed because of technological and scientific advances. Some people regard this change as an improvement, while others believe that it is harmful.***

***Discuss both views and give your own opinion.***

Positives of advances in food technology:

- Farmers can produce crops that grow bigger and faster.

- Genetically modified crops may be more resistant to disease or insects.
- This could be important for food production in developing countries.
- Faster growing cereals, fruit and vegetables will mean more profit.
- Foods can be modified to look perfect and last longer.
- They may be more attractive to customers.

Negatives of advances in food technology:

- Many people distrust foods that have been modified or processed.
- They prefer organic foods which are produced without chemicals.
- Farming without fertilisers or pesticides is more environmentally friendly.
- There may be risks involved in the genetic engineering of foods.
- Genetically modified crops might change whole ecosystems.
- Food chains could be broken if crops are resistant to predators.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(40\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 23, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: the importance of planning](#)**

When the question topic is difficult, planning becomes even more important. If you start writing your essay straight away, without preparing some ideas first, you will probably get stuck and start to panic!

Take this recent exam question:

***The range and quality of food that we can buy has changed because of technological and scientific advances. Some people regard this change as an improvement, while others believe that it is harmful.***

***Discuss both views and give your own opinion.***

I think you'll agree that this is a tricky question. My advice would be to spend about 10 minutes planning. Follow these steps before you start writing:

1. Take a couple of minutes to read and understand the question.
2. Decide what each of your 4 paragraphs should contain.
3. Spend around 6 minutes noting down ideas for the two points of view.

[Click here](#) to download an essay plan template that I use with my students.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(44\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 16, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: both sides or one side?](#)**

***Can you see the difference between the two questions below?***

A) Explain the positives and negatives of this development.

B) Is this a positive or negative development?

***and these two questions:***

A) What are the advantages and disadvantages?

B) Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

***and these two questions:***

A) Discuss both views and give your opinion.

B) To what extent do you agree or disagree?

**Answer:**

The difference is that for all of the (A) questions you must explain both sides of the argument, whereas the (B) questions can be answered by giving both sides or by supporting only one side, depending on the view that you express in your introduction.

This is still the most common confusion that students ask me about. Make sure you understand the difference between the questions above; if you're still unsure, look through all of my task 2 lessons to see further advice and examples.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(24\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 09, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'prisons' topic](#)**

In today's lesson I'll try to explain what makes a good paragraph. We'll analyse a paragraph that I wrote with some of my students.

***Paragraph about the purpose of prisons:***

On the one hand, criminals do need to be punished in some way. A person who commits a crime must learn that unlawful actions have consequences. Prison sentences punish offenders because they lose their freedom, and are separated from family and friends. In this way, prison acts as a deterrent to make people think carefully before breaking the law. Last year in the UK, many people were given a prison sentence for rioting, and hopefully this punishment will deter them from similar behaviour in future.

***Analysis:***

- The paragraph contains 5 sentences, with a total of 85 words. This is the kind of length I suggest aiming for.
- The first sentence is short and simple. We often call this type of sentence a 'topic sentence' because it introduces the topic of the paragraph.
- Sentences 2, 3 and 4 develop the main idea in a logical, step-by-step way: crime has consequences - loss of freedom is the punishment - this stops people from breaking the law.
- Sentence 5 contains a real example.
- Remember that good vocabulary is the key to a high score. I've underlined the best words and phrases in the paragraph.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(26\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 02, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'university' topic](#)**

The book I mentioned in Monday's lesson (What are Universities for?) reminded me of this question from Cambridge IELTS 7:

***Some people think that universities should provide graduates with the knowledge and skills needed in the workplace. Others think that the true function of a university should be to give access to knowledge for its own sake, regardless of whether the course is useful to an employer. What, in your opinion, should be the function of a university?***

Here are some ideas:

- It would probably be easiest to argue that universities should fulfil both roles (providing vocational skills **and** knowledge for its own sake).

- We could use examples to help us generate ideas: try to make a list of some vocational degree courses (that provide training for a specific job), and a list of courses that do not lead to a particular job.
- Write one main paragraph explaining the benefits (to the student and to society in general) of the two types of course.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(20\)](#)

**Wednesday, April 25, 2012**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'hobbies' essay](#)

I wrote the following essay with some of my students. We tried to keep it clear, concise and well-organised, but it's still good enough for a band 9.

***Some people believe that hobbies need to be difficult to be enjoyable.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

Some hobbies are relatively easy, while others present more of a challenge. Personally, I believe that both types of hobby can be fun, and I therefore disagree with the statement that hobbies need to be difficult in order to be enjoyable.

On the one hand, many people enjoy easy hobbies. One example of an activity that is easy for most people is swimming. This hobby requires very little equipment, it is simple to learn, and it is inexpensive. I remember learning to swim at my local swimming pool when I was a child, and it never felt like a demanding or challenging experience. Another hobby that I find easy and fun is photography. In my opinion, anyone can take interesting pictures without knowing too much about the technicalities of operating a camera. Despite being straightforward, taking photos is a satisfying activity.

On the other hand, difficult hobbies can sometimes be more exciting. If an activity is more challenging, we might feel a greater sense of satisfaction when we manage to do it successfully. For example, film editing is a hobby that requires a high level of knowledge and expertise. In my case, it took me around two years before I became competent at this activity, but now I enjoy it much more than I did when I started. I believe that many hobbies give us more pleasure when we reach a higher level of performance because the results are better and the feeling of achievement is greater.

In conclusion, simple hobbies can be fun and relaxing, but difficult hobbies can be equally pleasurable for different reasons.

**Note:**

Notice that we used examples as the basis of both main paragraphs.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(38\)](#)

**Wednesday, April 18, 2012**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'hobbies' essay plan](#)

Did you try planning some ideas for last week's essay question?

***Some people believe that hobbies need to be difficult to be enjoyable.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

When I wrote my list of hobbies, I realised that some were easy and others were difficult. As a result, I'd say that "I partly agree" with the statement.

Here's my 4-paragraph essay plan:

1. Introduction - write 2 sentences: introduce the topic, and give an overall answer.
2. Main paragraph - about difficult hobbies. My examples: swimming, football, chess. Most sports and games are difficult, but the challenge makes them more enjoyable, especially when you can see that you are improving.
3. Main paragraph - about easy hobbies. My examples: photography, reading, cinema. In my opinion, you do not need to be an expert to enjoy taking photos, reading books, or watching films. I find these activities both easy and enjoyable.
4. Conclusion - repeat / summarise your answer in one sentence.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(19\)](#)

**Wednesday, April 11, 2012**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: examples give you ideas](#)

If you can't think of any good ideas for an essay, try thinking about some examples first. Plan your essay around the examples. Take this question:

***Some people believe that hobbies need to be difficult to be enjoyable.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

Use examples to give you ideas:

- Make a list of some hobbies: either your own hobbies, or some typical hobbies that you can easily write about. Label each hobby 'easy' or 'difficult'.
- Look at your list. Is there a balance between easy and difficult hobbies, or is your list one-sided? The answer to this question will give you your overall opinion.
- Finally, write down a few reasons why each hobby is easy or difficult. Is there a connection between the difficulty of the hobby and the enjoyment you get from it?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(22\)](#)

**Wednesday, April 04, 2012**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: question types](#)

Here are the four types of question from [last week's lesson](#):

1. Opinion
2. Discussion + opinion
3. Problem + solution
4. 2-part question

Important points to remember:

1. An 'opinion' question asks for your view, not the views of other people, and you don't have to give both sides of the argument. Just make your opinion clear in the introduction, then explain it in the rest of the essay.
2. A 'discussion' question requires you to write about both sides of the argument, and you should write a similar amount for each view. If the question also asks for your opinion, you don't need an extra paragraph. Just make it clear in the introduction and conclusion which of the two views you agree with.
3. Type 3 is easy. Simply write a paragraph explaining the problem(s) and a paragraph explaining the solution(s). Some questions ask about 'causes' or 'effects': these would be part of the 'problem' paragraph.
4. For type 4, just answer the two questions. Write one paragraph about each.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(41\)](#)

**Wednesday, March 28, 2012**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: four question types](#)

Here are 4 questions that illustrate the different types of task 2 question. Can you name each type? Can you explain the big difference between the first and the second type?

1. Some people think that the only purpose of working hard is to earn money. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?
2. Some people believe that punishment is the only purpose of prisons, while others believe that prisons exist for various reasons. Discuss both views and give your opinion.
3. The number of plants and animals is declining. Explain this problem and suggest some solutions.
4. Many people around the world are choosing to move to live in cities. What problems do people experience in big cities? Should governments encourage people to move to smaller towns?

I'll explain the differences in detail next Wednesday, but feel free to discuss your ideas in the "comments" area below.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(34\)](#)

**Wednesday, March 21, 2012**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: topic sentences](#)

A good way to start a paragraph is with a short, simple sentence that introduces the main idea of the paragraph. Teachers often call this a 'topic sentence'.

I normally write my topic sentences by thinking about how many points I want to mention in the paragraph:

**1. If I only have one point or idea, I usually state it straight away:**

In my opinion, junk food is the main cause of childhood obesity.

(then explain this opinion and give examples in the rest of the paragraph)

**2. If I have two or three points or ideas, I don't usually mention them directly in the topic sentence:**

There are two main causes (or 'several causes') of childhood obesity.

(then explain using "firstly, secondly..." or something similar)

Have a look through the essays that you've written in the past, and compare them with some of mine. Did you begin your main paragraphs with good topic sentences?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(19\)](#)

**Wednesday, March 14, 2012**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: agree, disagree, or both?](#)

For 'agree or disagree' essays, do you think you should give both sides of the argument or just one side? The answer is that you can do either.

A) Essay structure for one side of the argument:

1. Introduction: topic + your opinion (either agree or disagree)
2. First idea to support your opinion
3. Second idea to support your opinion

4. Conclusion: repeat your opinion
- B) Essay structure for giving both sides:
1. Introduction: topic + say that you 'partly agree'
  2. On the one hand,...
  3. On the other hand,...
  4. Conclusion: repeat that you accept elements of both arguments

Remember: it's very important to get the introduction right. This tells the examiner whether you are going to give one side of the argument or both sides.

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: 'technology' essay](#)

Several people have asked me about this question from Cambridge IELTS 8. I wrote the essay below with the help of some of my students. A few simple linking features are highlighted.

***Nowadays the way many people interact with each other has changed because of technology. In what ways has technology affected the types of relationships that people make? Has this been a positive or negative development?***

It is true that new technologies have had an influence on communication between people.

Technology has affected relationships in various ways, and in my opinion there are both positive and negative effects.

Technology has had an impact on relationships in business, education and social life. **Firstly**, telephones and the Internet allow business people in different countries to interact without ever meeting each other. **Secondly**, services like Skype create new possibilities for relationships between students and teachers. For example, a student can now take video lessons with a teacher in a different city or country. **Finally**, many people use social networks, like Facebook, to make new friends and find people who share common interests, and they interact through their computers rather than face to face.

**On the one hand**, these developments can be extremely positive. Cooperation between people in different countries was much more difficult when communication was limited to written letters or telegrams. Nowadays, interactions by email, phone or video are almost as good as face-to-face meetings, and many of us benefit from these interactions, either in work or social contexts. **On the other hand**, the availability of new communication technologies can also have the result of isolating people and discouraging real interaction. For example, many young people choose to make friends online rather than mixing with their peers in the real world, and these 'virtual' relationships are a poor substitute for real friendships.

In conclusion, technology has certainly revolutionised communication between people, but not all of the outcomes of this revolution have been positive.

(257 words, band 9)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(41\)](#)

**Wednesday, February 22, 2012**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: 'art and science' topic](#)

A student sent me this recent exam question:

***These days people pay more attention to artists (writers, painters and so on) and give less importance to science and technology.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

This seems to me to be a perfect question for a "balanced opinion" answer (i.e. both art and science are given equal importance). However, notice that you need to ***disagree*** with the question statement in order to give this balanced response.

Here's my recommended 4-paragraph essay plan:

1. Introduction: we could accept that artists are popular nowadays, but disagree that science and technology are treated as less important.
2. Main paragraph about the popularity of artists. I'd use examples as the basis for this paragraph. If you don't know any writers or painters, you can talk about actors and musicians.
3. Main paragraph about the importance of science and technology. I'd write about the popularity of mobile phones, computers and tablets. Maybe I'd use Steve Jobs or Bill Gates as examples of people who are famous for the technologies they created.
4. Conclusion: paraphrase the argument that you presented in the introduction.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(33\)](#)

**Wednesday, February 15, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: introductions and conclusions](#)**

Many students waste time writing long introductions and conclusions. These two paragraphs should be short and simple; a long, complex introduction or conclusion will not give you a high score.

Just make your introductions and conclusions quick and concise, and spend your time writing really good main body paragraphs.

Here's my introduction and conclusion for the topic of my last two writing lessons:

Introduction

There are various benefits and drawbacks of books, radio and television as ways to convey information. In my view, television is definitely the most effective of these three media.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although books, radio and television each have their advantages and disadvantages, it seems to me that the impact of television is greater.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(42\)](#)

**Wednesday, February 08, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: books, radio, TV](#)**

Here are my 'main body' paragraphs for last week's question. Notice that it's possible to put advantages and disadvantages together in the same paragraph. Also, you need to be careful not to write too much!

***Advantages / disadvantages of books:***

The main advantage of books is that they are usually considered to be reliable sources of information. People tend to refer to books when they want to research a subject in depth, and for this reason they continue to play an important role in education. On the other hand, books quickly go out of date, and therefore they are not the best medium for communicating news stories.

### ***Advantages / disadvantages of radio:***

Radio is a much more effective medium than books for the communication of up-to-date information. We can listen to news broadcasts about events as they happen, and a key benefit of radio is that we can listen to it while doing other activities, such as driving or working. The main drawback of radio, when compared to books or television, is that there is no visual element; we cannot see what the broadcaster is describing.

### ***Advantages / disadvantages of TV, and my opinion:***

In my opinion, television is the most effective of these three media because it brings us closer to reality than a book or radio programme ever can. For example, we can watch events as they take place on the other side of the world, or we can see the body language of a politician who is being interviewed. The disadvantages of television are that programmes tend to be short and interrupted by advertisements, meaning that information is presented in limited depth.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(33\)](#)

**Wednesday, February 01, 2012**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'media' topic](#)

Several people have asked me about the following question from Cambridge IELTS book 4.

***Compare the advantages and disadvantages of three of the following as media for communicating information. State which you consider to be the most effective.***

- ***comics***
- ***books***
- ***radio***
- ***television***
- ***film***
- ***theatre***

Usually I recommend writing 4 paragraphs, but for this question I think I would write 5 paragraphs:

1. Introduction: state which 3 media you are going to write about (e.g. books, radio, TV), and say which you think is most effective (e.g. television).
2. Advantages and disadvantages of books.
3. Advantages and disadvantages of radio.
4. Advantages and disadvantages of TV (mention again that you consider this the most effective).
5. Conclusion: summarise and repeat your opinion.

Maybe you can share your ideas about the advantages and disadvantages of these 3 media, and I'll use them to write an essay for next week's lesson.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(35\)](#)

**Wednesday, January 25, 2012**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: full essay](#)

Today I'm attaching the full essay ([click here](#)) that we've been working on for the last 2 weeks. Here are some points to notice:

- There is a clear 4-paragraph structure, and the essay is easy to read because the ideas are developed in a logical way.

- The introduction is short, but it covers everything that the question asks you about.
- The main paragraphs make up around 70% of the essay. These paragraphs are the key to a high score.
- The conclusion is very short, and simply summarises what I had already written. Never put any new ideas in the conclusion.
- I focus on expressing my ideas well, using a range of relevant words and phrases. I'm not thinking about 'complex grammar' or linking phrases.

**Note:**

I went a bit "over the top" with this essay. It's 310 words long, and more than good enough for band 9. You might not be able to write like this, but hopefully you can learn something from it.

**(go over the top:** to do something that is more than what is considered normal or suitable)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(20\)](#)

**Wednesday, January 18, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: main body paragraphs](#)**

Here are my 2 main body paragraphs for [last week's question](#). I tried to use an "Idea, Explain, Example" structure for the first paragraph, and a "Firstly, Secondly, Finally" structure for the second.

***Main body paragraphs:***

On the one hand, having a defined career path can certainly lead to a satisfying working life. Many people decide as young children what they want to do as adults, and it gives them a great sense of satisfaction to work towards their goals and gradually achieve them. For example, many children dream of becoming doctors, but to realise this ambition they need to gain the relevant qualifications and undertake years of training. In my experience, very few people who have qualified as doctors choose to change career because they find their work so rewarding, and because they have invested so much time and effort to reach their goal.

On the other hand, people find happiness in their working lives in different ways. Firstly, not everyone dreams of doing a particular job, and it can be equally rewarding to try a variety of professions; starting out on a completely new career path can be a reinvigorating experience. Secondly, some people see their jobs as simply a means of earning money, and they are happy if their salary is high enough to allow them to enjoy life outside work. Finally, job satisfaction is often the result of working conditions, rather than the career itself. For example, a positive working atmosphere, enthusiastic colleagues, and an inspirational boss can make working life much more satisfying, regardless of the profession.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(33\)](#)

**Wednesday, January 11, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: rules for introductions](#)**

***Many people decide on a career path early in their lives and keep to it. This, they argue, leads to a more satisfying working life.***

***To what extent do you agree with this view?***

***What other things can people do in order to have a satisfying working life?***

In today's lesson I just want to look at how to write an introduction for this type of question. My simple rules for task 2 introductions are:

1. Write 2 sentences: introduce the topic, then give a general answer.
2. Mention everything that the question mentions.
3. Don't save any surprises for the conclusion; give your opinion in the introduction if the question asks for it.

***Here's an example introduction:***

It is true that some people know from an early age what career they want to pursue, and they are happy to spend the rest of their lives in the same profession. While I accept that this may suit many people, I believe that others enjoy changing careers or seeking job satisfaction in different ways.

I'll look at the main paragraphs next week.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(50\)](#)

**Wednesday, January 04, 2012**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: using the word "I"](#)**

Here is a question that a lot of students ask:

***Is it acceptable to use "I" or "my" in IELTS writing?***

As an ex-examiner, my advice is that you **should** use phrases like "I believe" or "in my opinion" when the question asks for **your opinion** e.g To what extent do **you** agree or disagree?

Some teachers tell students not to use "I" in academic essays, but this advice is really for university academic writing, not IELTS.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(32\)](#)

**Wednesday, December 28, 2011**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'nuclear power' topic](#)**

Following on from yesterday's listening lesson, here is a paragraph explaining some of the benefits of nuclear power:

There are several benefits to building more nuclear power stations. Firstly, nuclear power is a relatively sustainable energy source, meaning that it can be used to produce electricity without wasting limited natural resources like coal, oil or gas. Secondly, nuclear power stations are cleaner than fossil fuel power stations, and could help to reduce carbon emissions that cause global warming. With improvements in nuclear technology, the risks of accidents are being reduced. As a result, many countries are now considering nuclear power as a solution to high oil and gas prices, increasing demand for electricity, and worries about pollution and climate change.

Read, analyse and use the paragraph:

- How many sentences are there, and what does each sentence do?
- Note the main ideas and collocations (e.g. sustainable energy source).
- Try to rewrite the paragraph using only your notes.

PS. If you have my [ebook](#), you will find some ideas for the 'negatives of nuclear power' in the environment chapter on page 19.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

**Wednesday, December 21, 2011**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: short introductions](#)**

It's a good idea to practise writing short, fast introductions. If you can write the introduction quickly, you will have more time to focus on the main paragraphs - these are the key to a high score.

Here's a question that someone asked me about:

***In many cities, security measures, such as the use of video cameras in public places, are being increased in order to reduce crime, but some people believe that these measures restrict our individual freedom.***

***Do the benefits of increased security outweigh the drawbacks?***

Here's my short, fast introduction:

It is true that the security in many cities has been tightened in recent years. Although I agree that some security measures can feel restrictive, I believe that there are more benefits than drawbacks.

**Note:**

- In reality, it might not be true that security has been increased in most cities, but I think we have to accept this in order to answer the question.
- The question gives us an example of increased security (video cameras), so we can definitely use that example in a paragraph about the drawbacks.
- Notice that my introduction paraphrases the question. I've used some of the words from the question, but there are some nice changes too (e.g. tightened, feel restrictive).

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(51\)](#)

**Wednesday, December 14, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'global warming' topic](#)

If the question asks you to explain a problem related to the environment, you could write about global warming.

***Here is a paragraph explaining the problem (causes) of global warming:***

Perhaps the most serious problem facing the environment is global warming. Gases such as carbon dioxide trap heat from the sun within the earth's atmosphere, and this causes global temperatures to rise. This process is known as the greenhouse effect, and human activity is a major factor in the rise of the greenhouse gases which cause it. For example, factories and vehicles produce emissions and exhaust fumes. As many developing countries are becoming industrialised, emissions from factories are expected to increase. Furthermore, the number of cars on our streets is growing all the time, and cheap air travel is making flying accessible to more and more people. Consequently, the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere shows no signs of decreasing.

You can learn a lot from this paragraph if you analyse it:

1. How many sentences are there? What does each sentence do? (e.g. The first sentence introduces the topic)
2. Can you find some "band 7 vocabulary"?
3. Look at how the ideas are linked. Can you see that the word "this" is an important linking word?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

**Wednesday, December 07, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'help' essay](#)

Last week I wrote a plan for the question below. Now you can read my full essay.

***We cannot help everyone in the world that needs help, so we should only be concerned with our own communities and countries.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?***

Some people believe that we should not help people in other countries as long as there are problems in our own society. I disagree with this view because I believe that we should try to help as many people as possible.

On the one hand, I accept that it is important to help our neighbours and fellow citizens. In most communities there are people who are impoverished or disadvantaged in some way. It is possible to find homeless people, for example, in even the wealthiest of cities, and for those who are concerned about this problem, there are usually opportunities to volunteer time or give money to support these people. In the UK, people can help in a variety of ways, from donating clothing to serving free food in a soup kitchen. As the problems are on our doorstep, and there are obvious ways to help, I can understand why some people feel that we should prioritise local charity.

At the same time, I believe that we have an obligation to help those who live beyond our national borders. In some countries the problems that people face are much more serious than those in our own communities, and it is often even easier to help. For example, when children are dying from curable diseases in African countries, governments and individuals in richer countries can save lives simply by paying for vaccines that already exist. A small donation to an international charity might have a much greater impact than helping in our local area.

In conclusion, it is true that we cannot help everyone, but in my opinion national boundaries should not stop us from helping those who are in need.

(280 words, band 9)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(39\)](#)

**Wednesday, November 30, 2011**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: who should we help?](#)**

***We cannot help everyone in the world that needs help, so we should only be concerned with our own communities and countries.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?***

Let's plan an essay for this question.

1. [Introduction](#) - I don't think there is a "middle" opinion for this question. You either agree that we should **only** be worried about our own communities and countries, or you think that we should **also** help those outside our own countries. The best response might be to **disagree** - then you can say that we should try to help everyone.
2. [Paragraph 2](#) - I agree that it is important to help our neighbours and fellow citizens. (Explain this idea)
3. [Paragraph 3](#) - At the same time, I believe that we have an obligation to help those who live beyond our national borders. (Explain)
4. [Conclusion](#) - Repeat the idea that we can help people both at home and abroad.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(33\)](#)

**Wednesday, November 23, 2011**

## [IELTS Writing Task 2: conclusions](#)

Several people have asked me about conclusions for IELTS Writing Task 2. The main body paragraphs are much more important, so don't worry too much about the conclusion; make it short, simple and fast.

Here are some example conclusion phrases for different types of question:

### **1. Opinion**

For the reasons mentioned above, I believe that... (+ repeat your opinion).

### **2. Discussion (+ Opinion)**

In conclusion, there are convincing arguments both for and against... (topic), but I believe that... (if the question asks for your opinion).

### **3. Advantages and Disadvantages**

In conclusion, I would argue that the benefits of... (topic) outweigh the drawbacks.

### **4. Problem and Solution**

In conclusion, it is clear that there are various reasons for... (topic), and steps need to be taken to tackle this problem.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

**Wednesday, November 16, 2011**

## [IELTS Writing Task 2: discussion without opinion](#)

Most discussion essays also ask for your opinion. Sometimes, however, the question doesn't ask for your opinion. It might just ask you to discuss two different views, or compare the advantages and disadvantages.

Remember: if the question doesn't ask for your opinion, don't give it.

Compare the 2 essays attached below. They are almost the same, but in the first essay I give my opinion clearly in several places, while in the second essay I've removed my opinions completely.

[Click here to download essays](#)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(35\)](#)

**Wednesday, November 09, 2011**

## [IELTS Writing Task 2: plan your main paragraphs](#)

Before you start writing your task 2 essay, you need a plan:

1. First, think about how you could write 2 main body paragraphs. What would be the main idea/topic of each one?
2. Then make some notes for the first main paragraph. Your notes could follow this formula: Idea, Explain, Example.
3. Do the same thing for the second main paragraph.

Here's an example question with a few ideas below:

***People nowadays work hard to buy more things. This has made our lives generally more comfortable, but many traditional values and customs have been lost and this is a pity. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

1. I can see two clear ideas in this question: 1) buying things has made our lives more comfortable. 2) traditional values and customs have been lost. I agree with both of these points,

so I'll write one paragraph explaining why I agree with the first point, and another paragraph explaining the second point.

2. Idea: buying things has made life more comfortable. Explain/Examples: we buy appliances like microwave ovens and dishwashers; we use computers to shop online; more people own a car.
3. Idea: traditional values and customs have been lost. Explain/Examples: people buy microwave meals rather than cooking traditional dishes; traditional local shops disappear and are replaced with online shopping; people are more independent, but lack a sense of community.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(41\)](#)

Wednesday, November 02, 2011

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'equality' topic](#)

Here's my full (band 9) essay for last week's question.

***In recent years, there has been growing interest in the relationship between equality and personal achievement. Some people believe that individuals can achieve more in egalitarian societies. Others believe that high levels of personal achievement are possible only if individuals are free to succeed or fail according to their individual merits.***

***What is your view of the relationship between equality and personal success?***

In my opinion, an egalitarian society is one in which everyone has the same rights and the same opportunities. I completely agree that people can achieve more in this kind of society.

Education is an important factor with regard to personal success in life. I believe that all children should have access to free schooling, and higher education should be either free or affordable for all those who chose to pursue a university degree. In a society without free schooling or affordable higher education, only children and young adults from wealthier families would have access to the best learning opportunities, and they would therefore be better prepared for the job market. This kind of inequality would ensure the success of some but harm the prospects of others.

I would argue that equal rights and opportunities are not in conflict with people's freedom to succeed or fail. In other words, equality does not mean that people lose their motivation to succeed, or that they are not allowed to fail. On the contrary, I believe that most people would feel more motivated to work hard and reach their potential if they thought that they lived in a fair society. Those who did not make the same effort would know that they had wasted their opportunity. Inequality, on the other hand, would be more likely to demotivate people because they would know that the odds of success were stacked in favour of those from privileged backgrounds.

In conclusion, it seems to me that there is a positive relationship between equality and personal success.

(260 words)

**Note:**

I'm not sure that this was a 'real' IELTS question (maybe the student who sent it to me remembered it wrongly) because it is a bit confusing: it seems strange to me to imply that "egalitarian/equality" is the opposite of "free to succeed or fail". Anyway, I hope you still find the essay useful.

## [IELTS Writing Task 2: difficult questions](#)

I student sent me this question, and I agree that it's difficult:

***In recent years, there has been growing interest in the relationship between equality and personal achievement. Some people believe that individuals can achieve more in egalitarian societies. Others believe that high levels of personal achievement are possible only if individuals are free to succeed or fail according to their individual merits.***

***What is your view of the relationship between equality and personal success?***

Faced with this question, here are 3 tips:

1. **Have a strong opinion** (e.g. I completely agree that people can achieve more in egalitarian societies.) You can ignore the other view.
2. **Focus on the last line of the question** (What is your view of...?). This line sums up the whole question very clearly. Just answer this question.
3. **Use examples** as the basis of your argument e.g. free university education ensures equality of opportunity, and therefore allows individuals to achieve more.

If you try writing an essay for this question, you can compare your essay with my answer next Wednesday. I'm afraid I can't check essays or give scores.

Note: 'egalitarian' refers to the principle that people are equal, and deserve equal rights and opportunities.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

**Wednesday, October 19, 2011**

## [IELTS Writing Task 2: higher education](#)

***Some people believe that studying at university or college is the best route to a successful career, while others believe that it is better to get a job straight after school.***

***Discuss both views and give your opinion.***

Here's my full introduction and conclusion, as well as some ideas for the main body paragraphs:

### **Introduction**

When they finish school, teenagers face the dilemma of whether to get a job or continue their education. While there are some benefits to getting a job straight after school, I would argue that it is better to go to college or university.

### **Paragraph 1: benefits of getting a job**

The option to start work straight after school is attractive for several reasons.

(IDEAS: start earning money, become independent, gain experience, learn skills, get promotions, settle down earlier, afford a house, have a family)

### **Paragraph 2: benefits of higher education (my opinion)**

On the other hand, I believe that it is more beneficial for students to continue their studies.

(IDEAS: some jobs require academic qualifications, better job opportunities, higher salaries, the job market is very competitive, gain knowledge, become a useful member of society)

### **Conclusion**

For the reasons mentioned above, it seems to me that students are more likely to be successful in their lives if they continue their studies beyond school level.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(47\)](#)

**Wednesday, October 12, 2011**

## [IELTS Writing Task 2: example paragraph](#)

Here's a 5-sentence paragraph using the second plan from [last week's lesson](#):

Many people believe that sports professionals earn too much money. They argue that sport is a form of entertainment rather than a vital public service. We could easily live without sportspeople, yet other professionals who contribute much more to society are undervalued and underpaid. For example, football players can earn enormous salaries by simply kicking a ball, while doctors, nurses and teachers earn a fraction of the money despite being essential for our health and prosperity. From this perspective, sports stars do not deserve the salaries they currently earn.

As you can see, the paragraph explains the view that sportspeople earn too much money. This came from a [discuss both views](#) question.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(17\)](#)

**Saturday, October 08, 2011**

### [IELTS Writing: 5 sentence paragraphs](#)

When writing main body paragraphs for IELTS writing task 2, try to aim for five sentences. For example:

1. Topic sentence (e.g. There are several reasons why I believe...)
2. First reason
3. Example
4. Second reason
5. Third reason

Another example:

1. Topic sentence (e.g. Many people believe that...)
2. Explain why
3. Explain in more detail
4. Example
5. Explain why they disagree with the opposite view

Before you start writing it's a good idea to make some notes. Try to organise your notes according to this 5-sentence paragraph structure.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#), [Questions/Advice](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(33\)](#)

**Wednesday, September 28, 2011**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: problem and solution \(obesity\)](#)

Hopefully yesterday's video gave you some good vocabulary ideas for the following question.

***Childhood obesity is becoming a serious problem in many countries. Explain the main causes and effects of this problem, and suggest some possible solutions.***

Here are some more ideas for this topic:

<b>Causes</b>
eat junk food e.g. hamburgers, chips, McDonald's / drink sugary soft drinks
lack of exercise / physical activity contributes to the obesity problem
play computer games / chat on the Internet, rather than playing outside or doing sport
<b>Effects</b>
these problems lead to obesity / children are overweight, unhealthy, unfit
a higher risk of diseases e.g. diabetes, heart disease, cancer
put a strain on hospitals / they will be a burden on hospitals in the future
<b>Solutions</b>
it is the parents'/schools'/government's responsibility to...
give children healthy food / control what they eat / ensure that they have a healthy diet / limit junk food advertising
restrict the time they spend playing computer games / encourage them to take regular exercise

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(52\)](#)

Wednesday, September 21, 2011

[IELTS Writing Task 2: do the advantages outweigh...?](#)

Some IELTS writing task 2 questions ask: "Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?" or "Do the benefits outweigh the drawbacks?"

My advice for these questions is to write a paragraph about each side, and make it clear in the introduction and conclusion which side outweighs the other (i.e. your opinion about whether there are more advantages or disadvantages).

This was a recent exam question:

***In some countries, governments are encouraging industries and businesses to move to regional areas outside the big cities.***

***Do the advantages of this trend outweigh the disadvantages?***

Here are some ideas:

1. Introduce the topic by paraphrasing the statement, then give a clear opinion about whether there are more advantages or disadvantages.
2. Advantages - e.g. costs are lower in regional areas; there is more space; provide jobs to boost deprived areas; avoid further overcrowding in cities.
3. Disadvantages - e.g. greater availability of skilled workers in big cities; better transport and infrastructure; companies based in regional areas are further from their clients, providers and other contacts.

4. Conclude by summarising your opinion in a different way.

[IELTS Writing Task 2: different introductions](#)

***Some people think the main purpose of schools is to turn children into good citizens and workers, rather than to benefit them as individuals.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

Here are 3 different introductions. Notice that the opinion is clear in each one.

Agree:

People have different views about what the main purpose of schools should be. Personally, I agree that a school's role is to prepare children to be productive members of society.

Disagree:

Many people argue that the main role of schools is to prepare children for their future jobs. However, I believe that the purpose of education should be to help children to grow as individuals.

Balanced view:

To a certain extent I agree that the role of schools is to prepare children to be productive members of society. However, I also believe that the education process has a positive impact on us as individuals.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(52\)](#)

**Wednesday, August 10, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: method](#)

I've noticed that the more essay practice I do with my students, the more **defined** my writing method becomes.

For example, I now know that my 250-word essays usually contain 13 to 15 sentences: 2 for the introduction, 5 to 6 for each main paragraph and 1 sentence for the conclusion. It takes me 10 minutes to write a good plan, 5 minutes to write an introduction, I have 2 main ways of writing main paragraphs etc. etc.

The question is: Do you have a clearly defined method? Do you repeatedly practise writing essays in the same way?

If you don't have a method, it's just "hit and hope".

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(28\)](#)

**Wednesday, August 03, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: advertising](#)

'Advertising' has been the topic of IELTS writing task 2 several times this year. It's a popular topic, so you need some ideas and opinions about it.

Here are some opinions about advertising, taken from my [ebook](#).

- Advertising should be \_\_\_\_\_.
- Advertising \_\_\_\_\_ children should be controlled or even banned.
- Unhealthy foods should not be marketed \_\_\_\_\_ attracts children.
- Products that can be a risk to health should \_\_\_\_\_ warnings.
- However, advertising is necessary in free \_\_\_\_\_ economies.
- It creates \_\_\_\_\_ products.

- Governments should only \_\_\_\_\_ false information or products that are harmful.

**Fill the gaps with these words/phrases:**

market, in a way that, regulated, display, censor, demand for, aimed at

**Note:**

'Advertising' is uncountable (you can't say "an advertising" or "advertisings"). 'Advertising' is the name of the industry, activity or profession (like 'marketing'). 'An advertisement' (or 'advertisements') is what you see on TV, in the street, in newspapers etc.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(58\)](#)

**Wednesday, July 27, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: globalisation of culture](#)

This was a recent exam question:

***Differences between countries become less evident each year. Nowadays, all over the world people share the same fashions, advertising, brands, eating habits and TV channels.***

***Do the disadvantages of this trend outweigh the advantages?***

Here's my outline for a 4-paragraph essay:

**Introduction**

It is true that many aspects of culture are becoming increasingly similar throughout the world. Although this trend has some benefits, I would argue that there are more drawbacks.

**First sentence of paragraph 2**

On the one hand, the globalisation of fashion, brands, eating habits and other areas of culture has some benefits. (Explain the benefits)

**First sentence of paragraph 3**

On the other hand, I believe that the disadvantages of cultural globalisation are even more significant. (Explain the disadvantages)

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it seems to me that the drawbacks of globalisation, in terms of cultural habits such as the clothes we wear or the foods we eat, do outweigh the benefits.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(51\)](#)

**Wednesday, July 20, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: recent question](#)

This was the IELTS writing task 2 question two weeks ago in the UK:

***It is right that university graduates should earn more money than less well educated people, but they should pay the full cost of their education.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

My students and I planned a 4-paragraph essay:

1) Introduction: introduce the topic and respond to both parts of the question. We decided to agree that graduates deserve good salaries, but we disagree with the idea that they should pay the full cost of their degree courses.

2) Paragraph explaining why graduates should earn good salaries: they have invested time and effort into gaining their qualifications; they have knowledge, skills and training required for important jobs; they are an asset to society.

3) Paragraph explaining why graduates should not have to pay the full cost of education: this will be too expensive and will deter many young people from going to university; students will have huge debts; graduates contribute by paying taxes when they work.

4) Conclusion: repeat the two main ideas.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(31\)](#)

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

[IELTS Writing Task 2: the '2 part' question](#)

The following question confuses many students because it doesn't seem to be one of the 3 normal types (opinion, discussion, problem/solution).

***Happiness is considered very important in life.***

***Why is it difficult to define?***

***What factors are important in achieving happiness?***

I call this a "2 part" question, and it's easier than you think. Just answer the first question in paragraph 2, and the second question in paragraph 3:

**1. Introduction - topic + simple answer to both questions**

**2. Paragraph - explain why happiness is difficult to define**

Some ideas: Explain that happiness means different things to different people; the same situation can make one person happy but another person sad/bored etc. Give examples of what makes different people happy (money, success, family, friends, hobbies). Give an example from your experience e.g. a hobby that makes you happy but that your friend hates.

**3. Paragraph - give your opinions about how to achieve happiness**

Some ideas: Try to organise your ideas logically - you could begin with humans' basic needs (in order to be happy we need to be healthy and have somewhere to live, food to eat etc.) then talk about the importance of family and friends. You could then write about career, money, success, status etc. - maybe you could explain that these things mean nothing if we do not have family and friends to share our experiences with. Give an example from your own life - what will make you happier than you are now?

**4. Conclusion - repeat/summarise the main ideas**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: different introductions](#)

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Balanced view:

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Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(58\)](#)

**Wednesday, July 27, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: globalisation of culture](#)

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***Differences between countries become less evident each year. Nowadays, all over the world people share the same fashions, advertising, brands, eating habits and TV channels.***

***Do the disadvantages of this trend outweigh the advantages?***

Here's my outline for a 4-paragraph essay:

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It is true that many aspects of culture are becoming increasingly similar throughout the world. Although this trend has some benefits, I would argue that there are more drawbacks.

#### **First sentence of paragraph 2**

On the one hand, the globalisation of fashion, brands, eating habits and other areas of culture has some benefits. (Explain the benefits)

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#### **Conclusion**

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- 4) Conclusion: repeat the two main ideas.

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**4. Conclusion - repeat/summarise the main ideas**

**IELTS Writing Task 2: how to answer any question**

Today I want to show you what happens in my brain when I see any IELTS Writing Task 2 question.

Here are my thinking steps:

1. I read the question very carefully, maybe three times. I ask myself "What's the topic? What is the question asking me to write about?"
2. I underline the key things that must be included in the essay. I always answer every part of the question.
3. Now I think about my 4 paragraph structure. I can write any type of essay in 4 paragraphs; I just need to decide what to put in each paragraph.
4. If I need to give my opinion, I think "What is the easiest opinion to explain? What good vocabulary could I use?"
5. Then I write down some vocabulary ideas that are related to the topic.
6. I try to write 2 sentences for the introduction: I introduce the topic, then give a simple answer (including my opinion if the question asks for it).
7. I write short 'topic sentences' to start each paragraph, then develop my ideas by explaining and supporting with examples.
8. I look at the question from time to time in order to check that I'm answering every part of it.
9. I know that I write about 10 words per line; I can quickly check the approximate number of words that I've written.
10. If I need more words (to reach 250), I expand one of my examples in the main body paragraphs. If necessary, I draw an arrow to show where I want to add the extra words.

**IELTS Writing Task 2: 'gender and university' essay**

Here's my full essay using last week's plan:

***Universities should accept equal numbers of male and female students in every subject. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

In my opinion, men and women should have the same educational opportunities. However, I do not agree with the idea of accepting equal proportions of each gender in every university subject.

Having the same number of men and women on all degree courses is simply unrealistic. Student numbers on any course depend on the applications that the institution receives. If a university decided to fill courses with equal numbers of males and females, it would need enough applicants of each gender. In reality, many courses are more popular with one gender than the other, and it would not be practical to aim for equal proportions. For example, nursing courses tend to attract more female applicants, and it would be difficult to fill these courses if fifty per cent of the places needed to go to males.

Apart from the practical concerns expressed above, I also believe that it would be unfair to base admission to university courses on gender. Universities should continue to select the best candidates for each course according to their qualifications. In this way, both men and women have the same opportunities, and applicants know that they will be successful if they work hard to achieve good grades at school. If a female student is the best candidate for a place on a course, it would be wrong to reject her in favour of a male student with lower grades or fewer qualifications.

In conclusion, the selection of university students should be based on merit, and it would be both impractical and unfair to change to a selection procedure based on gender.

(265 words, band 9)

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'helping poor countries' topic](#)**

This was the IELTS writing task 2 question on 28th May:

***The money given to help poor countries does not solve the problem of poverty, so rich countries should give other types of help instead.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

My students and I planned a 4-paragraph essay:

1. Introduction: introduce the topic of helping poor countries, and agree that giving money is not the best way to help.
2. Paragraph explaining why giving money is a bad idea.
3. Paragraph explaining why other types of help are better.
4. Conclusion: repeat the argument (investing is better than giving).

We discussed some ideas and wrote paragraph 2 together:

In my opinion, it is a bad idea to simply give financial aid to governments of poor countries. If rich countries do this, there is a risk that the money will not go to the people who need it most. Governments may misuse the money they are given because they do not have the resources or the know-how to tackle the causes of poverty. In some cases, corrupt politicians have become rich while their citizens continue to suffer. For these reasons, it is important for developed countries to find ways to invest in developing nations, instead of just donating money.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(44\)](#)

**Wednesday, June 01, 2011**

## [IELTS Writing Task 2: 'sports salaries' topic](#)

As I've said before, you can't get a high score for IELTS writing task 2 if you don't have good ideas about the question topic. Here are some ideas from my [ebook](#) about the following question:

***Some people believe that the salaries paid to professional sportspeople are too high, while others argue that sports salaries are fair.***

***Discuss both views and give your opinion.***

View 1: sports salaries are too high

- Sports professionals earn too much money.
- They do not provide a vital service.
- Football players earn enormous salaries by simply kicking a ball.
- We could all live happily without professional football.
- We should value professionals such as nurses and teachers more highly.

View 2: sports salaries are fair

- It is fair that the best sportspeople earn a lot of money.
- Sport is a multi-million-pound industry.
- There is a large audience of sports fans who are willing to pay.
- Televised games or events attract many viewers.
- Being a top sportsperson requires hours of practice.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(36\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 25, 2011**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: band 9 paragraph](#)

Below is a 'band 9' paragraph about the benefits of zoos. I took the vocabulary ideas from [this lesson \(click here\)](#) and organised them in the following way:

1. Simple topic sentence.
2. The main benefit is that...
3. Another advantage of zoos is that...
4. From a personal point of view,...

I've underlined the band 9 vocabulary.

Zoos have several benefits. The main benefit is that zoos play an important role in wildlife conservation. They help to protect endangered species, such as pandas or rhinos, and allow scientists to study animal behaviour. Another advantage of zoos is that they employ large numbers of people, therefore providing job opportunities and income for the local area. Also, the money that zoos make can be used for conservation projects. From a personal point of view, zoos are interesting, educational and fun. They are entertaining for families, and teach children to appreciate wildlife and nature.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(39\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 18, 2011**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: idea, explain, example](#)

A good way to write main body paragraphs is this:

**Start with an idea; Explain it in detail; Give an example**

Here's an example of how I 'build' a paragraph using the above method:

A sense of competition is necessary for success in life, and should therefore be encouraged. Competition motivates children to get good grades at school or become better at sports, while adults compete to climb the career ladder. In a job interview, for example, candidates compete to show that they are the most qualified, hard-working and competent person for the post.

**Note:**

What's the topic of the paragraph above? What do you think the question was?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(32\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 11, 2011**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: use related words](#)**

Look again at last week's question:

***Some people think that museums should be enjoyable places to entertain people, while others believe that the purpose of museums is to educate.***

***Discuss both views and give you own opinion.***

Let's forget about the whole question. Just try to list some words that are related to the 3 main ideas.

Museums:

- exhibition, exhibit (verb, like 'show'), an exhibit (noun, 'item'), artifact, object, collection, history, science, art, culture, visitors, members of the public, public viewing...

Entertain:

- entertainment, entertaining, enjoy, enjoyment, enjoyable, have fun, interesting, fascinating, spectacular, impressive, leisure time, free time, a day out, tourist attraction...

Educate:

- education, educational, teach, learn, explain, understand, know, gain/expand/pass on/transmit knowledge, skills, experience, open your mind, broaden your horizons...

Making lists of related words is a good way to generate ideas. You might not have time to do this in the exam, but it's a useful study technique.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

**Wednesday, May 04, 2011**

**[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'museums' essay](#)**

***Some people think that museums should be enjoyable places to entertain people, while others believe that the purpose of museums is to educate.***

***Discuss both views and give you own opinion.***

People have different views about the role and function of museums. In my opinion, museums can and should be both entertaining and educational.

On the one hand, it can be argued that the main role of a museum is to entertain. Museums are tourist attractions, and their aim is to exhibit a collection of interesting objects that many people will want to see. The average visitor may become bored if he or she has to read or listen to too much educational content, so museums often put more of an emphasis on enjoyment rather than learning. This type of museum is designed to be visually spectacular, and may have interactive activities or even games as part of its exhibitions.

On the other hand, some people argue that museums should focus on education. The aim of any exhibition should be to teach visitors something that they did not previously know. Usually this

means that the history behind the museum's exhibits needs to be explained, and this can be done in various ways. Some museums employ professional guides to talk to their visitors, while other museums offer headsets so that visitors can listen to detailed commentary about the exhibition. In this way, museums can play an important role in teaching people about history, culture, science and many other aspects of life.

In conclusion, it seems to me that a good museum should be able to offer an interesting, enjoyable and educational experience so that people can have fun and learn something at the same time.

(253 words, band 9)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(56\)](#)

**Wednesday, April 27, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: how to write a paragraph](#)

Today I'm going to write a paragraph about gun control. I'll start with some vocabulary ideas, then I'll make them into full sentences.

Ideas: why should the ownership of guns be limited/controlled?

1. Topic sentence to introduce the idea of gun control
2. risk of accidents, danger to children
3. more violent crimes, criminals will use guns, police will need guns
4. higher suicide rates
5. guns create violent societies

Here's my paragraph using the ideas above. I've divided the paragraph into separate sentences so that you can see what I have done more clearly.

1. In many countries, gun ownership is strictly controlled.
2. Supporters of this policy point out the risk of accidents with guns, especially when children can gain access to them.
3. They also argue that the number of violent crimes increases when guns are available, and that police are forced to use guns to combat armed criminals.
4. Furthermore, suicide rates have been shown to rise in places where guns are legal.
5. All in all, gun control advocates believe that guns create violent societies with high murder rates.

Of course, in the IELTS exam you would probably have to explain the opposite view: the arguments in favour of gun ownership.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

**Wednesday, April 20, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: sample discussion essay](#)

Here's an example of how I write a 4-paragraph essay for "discuss and give your opinion" questions. Notice that I give my opinion in 3 places (introduction, paragraph 3, conclusion).

***Some people believe that studying at university or college is the best route to a successful career, while others believe that it is better to get a job straight after school.***

***Discuss both views and give your opinion.***

When they finish school, teenagers face the dilemma of whether to get a job or continue their education. While there are some benefits to getting a job straight after school, I would argue that it is better to go to college or university.

The option to start work straight after school is attractive for several reasons. Many young people want to start earning money as soon as possible. In this way, they can become independent, and they will be able to afford their own house or start a family. In terms of their career, young people who decide to find work, rather than continue their studies, may progress more quickly. They will have the chance to gain real experience and learn practical skills related to their chosen profession. This may lead to promotions and a successful career.

On the other hand, I believe that it is more beneficial for students to continue their studies.

Firstly, academic qualifications are required in many professions. For example, it is impossible to become a doctor, teacher or lawyer without having the relevant degree. As a result, university graduates have access to more and better job opportunities, and they tend to earn higher salaries than those with fewer qualifications. Secondly, the job market is becoming increasingly competitive, and sometimes there are hundreds of applicants for one position in a company. Young people who do not have qualifications from a university or college will not be able to compete.

For the reasons mentioned above, it seems to me that students are more likely to be successful in their careers if they continue their studies beyond school level.

(271 words, band 9)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(50\)](#)

**Wednesday, April 13, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'job satisfaction' topic](#)

***As most people spend a major part of their adult life at work, job satisfaction is an important element of individual well-being.***

***What factors contribute to job satisfaction?***

***How realistic is the expectation of job satisfaction for all workers?***

The following paragraph answers the second part of the question (How realistic..)

It is difficult to imagine a world in which everyone is truly satisfied with their job. Most people work in order to earn a salary, and they would probably not choose to spend eight or more hours each day doing their jobs if they did not need the money. The need to earn money to pay mortgages, bills and everyday living costs is of much greater concern than job satisfaction. In fact, I would argue that the majority of people dislike their jobs and are unhappy about their salaries, working hours, workloads, or their bosses.

(95 words)

**Note:**

What "band 7 vocabulary" can you find in the paragraph above?

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(50\)](#)

**Wednesday, April 06, 2011**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: how to write introductions](#)

Here is a review of my advice for task 2 introductions:

- Make the introduction short and do it quickly. The main body paragraphs are more important.
- Two sentences are enough: 1) introduce the topic. 2) give a basic answer to the question.

**Example question:**

All high school students should be encouraged to take part in community service programmes. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

**My introduction:**

Some people believe that high school students would benefit from doing unpaid work in their local communities. I completely agree that community service programmes for teenagers are a good idea.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(38\)](#)

Wednesday, March 23, 2011

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'dependence' question](#)

The following question was used in several countries last Saturday. I've listed some ideas below.

***Some people think that in the modern world we have become more dependent on each other, while others think that people are now more independent.***

***Discuss both views and give your own opinion.***

First view: we have become more dependent

- Life is more difficult and expensive, and we are less self-sufficient
- Young people rely on their parents for longer
- Unemployed people receive state benefits
- Our jobs are much more specialised, and we need to work in teams

Second view: we are more independent

- We rely on machines more than we depend on each other
- The Internet allows us to solve problems without needing help
- Families are more dispersed, and therefore provide less support
- Education gives us the freedom to make our own choices

By linking these points together and supporting them with examples, you could easily write two good paragraphs.

[IELTS Writing Task 2: the 'two-part' question](#)

Usually the question tells you to "discuss both views" or it asks whether you "agree or disagree".

However, sometimes the question looks different:

***Competitiveness is considered to be a positive quality among people.***

***How does competitiveness affect individuals?***

***Is competitiveness a positive or negative quality?***

Notice that the question above gives you the topic (competitiveness) and then two questions. I call this a "two-part" question.

For this kind of question, just write 4 paragraphs (see below), and make sure you write an equal amount for paragraphs 2 and 3.

1. Introduction: topic + general response
2. Answer the first question

3. Answer the second question
4. Conclusion: repeat your response

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: 'minority languages' essay](#)

Today, I'd like to share a 'band 9' sample essay for the question below.

***Several languages are in danger of extinction because they are spoken by very small numbers of people. Some people say that governments should spend public money on saving these languages, while others believe that would be a waste of money.***

***Discuss both these views and give your opinion.***

It is true that some minority languages may disappear in the near future. Although it can be argued that governments could save money by allowing this to happen, I believe that these languages should be protected and preserved.

There are several reasons why saving minority languages could be seen as a waste of money. Firstly, if a language is only spoken by a small number of people, expensive education programmes will be needed to make sure that more people learn it, and the state will have to pay for facilities, teachers and marketing. This money might be better spent on other public services. Secondly, it would be much cheaper and more efficient for countries to have just one language. Governments could cut all kinds of costs related to communicating with each minority group.

Despite the above arguments, I believe that governments should try to preserve languages that are less widely spoken. A language is much more than simply a means of communication; it has a vital connection with the cultural identity of the people who speak it. If a language disappears, a whole way of life will disappear with it, and we will lose the rich cultural diversity that makes societies more interesting. By spending money to protect minority languages, governments can also preserve traditions, customs and behaviours that are part of a country's history.

In conclusion, it may save money in the short term if we allow minority languages to disappear, but in the long term this would have an extremely negative impact on our cultural heritage.

(258 words)

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(29\)](#)

**Wednesday, March 02, 2011**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: 'women and work' topic](#)

Dana sent me the following question:

***Women should have an equal role alongside men in both police and armed forces. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

Here is my plan for a 4-paragraph essay:

#### **1. Introduction: topic + response**

- Introduce the topic e.g. "Increasing numbers of women are choosing to..."
- Respond to the question e.g. "I completely agree that women should be able..."

#### **2. First reason why I agree: equal opportunities**

Explain why women should have the same right as men to choose their profession. People should be chosen for jobs according to their skills, qualifications, character etc.

### 3. Second reason why I agree: women's capabilities

I would disagree with the view that women are less able than men to do certain jobs. Also, I would argue that policewomen, for example, may be better at controlling a situation by communicating more effectively. Police and military work requires more than just physical strength. Teamwork, leadership and communication can be much more important.

### 4. Conclusion: one sentence

Repeat your response in a different way.

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: technology](#)

Here is a question that a student asked me about:

***Some people believe that the range of technology available to individuals today is increasing the gap between rich people and poor people, while others say that technology has the opposite effect. Discuss both views and give your opinion.***

I'd write a 4-paragraph essay:

1. Introduction: introduce the topic and give your view
2. One view
3. The other view (that you agree with)
4. Conclusion: repeat your view

Some ideas:

Technology could increase the gap between rich and poor. Rich people have smartphones, laptops, wireless broadband Internet etc. People in developed countries can now work from home or from anywhere in the world. They can do their shopping online and have things delivered to their homes. Technology improves their quality of life.

On the other hand, many people in poorer countries, who did not have normal telephones, now have mobile phones. Also, the Internet is spreading to all parts of the world. In the past, only people in developed countries had access to world-class libraries, but now the Internet gives everyone access to the same information. This will lead to greater equality.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(23\)](#)

**Wednesday, October 20, 2010**

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: global language argument](#)

The speaker in yesterday's video gave the positives of English as a global second language. Here is a paragraph with arguments against this view.

### **Negatives of English as a global language:**

The expansion of English has also been criticised. Some people worry that if one language, like English, becomes dominant, other languages may disappear. Languages spoken by small communities could become extinct as people learn English in order to find work. This would obviously have a negative effect on local cultures, customs and traditions because the new dominant language would bring its own culture with it. For example, the expansion of English has happened alongside the increasing popularity of American culture. The American film, music and fashion industries are as dominant as global American companies and products, such as Microsoft or the iPod. Some people call this 'cultural imperialism', meaning that one culture has power over others.

### Try to analyse this paragraph

Is there a topic sentence? What reasons and examples are given? What linking expressions are used? What 'band 7 vocabulary' is used? Can you find some conditional sentences?

Write the main ideas for the 'global language' topic (positives and negatives) in your notebook.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(15\)](#)

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: what is happiness?](#)

Many students find the following question difficult (Cambridge IELTS 4, page 55):

***Happiness is considered very important in life.***

***Why is it difficult to define?***

***What factors are important in achieving happiness?***

Here are some ideas from my ebook.

- Happiness means different things to different people.
- It can be described as a feeling of pleasure or enjoyment.
- People enjoy spending time with family and friends.
- Hobbies, sports and games can be a source of fun and enjoyment.
- Some people see money as a source of happiness.
- Other people define happiness as something deeper.
- They need to feel that they are doing something useful with their lives.
- Some people get a sense of achievement from their work.
- Others find happiness in bringing up their children.

Try expanding on these ideas to write a full essay. Remember to use examples from your experience; this is the best way to develop an idea.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(18\)](#)

Wednesday, October 06, 2010

### [IELTS Writing Task 2: tourism](#)

***Do the benefits of tourism outweigh the drawbacks?***

Here are some ideas. I've organised the vocabulary according to different perspectives (different ways of looking at this issue).

Positives of tourism:

1. **Personal perspective:** Tourism is a popular leisure activity. Tourists can relax, have fun, 'recharge their batteries', experience different customs and cultures (sight-seeing, sunbathing, visiting monuments, tasting new cuisine). Travel opens our minds. It can broaden our horizons.
2. **Economic perspective:** The tourism industry is vital for some countries. People rely on tourism for their income. Tourism attracts investment from governments and companies. It creates employment due to demand for goods and services (hotels, entertainment etc.). It helps to improve the standard of living.

Negatives of tourism:

1. **Environmental perspective:** Tourism can have a negative impact on the environment. Excessive building (roads, hotels etc.) destroys natural habitats and spoils the landscape. Tourism creates pollution and waste. It puts pressure on local resources such as food, water and energy.

2. **Economic perspective:** Tourism may cause a rise in the cost of living. Prices of goods and services go up. Tourists buy second homes. All of this affects local people.
3. **Cultural perspective:** Local traditions may be lost. Traditional jobs and skills die out (e.g. farming, fishing). Local people are forced to work in the tourist industry.

Thinking about topics from different perspectives can help you to generate better ideas. This technique isn't perfect for every topic, but it can be really useful.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

**Wednesday, September 29, 2010**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: advertising topic](#)

Advertising is a very common topic in both the IELTS writing and speaking tests. Here are some ideas from my [ebook](#) that you could learn.

**Positives of advertising:**

- Companies need to tell customers about their products and services.
- Advertisements inform us about the choices we have.
- The advertising industry employs many people.
- Advertisements are often funny, artistic or thought-provoking.

**Negatives of advertising:**

- Advertisers aim to convince us that buying things leads to happiness.
- We are persuaded to follow the latest trends and fashions.
- Children can be easily influenced by advertisements.
- They put pressure on their parents by pestering or nagging.

**Opinions:**

- Advertising should be regulated by governments.
- Advertisements that target children should be banned.
- Packaging for junk food should display clear health warnings.
- Overall, advertising is necessary but it needs to be controlled.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

**Wednesday, September 22, 2010**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: globalisation](#)

Here is an essay question on the topic of globalisation:

***It has been said that the world is becoming a global village in which there are no boundaries to trade and communication. Do the benefits of globalisation outweigh the drawbacks?***

Yesterday's video contained some useful ideas, but here are some more ideas from my ebook:

**Positives of globalisation:**

- Business is becoming increasingly international.
- A global economy means free trade between countries.
- This can strengthen political relationships.
- Globalisation can also create opportunities for employment.
- It encourages investment in less developed countries.
- It could reduce poverty in the developing world.

**Negatives of globalisation:**

- Globalisation can also lead to unemployment and exploitation.

- Companies move to countries where labour is cheap.
- This creates redundancies, or job losses.
- Some companies exploit their employees in developing countries.
- Salaries are low and working conditions are often poor.
- Global trade also creates excessive waste and pollution.

**Note:**

The American English spelling is 'globalization'. You can use either spelling in the IELTS test.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(36\)](#)

**Wednesday, September 15, 2010**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: education / practical skills](#)

Several students have asked me to help them with this IELTS question:

***Some people think that school children need to learn practical skills such as car maintenance or bank account management along with the academic subjects at school. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

Here are some suggestions (this is NOT an essay):

**1. Introduce the topic then give your opinion**

I would write that it is true that children learn academic subjects at school, but not many practical skills. However, I would then disagree that schools should teach skills like bank account management and car maintenance.

**2. First supporting paragraph**

I would write a paragraph about the importance of academic subjects like maths, science, languages etc. We live in a knowledge-based economy where independent thinking and problem solving are the most important skills. With timetables already full, schools do not have time to teach children anything else.

**3. Second supporting paragraph**

I would argue that bank account management is a 'life skill' that anyone can learn by simply opening a bank account. Most adults have no problem managing their finances without being taught accounting lessons at school. Other skills like car maintenance are not really necessary. Most people take their cars to a qualified mechanic.

**4. Conclusion**

Repeat the idea that schools are already doing a good job teaching the traditional academic subjects. If they start to teach practical skills, the study of important academic subjects will suffer.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

**Wednesday, September 08, 2010**

[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'zoo' topic](#)

***Some people believe that it is wrong to keep animals in zoos, while others think that zoos are both entertaining and ecologically important. Discuss both views.***

Here are some (band 7 or higher) vocabulary ideas. I've organised the vocabulary according to different perspectives.

Positives of keeping animals in zoos:

1. **Environmental perspective:** Zoos play an important role in wildlife conservation. They help to protect endangered species. They allow scientists to study animal behaviour.
2. **Economic perspective:** Zoos employ large numbers of people. They provide job opportunities and income for the local area. The money raised can be used for conservation projects.
3. **Personal perspective:** Zoos are interesting, educational and fun. They make a great day out for families. Children learn to appreciate wildlife and nature.

Negatives of zoos:

1. **Environmental perspective:** Zoos are artificial environments. Animals lose their instinct to hunt for food. It would be better to save endangered species by protecting their natural habitats.
  2. **Moral perspective:** Keeping animals in cages is unethical. We have no right to use animals for entertainment. Zoos exhibit animals with the aim of making a profit.
- Thinking about topics from different perspectives is a useful technique. It helps you to generate a variety of interesting ideas. I used this technique when thinking of ideas for my ebook, and I encourage my students to use it when planning their essays.

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(24\)](#)

Wednesday, September 01, 2010

[IELTS Writing Task 2: crime topic](#)

Here is a "problem/solution" question, with some ideas for an essay below:

***Many criminals re-offend after they have been punished. Why do some people continue to commit crimes after they have been punished, and what measures can be taken to tackle this problem?***

Causes of crime and re-offending:

- The main causes of crime are poverty, unemployment and lack of education.
- People who commit crimes often have no other way of making a living.
- The prison system can make the situation worse.
- Offenders mix with other criminals who can be a negative influence.
- A criminal record makes finding a job more difficult.
- Many prisoners re-offend when they are released.

Possible measures to reduce crime and re-offending:

- Prisons should provide education or vocational training.
- Rehabilitation programmes prepare prisoners for release into society.
- Community service is another way to reform offenders.
- It makes offenders useful in their local communities.
- They might be required to talk to school groups or clean public areas.
- Offenders also need help when looking for accommodation and work.

There are more ideas about topics like police, prisons, capital punishment and community service in my [ebook](#).

Posted by [Simon](#) in [IELTS Writing Task 2](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(18\)](#)

Wednesday, August 25, 2010

["Band 7 Vocabulary"](#)

When I say "band 7 vocabulary", I'm really talking about vocabulary that could help you to get a band 7 **or higher**. Examiners are looking for "less common" words and phrases, correct and relevant collocations, and maybe some idiomatic language.

I've written the following paragraph using some of the ideas from the lesson below. I've underlined the band 7 (or higher) vocabulary.

***Advantages of studying abroad:***

Many students choose to study abroad because there are greater opportunities in a particular foreign country. Foreign universities may offer better facilities or courses. They may also be more prestigious than universities in the student's own country and have teachers who are experts in their fields. Therefore, by studying abroad, students can expand their knowledge and gain qualifications that open the door to better job opportunities. A period of study abroad can also broaden students' horizons. In the new country, they will have to live and work with other students of various nationalities. Thus, overseas students are exposed to different cultures, customs and points of view.

(106 words)