

IELTS Made Easy

**Step-by-step guide
to writing a Task 2**



IELTS buddy

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Thank You Page

This page is to say thank you for purchasing the **IELTS Made Easy eBook** and I hope that it will help you with your IELTS test.

It is important that you try to put what you will learn into practice by trying to use some of the tips and strategies that you will be shown. This is the way to improve your score.

Of course everybody has different ways of learning and some people are more comfortable with doing things one way than someone else.

You will be shown various strategies and techniques but don't feel that you have to do everything the way it has been explained in the book – if you like some strategies or techniques then use them. If there are things you do not feel suit you, then do it your own way or another way that you have been taught.

You'll always hear different advice on ways to approach the IELTS test as teachers have different methods – there is not always a right or wrong way.

It is important to be flexible – choose what works for you.

Of course whatever you do, you must ensure that you are meeting the criteria as set out in the band descriptors.

Finally, as I hope you will understand, a lot of work has gone into creating and writing this eBook, so please don't share it on the internet or post it anywhere as a free download.

It is a small price to pay for such a book, so if you like it and would like to share it with others, then please recommend it to others in social media such as blogs or on facebook, and post a link to the sales page on the IELTS buddy website so others can purchase it.

This is the link: <http://www.ieltsbuddy.com/ielts-ebook.html>

Thank you again and good luck with the book and with your preparation.

IELTS buddy

About the book

The book is designed to be a self-study guide; however, it can also be used as a guide to teaching IELTS if you are an IELTS instructor.

The book is aimed at all levels. The book contains the basic building blocks of creating a good essay so is suitable for those who are beginners to IELTS, but there are also tips and strategies that will help you move to the highest band scores (if you have the right grammar abilities).

Although there are essential grammar points in parts of the book (particularly Unit 10 on ‘Coherence and Cohesion’) the book is not designed as a grammar book. The book aims to develop specific skills that help you write an essay in a short space of time and the steps that are involved in this process.

Students often have particular problems with not answering the question properly and finding they do not have enough time in the test, so the book has a particular focus on explaining how to properly analyse and plan an essay and tips and strategies so that you can write essays faster.

The book contains a number of sample essays as illustrations of how to tackle different types of essays.

How to use the book

It is recommended that you work through the book unit by unit as each unit builds up different skills and they are then built further in the next unit. You can, though, look at specific units if you need particular help in one area.

Contents

Unit 1 gives an overview of task 2 and some general tips.

Unit 2 explains why it is so important to spend time analysing the essay questions and provides you with strategies, tips and exercises to do this.

Brainstorming is something candidates always have difficulty with so **Unit 3** provides useful tips on how to brainstorm ideas. **Unit 4** then shows you how to put these ideas into a plan.

You don't want to waste too much time on introductions and conclusions and you need to practice writing introductions quickly so **Unit 5** explains how you can do this and gives you a chance to practice writing them.

The most important parts of your essay are the body paragraphs but they can take a long time to write. **Unit 6** explains two types of paragraphs and methods for planning and writing them

quickly, which you can learn to help you be successful in IELTS. Again, you will have the opportunity to write your own paragraph using the methods you have learned.

Candidate's examples in IELTS are often too weak and so **Unit 7** gives you top tips on how to develop strong examples. There are guided exercises to help you do this.

Unit 8 presents you with a simple method for recognising different essay types and shows you how this is directly related to the way you will organise your essay. Recognising these different types will save you time in the test. You will have a chance to practice identifying different essay types. Also, model answers are provided for each essay type so you have templates for organising your essays.

Candidates find opinion essays particularly difficult so **Unit 9** is dedicated to providing you with tips on how to understand and plan for the different opinion type essays.

Finally, **Unit 10** focuses on what you need to do to have a coherent and cohesive essay. The different cohesive devices are explained with grammatical explanations of how to use them and practice exercises to improve how you use them.

UNIT 1: About Academic IELTS Task 2

What is in academic task 2?

In the writing part of the IELTS exam you will have to write an essay that is a minimum of 250 words long.

There are many kinds of topic. Below are some common examples though there are others:

- **Environment**
 - Global warming
 - Deforestation
 - Pollution
- **Science & Technology**
 - Computers
 - Internet
 - Space exploration
- **Media**
 - Advertising
 - TV
 - Fame
- **Education**
 - Assessment
 - IT in the classroom
 - School leaving age
- **Employment**
 - Retirement
 - Telecommuting
 - Automation
- **Globalisation**
 - Transport of food
 - Loss of identity/culture
 - Poverty & wealth
- **Health**
 - Obesity
 - Stress
 - Diet
- **Animals**
 - Blood sports
 - Animal experiments
 - Pets
- **City & Countryside**
 - Urbanisation
 - Migration
 - Quality of life
- **Family**
 - Size
 - Parenting
 - Child discipline
- **Law & Order**
 - Rising crime
 - Teenage crime
 - Capital punishment
- **Sport & Recreation**
 - International sporting events
 - Dangerous sports
 - Competitive sport at school

How will it get graded?

You get graded on four criteria. You will be given a band score (1-9) for each of these and then these will be averaged to give your final task 2 writing score.

The criteria are shown below with a brief explanation of the meaning of each. These are very brief general explanations – you can download the full versions from the internet as they are publicly available.

Criteria	Evaluation
Task Response	Your ability to answer the question, support and develop your ideas and present a clear position.
Coherence and Cohesion	Your ability to logically organize your essay and the ideas within the essay, and to use appropriate cohesive devices to do this.
Lexical Resource	Your ability to use a range of vocabulary and your ability to use it accurately.
Grammatical Range & Accuracy	Your ability to use a range and variety of sentence structures and the accuracy you have with your grammar.

How should I answer the task?

You'll get the answer to this when you read the eBook, but here are some general tips before we begin:

- Spend 40 minutes on task 2. You have one hour for the writing but you are also required to do task 1. Task 2 is weighted more heavily so you should spend more time on this, but do not spend more than 40 minutes.
- Make sure you spend time at the beginning checking you understand the question, brainstorming and planning.
- Make sure you write at least 250 words. Your score may be reduced if you write less. Aim for about 265 words, but of course the amount you can write will depend on your writing ability. Someone with better skills may be able to write more in a shorter space of time as they will have to spend less time thinking about their grammar.
- Don't write too many words. It does not follow that you get more marks for writing more. Quality is more important than quantity.
- Don't try to get carried away and throw as many ideas into your essay as possible. Fewer ideas that are fully explained are better than lots of ideas that are not explained properly.
- Make sure you do lots of practice under timed conditions – brainstorming, planning and writing a 250 word essay in 40 minutes is not easy.

- Make sure you can write a *finished* essay in the time – a coherent essay has an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion
- Don't worry about whether the examiner would agree with your ideas or not. They are *your* ideas that are asked for – they will be ok as long as they answer the question directly and you can justify and explain them.

UNIT 2: Understanding IELTS Essay Questions

In this section we'll look at how essay questions are usually constructed. We'll look at:

- The parts of an IELTS essay question
- Analysing the question

The Parts of an Essay Question – Identifying facts and opinions

An IELTS question will have at least one or more of the following:

1. Background Facts

This is factual information about a situation or matter. In other words, it is something that is generally accepted as being true. (Sometimes, there are no facts in the question. Only opinions and a task are given).

2. Opinion

This is someone's view about a situation or issue. As it's an opinion, it is possible to agree or disagree with it. (Sometimes, there are no opinions in the question. Only facts and a task are given).

3. Task

These are words telling you what you should do. There may be more than one task in an essay question, in which case both would need to be answered.

Knowing the difference between these will help you to analyse essay questions as you need to know the difference between a fact and an opinion and what the task is.

Now look at this essay question:

Advances in technology and automation have reduced the need for manual labour. Therefore, working hours should be reduced.

To what extent do you agree?

1. Are there any background facts? *(If so, put brackets around them)*
2. Is there an opinion some people have about a social situation or problem? *(If so, underline it)*
3. Is there a task? How many? *(If so, highlight it)*

(Advances in technology and automation have reduced the need for manual labour). Therefore, working hours should be reduced.

To what extent do you agree? *(1 task)*

As you can see, there are some background facts, an opinion, and then you are told what you need to do.

Exercise 1 – Identifying the Parts of an Essay Question

Look at the following essay questions. Identify what the task is and whether there are any facts or opinions or write ‘none’ if there are no facts or opinions. There will always be a task as this is the part that tells you what you need to do.

1. **In many countries the proportion of older people is increasing. Could this have more positive or negative effects on society?**

Facts	
Opinions	
Task/s	

2. **The best way to help developing countries is to give them financial aid.**

Write an essay either agreeing or disagreeing with this statement.

Suggest alternatives to this policy.

Facts	
Opinions	
Task/s	

3. **Smoking is a habit that claims many lives and is a great drain on health services. One way to combat smoking would be to make it illegal.**

What are the pros and cons of such a government policy?

What alternative strategies can you suggest to combat smoking?

Facts	
Opinions	
Task	

4. **Air transport is increasingly used to transport fruit and vegetables to other countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season. Some people say this is good but others believe the use of air transport for this purpose is not justified.**
- Discuss both views and give your opinion.**

Facts	
Opinions	
Task	

5. **The crime rate among teenagers has increased dramatically in many countries.**
- Discuss some possible reasons for this increase and suggest solutions.**

Facts	
Opinions	
Task	

6.

In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong while others consider it as valuable work experience.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Facts	
Opinions	
Task	

Check your answers for these exercises at the back of the book on page 92.

Unit Summary

The aim of this section has been to help you think about essay questions further and to understand the difference between facts, opinions and the task.

You should not need to spend time examining what the facts, opinions and tasks are every time you look at a question. This should be something you can recognise automatically when you see a question once you get used to looking at them.

But there are certain things you should do every time you get a question and we'll look at that in the next section.

Analysing the Question

One of the most important tasks before you start the IELTS essay is to analyse the question.

Unfortunately, many candidates rush this step or miss it altogether, **resulting in a lower band score**.

If you look at the IELTS public band descriptors for ‘*Task Response*’, you will see this for a band five:

*“Addresses the task only **partially**”*

This means that the question has **not been fully answered**. So if you do not take time to carefully analyse and understand the question, you may only provide a partial answer to the task.

Now let’s look at an example question:

Government investment in the arts, such as music and theatre, is a waste of money. Governments must invest this money in public services instead.

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

We will now look at the steps you should take before you start brainstorming ideas.

- *Underline* Key Words in the Question
- Identify the *topic*
- Focus on the *detail* in the question (and any restrictions)
- Identify the *task*
- *Rephrase* the question

Underline Key Words in the Question

What you should get into the habit of doing is underlining key words in the question. This will help you to understand the question and make sure that you do not miss out any important things that you should be discussing.

Don’t go to the next page yet!

First, think about what you would underline in the above question.

These are what you may have identified:

Government investment in the arts, such as music and theatre, is a waste of money. Governments must invest this money in public services instead.

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

Doing this will help you with the next two steps, which are identifying the topic and focusing on the details of the rubric.

Identify the topic

When you have underlined some key words / phrases, you should think about what the overall topic is. You should be able to state this in one or two words.

In this case it is ‘**Government Investment**’.

It is important to establish what the overall topic is to ensure you **stay on topic** when you answer the question.

Although this may seem obvious, many candidates start discussing ideas that are unrelated. This could significantly reduce your score.

Focus on the detail in the question

Looking at the detail means looking more closely at the facts and / or opinions so that you are clear about exactly what you should include in your essay and that you are not missing anything important.

This is a very important next step in order to clearly understand exactly what you need to write about, and it will also help you brainstorm ideas for your essay (*we will look at brainstorming in the next unit*).

Firstly, look at some of the other points you underlined:

Government investment in the arts, such as music and theatre, is a waste of money. Governments must invest this money in public services instead.

It mentions:

- ‘*the arts - waste of money*’
- ‘*public services*’.

So that means you **must** discuss government spending in relation to these factors – **the arts** (things such as music, theatre and dance) *and* **public services** (things such as health, education, police, housing).

If you write your whole essay about why investing in *the arts* is (or is not) a waste of money, but make no reference to spending on *public services*, you will not have fully answered the question.

This is a common mistake – to miss key things that need to be discussed.

Considering topic restrictions

Here is another tip to help you answer the question correctly as there is another error candidates sometimes make that means they do not answer the question properly, which again may lead to a lower score.

You need to decide if the topic has been **narrowed down** or **restricted** to a more specific **group of people, place** or **circumstances**.

In the question above, it is restricted to discussing government spending on the arts and public services, which we have already noted. You cannot start discussing government spending on AID, for example, as this is not a public service. This would be *off topic*.

Let's look at another question to show you when there is a restriction. What is the topic and has it been restricted to a certain group of people or place?

The percentage of overweight children in western society has increased by almost 20% in the last ten years.

Discuss the causes and effects of this disturbing trend.

Topic: *Obesity*

Restrictions: *Children in Western Countries*

Or you may have identified it this way:

Topic: *Child Obesity*

Restrictions: *Western Countries*

Either way, as you can see, you should be writing about obese *children*, not obesity generally, and writing about the problem in *western society*, not other parts of the world.

If you discuss things outside of these restrictions, you will not be answering the question properly.

This may seem obvious, but again, it is very common to see candidates miss these other factors and therefore write a response that does not fully address the task.

Of course, when you are nervous and under pressure, it is easy to miss these points. This is why it is so important to spend time carefully looking at the question and underlining key words and phrases *before* you start.

Identifying the task

Once you have identified the topic and details, then make sure you are very clear exactly what the *task* is.

As we saw in unit one, a question will always have a task because this is the part that tells you exactly what you need to do.

These are common tasks to see:

- What are the *advantages* and *disadvantages* of ...(topic)...?
- Do the *benefits* of this trend outweigh the *drawbacks*?
- To what extent do you *agree* or *disagree*?
- *Discuss both opinions* and give *your opinion*?
- What are the *causes* of ...(topic)... and what *measures* can governments and individuals take to respond to this problem?
- What are some of these *problems*? *What can be done* to reduce ...(topic)...?
- *How important* is it for individual countries to think about the future rather than focusing on the present? (in this example, the task is the whole question)

Again, it is common for candidates to completely miss a point they are being asked to discuss. So you need to look at the task very carefully.

You are often being broadly asked to look at two things. For example:

a) Advantages	a) Causes	a) Problems	a) Opinion 1
b) Disadvantages	b) Solutions	b) Solutions	b) Opinion 2

But the golden rule is **always read the question carefully** as it may not fit this pattern.

Once you are clear about the purpose of the essay you will be able to brainstorm and plan properly as the task will relate directly to your plan. We will look at this further in units 3 and 4.

Look at the example question again:

Government investment in the arts, such as music and theatre, is a **waste of money**. Governments must invest this money in **public services instead**.

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

In this question you are being asked the extent to which you *agree* or *disagree*. So this tells you that you will need to be *developing an argument* – therefore you need to decide what your opinion is and find *reasons* to support that opinion (your brainstorming).

Now you know that your opinion is needed and you have identified key things that must be included, these are the kinds of things you will need to think about and discuss in your essay:

- The arts
 - How can the arts benefit people?
 - How could they suffer without them?
 - Why do they need to be publicly funded?
 - What would happen to arts companies without funding?

- Public services
 - What are some examples of public services?
 - Why are they so important?
 - Are they so important that money from elsewhere should be diverted here?

Rephrasing the question in a more simple way – Focus Questions

When you are sure you understand the question, you may wish to write it in a more simple way. Again, this can help you to focus on what you want to write about and to brainstorm.

We will look more at focus questions in unit 3, but here are some examples of how the two questions illustrated in this unit can be simplified.

Original:

Government investment in the arts, such as music and theatre, is a waste of money. Governments must invest this money in public services instead.

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

Simplified:

Should the government invest money for the arts into public services instead?

Original:

The percentage of overweight children in western society has increased by almost 20% in the last ten years.

Discuss the causes and effects of this disturbing trend.

Simplified:

Why has child obesity in western societies increased?

What are the effects of increased child obesity?

Your answers to these questions will be your brainstorming and it will also provide you with your essay plan. We'll look at this in more detail in the following units.

Unit Summary

In this unit we have looked at understanding and analysing essay questions. The key points you need to remember are:

- Always spend some time (3-5 minutes) at the start of the test analysing the question
- Underline key words
- **Don't** start writing till you are sure you have understood **exactly** what you are being asked to do
- Not doing this may decrease your score as you get a **band 5** for 'task response' if you don't answer all parts of the question
- As you are analysing it, start to think about how that will link into your organisation / paragraphs
- Rephrase the question or write some focus questions if you think this will help

Links

Here you'll find some links to some practice exercises from the IELTS buddy website that will help you further with some of the steps from this unit:

[Identifying the topic](#)

[Identifying the task](#)

UNIT 3: Brainstorming

Many people studying for IELTS say they cannot come up with ideas to answer the question and want the teacher to help with this.

This may be ok in the classroom, but it won't help you in the test!

So what can you do to help you with this part of the writing? Here are three tips:

- Reading
- Relaxing
- Developing 'focus questions'

Reading - *Read as much as you can*

Reading is very important but is often overlooked by students because the material they may have to read may not be interesting to them. It can't be avoided though; firstly because it obviously helps you with the reading part of the IELTS test but also because it will provide you with knowledge that will help you answer questions for the writing.

So you will need to get into the habit of reading articles related to the topics that come up in the IELTS test. Some common topics were given in Unit 1.

Go on the internet and start doing searches around the common topics. These can even be magazines or newspaper articles. Make notes on what some of the key issues and key arguments are.

For example, put "*education exams or continuous assessment for against*" in a search engine. What comes up? Try to make it fun – make a list of the arguments for and against and decide what your opinion is.

Relaxing - *You are being tested on your language and organization, not your intelligence*

Although a broad knowledge of current issues in the world is important as mentioned above, remember that the IELTS test is ultimately a language test, **not** an intelligence (IQ) test – though intelligence obviously helps!

The examiner may not think all your ideas are great, but as long as they are directly answering the question and they are well-supported and argued then they will still merit a good band score.

If on the other hand you have a strong idea, but it is not explained, it will not get a good score.

So don't spend too much time trying to come up with the perfect ideas – you don't have time. The stronger the ideas the better, but the most important thing is to support and explain the ideas you do have.

Using Focus Questions

As we have discussed already, you can develop *focus questions*, which are a simplification of the essay question.

These will help you to brainstorm as they will make sure you focus on exactly what you need to write to ensure you are answering the question.

Here is an example that you have already seen from the previous unit:

Government investment in the arts, such as music and theatre, is a waste of money. Governments must invest this money in public services instead.

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

Focus Question:

Should the government invest money for the arts into public services instead?

Here is another example with an essay asking about advantages and disadvantages:

In many countries the proportion of older people is increasing.

Could this have more positive or negative effects on society?

Focus Questions:

What are the positive effects of an increasing older population?

What are the negative effects of an increasing older population?

Here are two more examples with agree / disagree type questions.

Advances in technology and automation have reduced the need for manual labour. Therefore, working hours should be reduced.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Focus Questions:

Should working hours be reduced?

A wide variety of vegetarian food is now available. However, although an increasing number of people are adopting a vegetarian diet, it is not healthy.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Focus Question:

Is a vegetarian diet healthy?

Exercise 1 – Analysing essay questions and developing focus questions

Now we'll try bringing everything together you have learned in this and the previous units by practicing analysing some essay questions.

Look at each question and do the following:

- Underline key words
- Identify the topic
- Look at what further detail is given / if the topic is narrowed down
- Identify the task
- Develop some focus questions

1.

The best way to help developing countries is to give them financial aid.

Write an essay either agreeing or disagreeing with this statement.

Suggest alternatives to this policy.

Topic:

Other detail / narrowing down of topic:

The task:

Focus Questions:

Is giving....

What are...

2.

The crime rate among teenagers has increased dramatically in many countries.

Discuss some possible reasons for this increase and suggest solutions.

Topic:

Other detail / narrowing down of topic:

The task:

Focus Questions:

Why...

What...

3.

Air transport is increasingly used to transport fruit and vegetables to other countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season. Some people say this is good but others believe the use of air transport for this purpose is not justified.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Topic:

Other detail / narrowing down of topic:

The task:

Focus Questions:

What...

What...

4.

Smoking is a habit that claims many lives and is a great drain on health services. One way to combat smoking would be to make it illegal.

What are the pros and cons of such a government policy?

What alternative strategies can you suggest to combat smoking?

Topic:

Other detail / narrowing down of topic:

The task:

Focus Questions:

What...

What...

5.

In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong while others consider it as valuable work experience.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Topic:

Other detail / narrowing down of topic:

The task:

Focus Questions:

Check the answer key at the back of the book on page 94 for some suggested answers.

Using your focus questions to brainstorm.

When you have focus questions, these can be used to brainstorm your ideas. However, you need to make sure your brainstorming is focused in a way that will help you prepare and plan your essay.

For some of the more simple questions (i.e. those that ask you directly in the task for problems / solutions, advantages / disadvantages, causes / solutions) this will usually just be a matter of brainstorming under the focus questions you have developed. For example:

The crime rate among teenagers has increased dramatically in many countries.

Discuss some possible reasons for this increase and suggest solutions.

Focus Questions & Brainstorming:

Why has teenage crime increased?

- *Breakdown in the nuclear family*
- *Lack of things to do*

What are the solutions?

- *Government - Provide better support for families & stricter punishments*
- *Individuals – take responsibility*

(You would of course need to explain these ideas using reasons and examples).

For opinion types essays where you are asked to agree / disagree for example, it is easiest to simply develop a 'yes' and 'no' statement:

Advances in technology and automation have reduced the need for manual labour. Therefore, working hours should be reduced.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Focus Questions:

Should working hours be reduced?

- *Yes - Brainstorm reasons why*
- *No - Brainstorm reasons why*

The results for your brainstorming will then help you decide if you agree or disagree.

For example, if you mainly or only find reasons that they should be reduced, then you would agree with the statement. If you mainly find reasons that they shouldn't, then you would disagree.

If you can see both sides then you would partly agree.

We will look more at opinion essays and how to answer 'agree / disagree' essays in Unit 9.

Unit Summary

In order to help with your brainstorming you should therefore:

- Read about the topics that come up in IELTS as much as you can so you have knowledge and ideas
- Don't get stressed about finding the perfect ideas (you don't have time – explain what you can think of well though)
- Develop focus question if this will help you.

UNIT 4: Planning

In this section we will look at how you can use the planning stage of your essay effectively.

Look at the question about government spending again, and then look at a candidate's plan below.

Government investment in the arts, such as music and theatre, is a waste of money. Governments must invest this money in public services instead.

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

Remember the focus question and how you can brainstorm from this:

Focus Question:

Should the government invest money for the arts into public services instead?

- 1. Yes – brainstorm ideas about why spending on public services is so important*
- 2. No – brainstorm ideas about why it is also important to spend on the arts*

Your brainstorming of the answers to these would then also provide you with your plan for your essay and your topics of each paragraph, giving you two body paragraphs:

Should the government invest money for the arts into public services instead?	
Yes	No
<p>Idea: Most money should be spent on Public Services</p> <p>Reason: Includes hospitals etc → Improves quality of life</p> <p>Ex: UK - recent public spending cuts</p> <p>Eff: ↑ hospital waiting lists & ↓ teachers Further adverse affects in the future</p> <p>Conc: Spending on public services - v. important</p>	<p>Idea: Must not neglect the arts</p> <p>Reason 1: Cannot generate their own profit</p> <p>Exp: May close down</p> <p>Reason 2: Impacts quality of life</p> <p>Exp: People great pleasure in seeing performances = imp. entertainment</p> <p>Reason 3: Arts keep our culture alive</p>

As you can see, the two sides of the argument presented in the question have made up the main ideas of each paragraph.

These have then been supported with a mix of examples and effects (*we will look at building good paragraphs and developing support later on in the book*).

Now take a look at the model answer to see how this has been turned into an essay.

Model Answer

Currently, most governments spend a large part of their budget not only on public services, but also the arts. Although it is necessary to channel a proportion of government money toward this sector, most should be spent on public services.

It is important that the government spends a significant amount of its budget on public services because these are our hospitals, roads and schools, and they determine quality of life. Taking the UK as an example, the government has recently reduced public spending on health and education, resulting in increased waiting lists for hospital treatments and fewer teachers, both of which will have further adverse effects in the future. This demonstrates the importance of ensuring that a large proportion of government money is spent on public services as it is the only way to maintain standards and accessibility for everyone.

However, this does not mean that the arts should be completely neglected. Firstly, it is difficult for many arts institutions to generate much profit because people are not prepared to pay high entrance fees for places such as art galleries or theatres, so without some help from the government, such places may have to close. Also, the arts have an important impact on our quality of life, with many people getting great pleasure in going to see music and theatre performances. Not only this, the performing arts and literary arts such as dance and books help to keep our culture and history alive for future generations.

To conclude, although the majority of government spending should be directed towards public services, spending money on the arts is not a waste and should continue. A balance is required to ensure public services are maintained whilst the arts remain available to all.

(289 words)

Here you can see exactly how the ideas in the essay have been developed and organized.

The first paragraph has one main idea that is expanded using a reason, example and an effect (with a concluding sentence restating the main idea).

In the second body paragraph, three supporting ideas are presented. Although they are not explained in as much detail as the idea in the first paragraph, they are still clear and understandable.

And can you remember the questions that you should have been thinking about if you analysed the question carefully? Here they are again:

- The arts
 - How can the arts benefit people?
 - How could they suffer without them?
 - Why do they need to be publicly funded?
 - What would happen to arts companies without funding?

- Public services
 - What are some examples of public services?
 - Why are they so important?
 - Are they so important that money from elsewhere should be diverted here?

You can see that these have been addressed in the essay. This is illustrated further here:

These days, the government spends a large part of its budget not only on public services, but also the arts. In my opinion, some government money should be spent on the **arts**, but most should be spent on **public services**.

(Idea) **It is important that the government spends a significant amount of its budget on public services** **(Reason 1)** because public services are our hospitals, roads and schools, and these things determine the quality of life that most of us will have. **(Ex)** Taking the UK as an example, the government has recently cut back on public spending, **(Eff)** which has resulted in increased waiting lists for hospital treatments and fewer teachers, and this may eventually lead to a decline in the health of the nation along with educational standards. **(Conc)** It is thus clear that ensuring a large proportion of government money is spent on public service is extremely important.

(Idea) **However, this does not mean that the arts should be completely neglected.** **(Reason 1)** Firstly, it is difficult for many arts institutions to generate much profit **(Exp)** because people are not prepared to pay high entrance fees for places such as art galleries or theatres, so without some help from the government, such places may have to close. **(Reason 2)** Also, the arts have an important impact on our quality of life, **(Exp)** with many people getting great pleasure in going to see music and theatre performances. **(Reason 3)** Not only this, the performing arts and literary arts such as dance and books help to keep our culture and history alive for future generations.

To conclude, I do not believe spending money on the arts is a waste. A balance should be achieved to ensure public services are maintained and the arts remain available to all.

Unit Summary

As you should be able to see from the last three units, your analysis of the question, brainstorming and planning are closely connected to each other.

You can use the question to develop brainstorming questions and the answers to these will form your plan.

Doing this will save you time at the beginning of the test.

Follow this link for further explanations of [how to brainstorm and plan](#) with a ‘problems and solutions’ essay question.

UNIT 5: Introductions & Conclusions

Introductions

Some students spend a lot of time writing an introduction to their essay, and then don't finish the essay because they run out of time.

You need to write a good introduction in order to have a coherent essay, but most of the marks on the IELTS grading sheet do not come from the introduction. Most of them focus on the paragraph e.g. their coherency and whether ideas are extended and supported.

So you need to write your introduction quickly, and here are some tips on doing that.

Have a look at this question:

Fresh water has always been a limited resource in some parts of the world. Today, however, growing worldwide demand has made this a global problem.

What are the causes of the increased demand, and what measures can governments and individuals take to respond to this problem?

You just need to do two things:

1. *Give some background to the topic and refer to the **topic of the essay** using some facts (taken from the question if they are included). Reverse some of the information, paraphrase, and use some synonyms.*
2. *Tell the reader what will be in your essay.*

Example:

Introduction:

In some areas around the world, there has always been a lack of fresh water, but this is now a global problem due to the growth in worldwide demand. Several factors have led to this increase, but there are measures that governments and individuals can take to solve this problem.

The *first sentence* introduces the topic and the information is taken from the question (but you must paraphrase – *don't copy from the question!!!*).

The *second sentence* tells the reader exactly what will be in the essay.

Here is another example with a different type of question (*agree / disagree*):

Because many problems we face today affect our whole planet, good relationships between countries are becoming more important than ever before.

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

Introduction:

These days, many of the problems that we are experiencing are global problems, so they have an effect on the whole world. There are therefore several reasons why I believe that it is of the utmost importance that **countries have good relationships** with each other.

Again, as you can see, the first sentence introduces the topic, and the second tells us whether the writer agrees or disagrees. In this question the main topic is given in the second sentence. This is fine as the introduction is still coherent.

Exercise 1

Now it's your turn. Have a practice with the following questions:

1.

As global trade increases, many goods, including those we use on a daily basis, are produced in other countries and have to be transported long distances.

Do the benefits of this trend outweigh the drawbacks?

Your Introduction:

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.

In many countries, children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong while others consider it as valuable work experience.

Discuss both opinions and give your opinion.

Your Introduction:

.....
.....
.....
.....

3.

Unpaid community service should be a compulsory part of high school programs (for example, working for a charity, improving the neighbourhood, or teaching sports to younger children).

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Your Introduction:

.....
.....
.....
.....

You can see model answers for the introductions and conclusions in the answer key on page 97 (you will practice conclusions in the next section so do not look at the sample conclusion answers yet).

Conclusions

Like your introductions, your conclusion should be quick and easy to write.

There are three things you need to do:

1. *Use a transition to show it is the conclusion (in blue)*
2. *Repeat your thesis statement (the final sentence of your introduction) in different words (in red below - underlined)*
3. *Give some personal opinions, or your hopes, fears, recommendations about the issue (in green – italics)*

Look at the same question as we looked at in the introductions:

Fresh water has always been a limited resource in some parts of the world. Today, however, growing worldwide demand has made this a global problem.

What are the causes of the increased demand, and what measures can governments and individuals take to respond to this problem?

Introduction:

In some areas around the world, there has always been a lack of fresh water, but this is now a global problem due to the growth in worldwide demand. Several factors have led to this increase, but there are measures that governments and individuals can take to solve this problem.

Conclusion

To sum up, it is evident that although a number of factors are resulting in an increased demand for water, solutions to tackle the problem are available to governments and individuals. It is imperative that the issue be resolved as soon as possible to avoid the potential dangers to mankind that the lack of fresh water would bring.

Exercise 2

Using the same questions for the introductions, have a practice at writing your own conclusions.

1.

As global trade increases, many goods, including those we use on a daily basis, are produced in other countries and have to be transported long distances.

Do the benefits of this trend outweigh the drawbacks?

Your Conclusion:

.....
.....
.....
.....

2.

In many countries, children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong while others consider it as valuable work experience.

Discuss both opinions and give your opinion.

Your Conclusion:

.....
.....
.....
.....

3.

Unpaid community service should be a compulsory part of high school programs (for example, working for a charity, improving the neighbourhood, or teaching sports to younger children).

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Your Conclusion:

.....
.....
.....
.....

You can see model answers for the introductions and conclusions on pages 97.

Unit Summary

The important thing to remember with introductions and conclusions is that they don't account for much of the grading in your IELTS essay.

The main thing they count for is your coherence, which is of course important – a coherent essay has an introduction that introduces the topic and is followed by a thesis, and a conclusion that sums up the main points.

So don't spend a lot of time on them.

You need to practice writing introductions and conclusions so you can do them quickly and then move on to develop strong and well-supported paragraphs that explain your points.

We'll move on to look at this in the next section.

UNIT 6: Developing strong paragraphs quickly

40 minutes is not much time to write a whole essay even though it is only a short essay. You need to do the following things in your 40 minutes:

1. *Analyze the question*
2. *Brainstorm ideas*
3. *Organise your ideas*
4. *Write the essay*
5. *Check the grammar*

It's common for students to either miss or just spend a few minutes on parts 1-3 as the temptation is to start writing as soon as possible.

This is a ***big mistake*** and you should not do this. If you do, you are in danger of:

- Not answering the question properly
- Having poor ideas that are badly supported or unsupported
- Producing a badly organized incoherent essay

All of these will likely lead to a low band score. Remember:

Quality not Quantity

A well-written, well-supported, well-organized, coherent essay that is 260 words is going to get a better band score than one that is 300 words but weak in lots of other ways because it has not been planned properly.

So how can you do these things in a short space of time?

There are two ways that you can organize a paragraph (though in reality you may see a mix of the two) and for explanation we'll call these "***one idea paragraphs***" and "***multiple idea paragraphs***" (the second can be referred to as a '*listing paragraph*'). We can call these OIPs and MIPs!

Elements of a strong paragraph

Before we look at these, it is important to remember the key elements of any good paragraph:

- **Unity:** *A paragraph should focus around one main idea*
- **Development:** *This idea should be developed (explained) in the other sentences*
- **Coherence:** *The idea should be explained in a clear and logical way*

One Idea Paragraph

In this type of paragraph, you present an idea, and the remainder of your paragraph focuses on explaining this idea. Or for a longer paragraph you may have two ideas.

In this type of paragraph you use these to support your ideas:

Reasons, Examples, Results

You can follow the pattern of idea, reason, example, result (or variations of these) to write your paragraph.

This is a method that provides you with a structure that you can use to brainstorm your ideas, that helps you to extend and support them, and that also provides you with a rough outline at the same time. Overall, this *speeds up the planning process*.

To explain this, let's look at a common problem. Many students write lots of general ideas, but do not support them properly because they have not planned.

Imagine that you have this essay question:

There have been major advances in technology over recent decades and this has led to significant improvements in people's lives.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Look at this example of what a candidate has written in a *body paragraph* about the benefits of advances in technology in support of the statement:

Our lives are much more convenient. In addition, the speed of modern devices means we have more time to do things in our free time. Our time is saved which is beneficial to us. Technological devices are also easily available because they can be found cheaply these days in most shops.

In this example, the candidate has given 4 or 5 ideas (*convenience; speedy modern devices; more time; availability of devices; cheapness of devices*), but none of them have been explained properly and there is repetition.

All it does is create more questions:

- *How are our lives more convenient?*
- *What kinds of devices give us more free time and how?*

- *Why is our time being saved beneficial?*
- *Which are easily available (many are not)?*

Ideas should be clear, not ambiguous.

Paragraphs like this are common to see from candidates who have not planned properly and do not know how to extend their ideas. Each one of these ideas could be extended into a full body paragraph.

Solution:

Give **one idea**

Give a reason **WHY** this idea is true

Give an **example** of it

Say what the **implications / effects** of this example are

Conclude the paragraph

Idea	People's lives are much more convenient.
Reason	This is because we are able to do many things without having to stay at the office or home, something which is extremely important given the busy lifestyles of today.
Example	For example, most people now have a mobile phone or laptop, and Wi-Fi is available in virtually every place.
Result	As a result, people are able to do their work, liaise with colleagues or friends, and check their emails anywhere they choose such as in coffee shops or while travelling on a train or bus.
Conclusion	There is no doubt that this has improved people's lives in many ways and this would not have been possible without improved technology.

You can use this to ensure you are developing your ideas. Here is an example of how this has then been turned into the first paragraph of an essay:

The main benefit of modern technology is that people's lives are much more convenient. This is because we are able to do many things without having to stay at the office or home, something which is extremely important given the busy lifestyles of today. For example, most people now have a mobile phone or laptop computer, and Wi-Fi is available in virtually every place. As a result, people are able to do their work, liaise with colleagues or friends, and check their emails anywhere they choose such as in coffee shops or while travelling on a train or bus. There is no doubt that this has improved people's lives in many ways and this would not have been possible without improved technology.

(119 words)

As you can see, you now have a well-constructed and supported paragraph. There is only one idea but it is developed and avoids repetition.

You certainly don't have to follow this exact structure of *idea, reason, example, effects* and *conclusion*. The examiner is not looking for this, but what they ARE looking for is well-supported ideas within a well-organized paragraph. This structure will provide you with this.

The key point is that you **MUST** explain your ideas.

So how is this connected to writing a paragraph **quickly**? The advantage behind this method is that you can use the framework to brainstorm and plan your ideas.

On a piece of paper, you can write out the framework, and brainstorm your ideas around it. Here is an example of a candidate's brainstorming in the test:

Brainstorming / Planning notes

How has technology benefitted people?

Idea: more convenience

Why? can do things away from home –
important due to busy lifestyles

Ex: Phones & laptops; Wi-Fi everywhere

Result: can work, talk, email – coffee shops,
while travelling

Conc: not possible without technology

Multiple Idea Paragraphs (Listing Paragraphs)

In this type of paragraph, multiple supporting ideas are presented to support the main idea in the topic sentence.

This is called a '*listing paragraph*' because ideas are literally being presented in a list.

For a paragraph such as this, you will see transitions such as *firstly, secondly, moreover, furthermore* (highlighted in red) to introduce each new supporting idea. Of course you should try and work on making your transitions more sophisticated, such as "*The first reason that...*".

There is no doubt that modern technology has improved people's lives in many ways. **Firstly**, people's lives are much more convenient because we have devices such as mobile phones, meaning that people can communicate when and where they like, not just in the office or home. **In addition**, people are living much longer lives due to the advances in medical technology, with doctors now able to carry out complicated heart surgery and other operations that were not possible many years ago. People's lives have **also** improved around the home. Evidence of this can be seen with all the machines that are now readily available to people that save time such as washing machines and dish washers. None of this would have been possible without advances in technology.

(128 words)

In the paragraph, the topic sentence is broader (less specific) than in the first one idea paragraph and there are several supporting ideas.

You still need to ensure that the ideas are understandable. NEVER leave anything up to the reader to guess. Again, '**why? questions**' help you to develop your ideas.

- *Why are people's lives more convenient?* Because of better communication.
- *Why are people living longer?* Because of advances in medical technology.
- *Why is home life better?* Because of machines which can save time.

The outline of the paragraph would look something like this:

Main Idea
Supporting Idea
Explanation
Supporting Idea
Explanation
Supporting Idea
Explanation
*Conclusion (*optional)*

*The concluding sentence has been placed as optional because you do not have to have a concluding sentence and in a MIP paragraph you may find that, especially if you have three ideas, you are writing too much.

Here are the candidates brainstorming notes:

Brainstorming / Planning notes

How has technology benefitted people?

Idea: benefitted people in many ways

SI: More convenience

Exp: mobile phones – communicate anywhere

SI: Longer lives

Exp: complicated heart operations and others possible

SI: Better home life

Exp: save time – microwave, washing machine etc

Conc: not possible without technology

A good paragraph

Returning back to the elements of a good paragraph – *unity*, *development*, and *coherence* – you will see that both paragraphs have all these elements.

Paragraph 1

Unity
The paragraph is focused around <i>one</i> idea – “the convenience that modern technology has brought to people’s lives”
Development
This idea is developed by the use of reasons, examples and effects All these other sentences relate to and support the main idea
Cohesion
The paragraph is easy to read as it follows a logical progression and the reader is guided through each part with transitions and discourse markers such as ‘this’, ‘because’, ‘for example’, ‘and’, ‘as a result’.

Paragraph 2

Unity
The paragraph is focused around <i>one</i> idea – “the benefits to people’s lives of modern technology”
Development
This central idea is developed by listing three reasons to support and explain it All these other sentences relate to and support the main idea
Cohesion
The paragraph is easy to read as it follows a logical progression and the reader is guided through each part with transitions such as ‘firstly’, ‘in addition’, ‘also’, ‘and’, ‘due to’.

Which type of paragraph should I choose?

This will depend on how many ideas you have and also the essay question.

For example, if you have a question that asks you to discuss the *problems and solutions* connected to urbanization, you clearly need to mention **more than** one problem and **more than** one solution, so a multiple ideas paragraph will be better.

If you are giving your side of an argument on an issue you can still use multiple ideas (reasons) to support your opinion, but you may have one excellent idea that you feel fully supports your argument. You may then want to use an expanded idea paragraph to fully explain it (or even three excellent ideas and you may want to explain each one fully in a separate paragraph and thus have three body paragraphs).

In future chapters we’ll look at more essay samples and you will see how they can be used.

Practice

Now it’s your turn. You are going to write two paragraphs *opposing* the idea that advances in technology have improved people’s lives. So you need to think of some ways that technology has made people’s lives *worse*.

For the first paragraph, you can practice the ‘*one idea paragraph*’, and in the next the ‘*multiple idea paragraph*’. The exercises are on the next pages.

Write a plan for the second paragraph in the box, and then write the second paragraph.

One Idea Paragraph

Paragraph Plan:

Idea:

Reason:

Example:

Result:

Conclusion:

The main benefit of modern technology is that people's lives are much more convenient. This is because we are able to do many things without having to stay at the office or home, something which is extremely important given the busy lifestyles of today. For example, most people now have a mobile phone or laptop computer, and Wi-Fi is available in virtually every place. As a result, people are able to do their work, liaise with colleagues or friends, and check their emails anywhere they choose such as in coffee shops or while travelling on a train or bus. There is no doubt that this has improved people's lives in many ways and this would not have been possible without improved technology.

However, _____

Multiple Idea Paragraph

Paragraph Plan:

Idea:
SI:
Exp:
SI:
Exp:
SI:
Exp:
Conclusion (optional):

There is no doubt that modern technology has improved people’s lives in many ways. Firstly, people’s lives are much more convenient because we have devices such as mobile phones, meaning that people can communicate when and where they like, not just in the office or home. In addition, people are living much longer lives due to the advances in medical technology, with doctors now able to carry out complicated heart surgery and other operations that were not possible many years ago. People’s lives have also improved around the home. Evidence of this can be seen with all the devices that are now readily available to people that save time such as microwaves, washing machines, and dish washers. None of this would have been possible without advances in technology.

However, _____

Example Answers

One Idea Paragraphs

The main benefit of modern technology is that people's lives are much more convenient. This is because we are able to do many things without having to stay at the office or home, something which is extremely important given the busy lifestyles of today. For example, most people now have a mobile phone or laptop computer, and Wi-Fi is available in virtually every place. As a result, people are able to do their work, liaise with colleagues or friends, and check their emails anywhere they choose such as in coffee shops or while travelling on a train or bus. There is no doubt that this has improved people's lives in many ways and this would not have been possible without improved technology.

However, a particularly dire effect of developments in technology has been automation. Many everyday practices are now performed by machines instead of people and this has resulted in less need for labour. For example, in recent decades nearly all major banks have replaced telephone operators with telephone switchboards that have recorded messages and all banks now have automated teller machines (ATMs). This reduces the need for people to visit the bank itself and has resulted in a corresponding decrease in the need for bank staff. As banks and other similar businesses strive for profit, this is likely to increase unemployment further in the future.

(227 words)

Multiple Idea Paragraphs

There is no doubt that modern technology has improved people's lives in many ways. Firstly, people's lives are much more convenient because we have devices such as mobile phones, meaning that people can communicate when and where they like, not just in the office or home. In addition, people are living much longer lives due to the advances in medical technology, with doctors now able to carry out complicated heart surgery and other operations that were not possible many years ago. People's lives have also improved around the home. Evidence of this can be seen with all the devices that are now readily available to people that save time such as microwaves, washing machines, and dish washers. None of this would have been possible without advances in technology.

However, the effects on people's lifestyles have not all been positive. Although mobile phones have simplified the way we communicate, there is growing evidence that heavy use may affect a person's brain functioning long-term, especially children who may use them from a young age. In addition, it could be argued that the ease with which we can now be contacted via phone or email may lead to stress as we can never really escape from work, even if abroad on holiday. Another negative aspect is the impacts technology has had on the job market. Machines have steadily replaced the work that people do leading to redundancies at factories as they strive for profit and efficiency.

(243 words)

Unit Summary

Of course in reality, a paragraph may not follow these patterns exactly. You could get a mix. For example, you may get a paragraph with two ideas with one idea at the beginning that is explained using a reason, example and result, then one shorter idea after that which does not require such full explanation (such as those in a listing paragraph).

Also, one paragraph could be OIP and the next MIP.

Don't think about it too much and get stuck over deciding whether what you are writing is a reason and where your result is etc. If you can't think of a result but your idea is still clear, then leave it as it is and go on to expand your paragraph with another idea.

The important point is that your paragraph must be **well-organized** and **coherent**, and your ideas must be **clear** and **explained properly**, be it in one sentence or 5 sentences.

Take a look at the paragraphs again that were presented above. Are there any ideas that you don't understand? They are all clear. You **MUST NOT** write something that leaves someone having to guess what you mean. The examiner is not a mind reader!

Some things can be clearly explained in one sentence, some things may take a few more sentences to make it clear what you are saying. You are free to be flexible, depending on what you need to say.

UNIT 7: Fully-developed Examples

Examples are an important part of the support when you are writing a task 2 essay.

This is what the IELTS writing rubric says:

*Give reasons for your answer and **include any relevant examples** from your own experience or knowledge.*

However, a problem candidates often have is that they provide weak, undeveloped ideas and examples. Let's look at the same essay question from the previous section:

There have been major advances in technology over recent decades and this has led to significant improvements in people's lives.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Imagine someone is writing about the disadvantages of improved technology, and they write:

"For example, increased automation¹ means that businesses need less staff".

This is just a **general idea** and it needs to be explained. Examples should be **specific**.

An example is usually longer than the one above, and it often gives names of specific people, places, times etc. Examples are used to help clarify exactly what you mean when you give an idea by using a specific case. It turns a general idea into something more concrete.

Have you thought about how you make something clear to someone if you are explaining something new? If it is difficult to understand, you will give an example. In the same way, you are explaining something to the person reading your essay and you need to make it clear. A specific example will do this.

It will also make your writing more interesting and provide better support for your arguments.

Solution

A fully developed example answers questions such as:

How? When? Where? Why? Who? What kind? How many?

¹ to make a process in a factory or office operate by machines or computers, in order to reduce the amount of work done by humans and the time taken to do the work

It will also give the implications of what you have explained i.e. what the ‘results’ are of your example? What does it mean is happening?

A Fully-developed Example

This is a fully developed example taken from the essay in the previous section:

However, a particularly dire effect of developments in technology has been automation. Many everyday practices are now performed by machines instead of people and this has resulted in less need for labour. **For example, in recent decades nearly all major banks have replaced telephone operators with telephone switchboards that have recorded messages and all banks now have automated teller machines (ATMs). This reduces the need for people to visit the bank itself and has resulted in a corresponding decrease in the need for bank staff.** As banks and other similar businesses strive for profit, this is likely to increase unemployment further in the future.

As you can see, the point made in the bad example we looked at was a **general statement**. This has been turned into the first point, and a **specific example** has then been used to illustrate this point clearly.

Several “wh...” questions have been answered by referring to **specific** places, times etc:

- **Who?** – banks
- **How many?** – nearly all
- **When?** – over the last few decades
- **What?** – replaced need for telephone operators and bank tellers
- **How?** – using switchboards and ATMs
- **Result?** – people don’t need to visit the bank and less staff are needed

What before was a short unexplained example has been changed into an interesting, fully developed point and virtually full paragraph.

Practice

Have a go at developing some specific examples of your own to discuss the negative and positive aspects of the internet.

You have been given the first sentence focused around this topic stating a reason why access to the internet is positive or negative. You then need to develop a specific example to support the reason. Remember to use the methods explained above.

The spread of the internet is a positive development because everyone has easy access to an abundance of information. A good example of this is _____

However, there are also drawbacks because of the easy access to dangerous sites. For instance, _____

See the next page for a sample answer

The spread of the internet is a positive development because everyone has easy access to an abundance of information. A good example of this is the great benefits the internet provides when studying at university. Students are required to undertake a significant amount of research, which previously entailed trawling through library book shelves and using a microfiche for the initial search. Now all journal and book data are stored on the internet so the contents of the book or journal can be viewed before finding it. Many other sources such as newspapers and company websites can also be found online. All in all, information about virtually everything we need to know can be found via the internet.

However, there are also drawbacks because of the easy access to dangerous sites. For instance, there has been a proliferation of pornography and gambling websites over the last few decades which are available to children. Although there are some restrictions on access to these sites, it is usually very lax and easy for individuals to overcome. Such sites require the customer to be over 18 years old but it is easy for a person to simply pretend they are this age. Credit card information is needed to access some sites but some children may use someone else's card for this. There are, therefore, also dangers associated with the spread of the internet.

(229 words)

Unit Summary

Examples should not be too general. Examples are there to fully explain exactly what you mean.

The examiner cannot read your mind and if your point is not completely clear, you should back it up with an example.

Even if it is clear, you can still use an example to create a well-supported paragraph. To gain a high score, you need ideas that are fully supported and explained.

To make sure your examples are specific, mention such things as *who*, *how many*, *when*, *what* and *how*.

UNIT 8: Essay Types

In this next section we'll look at some different **types of essay**.

It's important to understand the different types of IELTS essay you may get as this will help you to make sure that you answer the question properly.

Many books and websites divide essays up into such things as argumentative, discursive, thesis led etc. Although useful, this can be confusing for many students to understand these distinctions.

A simpler way and a way that can make it easy to quickly identify what you need to do is to divide the essays up according to the task (what you are being told to do).

There are some essay types that commonly come up in IELTS, and they are as follows:

1. *Agree or disagree*
2. *Discuss two opposing opinions*
3. *Advantage and disadvantages*
4. *Problems and solutions*
5. *Causes and solutions*
6. *Causes and effects*

(These are represented in the chart on the following page with an example question).

So one of the first things you should be is to check which type it is. If you have practiced the different types of essay before the IELTS test, then it will be easy for you to see how you can structure your essay as you can organize it as you did when you practiced, but just with a different topic.

These are common patterns for questions but of course they may not always fit this exactly, so the golden rule remains - ***analyze the question very carefully to assess what you are told you have to do.***

For example, take a look at this question:

There are many types of music in the world today. Why do we need music? Is the traditional music of a country more important and should it be preserved or is international music that is heard everywhere nowadays more useful to a society?

This one won't fit into one of the categories from the table, but it still takes of mix of some of the elements.

The first part is about **causes** or **reasons** (you need to explain the reasons why we need music). The second part is asking for **your opinion** i.e. discussing which you think is the most useful to society – traditional or modern music.

Common IELTS Task 2 Questions

Agree or Disagree	Discuss Two Opposing Opinions
<p>Advances in technology and automation have reduced the need for manual labour. Therefore, working hours should be reduced.</p> <p><i>To what extent <u>do you agree or disagree</u>?</i></p>	<p>In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong while others consider it as valuable work experience.</p> <p><i><u>Discuss both views and give your opinion.</u></i></p>
Advantages and Disadvantages	Problems and Solutions
<p>In many countries the proportion of older people is increasing.</p> <p><i>Could this have more <u>positive</u> or <u>negative</u> effects on society?</i></p>	<p>Many people believe that the high levels of violence in films today are causing serious social problems.</p> <p><i>What are these <u>problems</u> and how can they be <u>solved</u>?</i></p>
Causes (reasons) and Solutions	Causes (reasons) and Effects
<p>The crime rate among teenagers has increased dramatically in many countries.</p> <p><i><u>Why is this happening and what can be done to reduce it?</u></i></p>	<p>In many parts of the world, people are choosing to have fewer children.</p> <p><i><u>Why do you think this is happening?</u></i></p> <p><i><u>What impacts may it have on society?</u></i></p>
Other	
<p><i><u>How important</u> do you think it is for countries to think about the future rather than concentrating on the present?</i></p> <p>In today's world of advanced technology and science we still greatly value artists such as writers, musicians and painters. <i>What can the arts tell us about life that science can't?</i></p>	

Practice

Take a look at the following essay questions and write below which kind of essay type they are (refer to the table). The first one has been done for you. A few won't fit exactly as you see in the box so look at them all carefully (*check your answers afterwards on page 99*).

Do the dangers derived from the use of chemicals in food production and preservation outweigh the advantages?

1. Essay Type...**Advantages and Disadvantages**.....

Individuals can do nothing to improve the environment. Only Large companies and businesses can make a difference.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

2. Essay Type.....

Fresh water has always been a limited resource in some parts of the world. Today, however, growing worldwide demand has made this a global problem.

What are the causes of the increased demand and what measures could governments and individuals take to respond to this problem?

3. Essay Type.....

Air transport is increasingly used to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season. Some people think this is a positive development, but others believe the use of air transport for this purpose is not justified.

Discuss both sides and give your opinion.

4. Essay Type.....

As global trade increases, many goods including those we use on a daily basis are produced in other countries and have to be transported long distances.

Do the benefits of this trend outweigh the drawbacks?

5. Essay Type.....

Because many problems we face today affect our whole planet, good relationships between different countries are becoming more important than ever before.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

6. Essay Type.....

Many people depend on their cars for everyday domestic, social and working needs. However, unlimited use of cars causes a number of problems.

What are some of these problems?

What can be done to reduce the use of cars?

7. Essay Type.....

Some businesses find that when new employees join them after finishing their education, they lack basic interpersonal skills such as the ability to work with their colleagues as part of a team.

What do you think are the causes of this problem and what measures could be taken to solve it?

8. Essay Type.....

Nowadays, families are not as close as in the past and a lot of people have become used to this.

Explain the reasons for this and discuss any possible effects it may have on society.

9. Essay Type.....

Some people think that computers are more of a hindrance than a help in today's society. Others believe that they are such indispensable tools that they would not be able to live or work without them.

Discuss both opinions and give your opinion.

10. Essay Type.....

Nowadays many people have access to computers on a wide basis and a large number of children play computer games.

What are the negative and positive impacts of playing computer games and what can be done to minimize the bad effects?

11. Essay Type.....

How important is it for individual countries to think about the future rather than focusing on the present?

12. Essay Type.....

Happiness is considered very important in life.

Why is it difficult to define?
What factors are important in achieving happiness?

13. Essay Type.....

The percentage of overweight children in western society has increased by almost 20% in the last ten years.

Discuss the causes and effects of this disturbing trend.

14. Essay Type.....

Developed countries have created many environmental problems in the World, particularly in their contribution to global warming.

What can be done to reduce the dangers of global warming?

15. Essay Type.....

There is an increasing trend around the world to have a small family rather than a large family.

What are some of the benefits and drawback of having a small family rather than a large family?

16. Essay Type.....

Global warming is one of the most serious issues that the world is facing today.

What are the causes of global warming and what measures can governments and individuals take to tackle the issue?

17. Essay Type.....

Genetic engineering is an important issue in modern society. Some people think that it will improve people's lives in many ways. Others feel that it may be a threat to life on earth.

Discuss both opinions and give your opinion?

18. Essay Type.....

Model Essays

Looking at essay questions this way and understanding the different types is important as it will guide you on how to structure your essay.

To get good marks for task response you must fully answer the question. Most of the questions we looked at have two things that need to be done. If you only write a few sentences on one of the parts, or write nothing at all about it, your score will be reduced.

Take a look at this table to see each essay question.

Essay Type	First half of essay	Second half of essay
Agree / Disagree	<i>Reasons to agree</i>	<i>Reasons to disagree</i>
Discuss two opinions ²	<i>First opinion</i>	<i>Second opinion</i>
Advantage and disadvantages	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Problems and solutions	<i>Problems</i>	<i>Solutions</i>
Causes and solutions	<i>Causes</i>	<i>Solutions</i>
Causes and effects	<i>Causes</i>	<i>Effects</i>

² Remember you must give your opinion as well for this essay type – we'll look at examples later

So in order to fully address the question, you should spend about half your essay on each part. If you don't, you may be in danger of having a 'partially' answered question.

In order to look at this in more detail, we will now examine some model essays that represent each type.

Causes and Effects

The percentage of overweight children in western society has increased by almost 20% in the last ten years.

Discuss the causes and effects of this disturbing trend.

Over the last ten years, western societies have seen close to a 20% rise in the number of children who are overweight. This essay will discuss some **reasons why** this has occurred and **examine the consequences** of this worrying trend.

The main cause of this problem is poor diet. Over the last decade there has been a prolific increase in the number of fast food restaurants. For example, on nearly every high street there is a MacDonalD's, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut. The food in these places has been proven to be very unhealthy, and much of the advertising is targeted at children, thus ensuring that they constitute the bulk of the customers of these establishments. However, it is not only due to eating out, but also the type of diet many children have at home. A lot of food consumed is processed food, especially with regards to ready-made meals which are a quick and easy option for parents who are working hard.

The effects of this have been and will continue to be very serious. Firstly, there has been a large increase in health related diseases amongst children, especially diabetes. This debilitating illness means a child has to be injected with insulin for the rest of their life. Not only this, very overweight children often experience bullying from other children, which may affect their mental health. The negative stigma of being overweight may also affect self-esteem.

To sum up, it is evident that **there are several causes of obesity amongst children**, and **a variety of negative effects**. Society must ensure steps are taken to prevent this problem from deteriorating further.

(275 words)

Comments

As you can see, each part of the question has been addressed adequately. The first half is about the 'causes' of obesity and the second part is about the 'effects' of this.

Causes and Solutions

Global warming is one of the most serious issues that the world is facing today.

What are the causes of global warming and what measures can governments and individuals take to tackle the issue?

Probably the most worrying threat to our planet at the present time is global warming. This essay will examine the **reasons why global warming is occurring** and **discuss some possible solutions**.

The predominant factors resulting in the warming of the earth are the emissions of CO₂ and deforestation. CO₂, which damages the ozone layer, comes from several sources, but the most problematic are those coming from the burning of fossil fuels from power plants. This releases thousands of tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere every year. Another cause of these emissions is the burning of gasoline for transportation, which continues to increase because of our demand for cars and also our increasing worldwide consumption, resulting in an increasing need to transport goods. Also, forests store large amounts of carbon, so deforestation is causing larger amounts of CO₂ to remain in the atmosphere.

Nevertheless, there are potential ways to solve these problems, or at least reduce the effects. Firstly, governments need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and promote alternatives. Plant-derived plastics, biodiesel, wind power and solar power are all things that are a step in the right direction, but governments need to enforce the limits on CO₂ emissions for the polluting industries in their countries for these to be effective. Also, individuals can play a part by making lifestyle changes. People should try to buy cars with the best fuel economy, and only use their car when really necessary. They can also switch to energy companies that use renewable energy rather than fossil fuels. Finally, small things like buying energy efficient light bulbs, turning off electricity in the house, and planting trees in the garden can help.

To conclude, although global warming, **caused by CO₂ emissions**, is a serious issue, **there are steps that governments and individuals can take to reduce its effects**. If we are to save our planet, it is important that this is treated as a priority for all concerned.

(320 Words)

Comments

As you can see, each part of the question has been addressed adequately. The first half is about the 'causes' of global warming and the second part is about the 'solutions'.

Problems and Solutions

Overpopulation of urban areas has led to numerous problems.

Identify one or two serious ones and suggest ways that governments and individuals can tackle these problems.

Many countries of the world are **currently experiencing problems** caused by rapidly growing populations in urban areas. Both **governments and individuals have a duty to find solutions to these pressing issues.**

Overpopulation can lead to overcrowding and poor quality housing in many large cities. Poorly heated or damp housing could cause significant health problems, resulting in illness, such as bronchitis or pneumonia. Another serious consequence of overcrowding is a rising crime rate as poor living conditions may lead young people in particular to take desperate measures and turn to crime or drugs.

In terms of solutions, I believe the government should be largely responsible. Firstly, it is vital that the state provides essential housing and healthcare for all its citizens. Secondly, setting up community projects to help foster more community spirit and help keep young people off the street is a good idea. For example, youth clubs or evening classes for teenagers would keep them occupied. Finally, more effective policing of inner city areas would also be beneficial.

Naturally, individuals should also act responsibly to address these problems, and the motivation to do this would hopefully arise if the measures described above are put into place by the government. This is because it will encourage people to have more pride in their own community and improve the situation.

Therefore, it is clear that the **problems caused by overpopulation in urban areas are very serious.** Yet if governments and individuals share a collective responsibility, then **it may well become possible to offer some solutions.**

(254 words)

Comments

Each part of the question has been addressed adequately. The first paragraph is about the 'problems' of growing populations in urban areas, and then there are two paragraphs dedicated to 'solutions' for individuals and governments.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Do the dangers derived from the use of chemicals in food production and preservation outweigh the advantages?

Most foods that are purchased these days in small stores and supermarkets have chemicals in them as these are used to improve production and ensure the food lasts for longer. However, there are concerns that these have harmful effects. In my opinion, the **potential dangers** from this are **greater than the benefits** we receive.

There are several reasons why chemicals are placed in food. Firstly, it is to improve the product to the eye, and this is achieved via the use of colourings which encourage people to purchase food that may otherwise not look tempting to eat. Another reason is to preserve the food. Much of the food we eat would not actually last that long if it were not for chemicals they contain, so again this is an advantage to the companies that sell food as their products have a longer shelf life.

From this evidence, it is clear to me that the main benefits are, therefore, to the companies and not to the customer. Although companies claim these food additives are safe and they have research to support this, the research is quite possibly biased as it comes from their own companies or people with connections to these companies. It is common to read reports these days in the press about possible links to various health issues such as cancer. Food additives have also been linked to problems such as hyperactivity in children.

To conclude, despite the fact that **there are benefits to placing chemicals in food**, **I believe that these principally help the companies but could be a danger to the public**. It is unlikely that this practice can be stopped, so food must be clearly labelled and it is my hope that organic products will become more readily available at reasonable prices to all.

(Words 298)

Comments

The essay discusses both the advantages and disadvantages of the use of chemicals in food production and preservation.

The essay question does not simply ask for a list of benefits and drawbacks – it also asks for an *opinion* i.e. are the drawbacks greater than the benefits. An opinion on this is clearly stated in the essay in the introduction and conclusion.

Agree / Disagree

Air traffic is increasingly leading to more noise, pollution, and airport construction. One reason for this is the growth in low-cost passenger flights, often to holiday destinations.

Some people say that governments should try to reduce air traffic by taxing it more heavily.

Do you agree or disagree?

Over recent years there has been an enormous increase in the amount of air traffic around the world resulting in various problems, and a major cause of this has been the growth of low-cost airlines. **Although some people believe that taxes should be increased for air travel, this is not the best solution.**

Those that support taxing airlines believe that this will result in a reduction in this type of travel and thus solve the problems of pollution, noise and construction. This is because a tax would make the cost of travelling more expensive, which will, they claim, lead to a decrease in demand. Proponents of this solution believe that taxes are fair because everyone has to pay them and it is a workable solution that will have the additional bonus of providing an income for the government.

However, there are a number of reasons why this is not the right course of action. Firstly, a tax is not fair because it will adversely affect people on lower incomes. Such a tax would have to be a fixed amount paid equally whether you are rich or poor, which means that those on lower incomes would find it more difficult to travel, but it would likely have little effect on the lives of those with a higher income. In addition, such a tax would not work. For example, we have seen taxes increase in most countries on cars, but this has had little effect, with car use continuing to grow.

To sum up, it is evident that **introducing heavy taxes on air travel is not fair or workable.** If we continue to explore alternatives, we can continue to enjoy the benefits that air travel offers.

(280 Words)

Comments

Although the writer disagrees with the opinion, both sides of the issue are discussed. We'll discuss this essay type and how you can answer it further in the next unit.

Discuss two opinions

A growing number of people feel that animals should not be exploited by people and that they should have the same rights as humans, while others argue that humans must employ animals to satisfy their various needs, including uses for food and research.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Some people believe that animals should be treated in the same way humans are and have similar rights, whereas **others think that it is more important to use them as we desire for food and medical research**. This essay will discuss both points of view.

With regard to the exploitation of animals, people believe it is acceptable for several reasons. Firstly, they think that humans are the most important beings on the planet, and everything must be done to ensure human survival. If this means experimenting on animals so that we can fight and find cures for diseases, then this takes priority over animal suffering. Furthermore, it is believed by some that animals do not feel pain or loss as humans do, so if we have to kill animals for food or other uses, then this is morally acceptable.

However, I do not believe these arguments stand up to scrutiny. The first reason is that it has been shown on numerous occasions by secret filming in laboratories via animal rights groups that animals feel as much pain as humans do, and they suffer when they are kept in cages for long periods. Not only this, a substantial amount of animal research is done for cosmetics, not to find cures for diseases, so this is unnecessary. Finally, it has also been proven that humans can get all the nutrients and vitamins that they need from green vegetables and fruit. Therefore, again, having to kill animals for food is not an adequate argument.

To sum up, **although some people argue killing animals for research and food is ethical, I would argue there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that this is not the case**, and, therefore, steps must be taken to improve the rights of animals.

(Words 294)

Comments

Here you can see that both sides of the issue have been discussed. Within this discussion of both sides, the author has clearly stated that the second opinion is **their opinion** too, thus ensuring that the final part of the prompt is covered – "...and give your opinion". Their opinion is also stated again in the conclusion.

Of course you could present the two arguments in two body paragraphs and then have your opinion in the third paragraph or in an extended conclusion. This is fine, though the only thing to avoid is repeating the ideas that you have just presented in the body paragraphs.

We'll discuss opinion essays further in the next unit.

Unit Summary

At university you are expected to carefully examine an essay question you are given. After doing this, you will usually find that you are being asked to write about causes, effects, solutions, your opinion etc.

IELTS reflects this – you need to look at the task carefully and work out exactly what you are being asked to write about.

Understanding the different essay types will help you to do this. You should practice looking at questions and identifying if it fits with one of these types.

If you have practiced them, you will be able to quickly work out how you need to structure your essay.

Remember though, **always** examine the task **very carefully** and don't jump to conclusions about the type you think it is.

UNIT 9: Opinion Essays

In this section we'll look in a bit more detail at opinion essays because they usually cause the most problems for candidates.

In an opinion essay, you are (usually) examining two sides of an issue.

Here are the common opinion style essays:

Agree / Disagree

The increasing use of air transport to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season is a positive development.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Discuss Two Opinions

Air transport is increasingly used to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season. Some people think this is a positive development, but others believe the use of air transport for this purpose is not justified.

Discuss both sides and give your opinion.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Air transport is increasingly used to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season.

Do the benefits of this trend outweigh the drawbacks?

OR

Do you think this has more positive or negative effects?

As you can see, all the questions are fairly similar. You are basically being asked to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using air transport to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season.

And in all of the questions you are specifically being asked to give your opinion.

However, each of the prompts is worded differently and this needs further consideration when you come to answer the question.

Agree / Disagree

There are some common questions asked about his type of question.

Should I look at both sides?

If you check the public IELTS band descriptors (available online from an IELTS institute or online if you do an internet search) you'll see there is nothing that refers specifically to this type of essay, and therefore nothing to say you can't 100% agree or disagree and then support that position. So on that basis, it should be ok.

However, there are benefits to looking at both sides of the issue.

Firstly, looking at both sides is standard style for an academic essay, and so can make a good impression on the person reading it. Also, it can make your essay more interesting if both view points are discussed.

Lastly, it is likely that it will be easier to come up with ideas to look at both sides. If you look at one side, you need to come up with more ideas and support for just one view. If you look at the advantages and disadvantages of the issue, you are likely to have a greater pool of ideas to draw from.

Ultimately though, the decision is yours. If you strongly agree with one particular side and have several arguments to support that opinion, there is nothing in the grading for the examiner to mark you down for doing this.

Where should I put my opinion?

There is no right or wrong answer for this, but you **MUST** under all circumstances give your opinion to confirm exactly where you stand on the issue.

However, I would recommend you put the opinion in the introduction (in the last sentence, as the thesis of course).

The benefits of this are that the examiner will know upfront exactly what your position is. This will then avoid any confusion when your essay is read. This is especially important if you are at a lower level of English. If you make errors with your grammar or wording, this

may make parts of your argument more difficult to follow. If the examiner already knows your opinion, this may make it easier.

Agree / disagree model essays

We'll now look at some model essays answering the above essay question so you can see the different options for tackling such a question.

The increasing use of air transport to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season is a positive development.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

An essay that disagrees with the opinion and looks at one side:

Focus Question:

Is using air transport to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season a positive development?

Answer: *No*

With the growth in aviation, many countries now choose this mode of transport to export food such as fruit and vegetables to places where they are not in season or cannot be grown. I do not believe that this has been a positive development for the following reasons.

The first is the negative impacts that this has on the environment. One of the biggest problems in the world today is global warming, and one of the major contributors to this is the burning of fossil fuels in the form of oil. Transporting millions of tonnes of food every day by air will add significantly to this problem as just one flight releases large amounts of carbon dioxide and other gases into the environment.

Another reason is the effect this can have on local markets. Using planes to transport food means that it can be exported in bulk, and it is large chains of supermarkets that usually use such methods. They can then sell it at discount prices to customers and provide a great deal of choice. Local farmers, on the other hand, cannot reduce their prices and they can only sell the fruits and vegetables that are in season. This means that they cannot compete in the market and may lose business or their business may fail.

To conclude, the detrimental effect that importing food by air has on the environment and local markets means that this is not sustainable. Measures should be taken to encourage local farming and reduce the dependency on exported food.

(255 Words)

In the above essay, if you agreed then of course your essay would have consist of arguments explaining the positive impacts of transport by air.

An essay that partly agrees with the opinion i.e. can see both sides:

Focus Question:

Is using air transport to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season a positive development?

Answer: *Yes and No*

With the growth in aviation, many countries now choose this mode of transport to export food such as fruit and vegetables to places where they are not in season or cannot be grown. I would argue that this has both positive and negative implications.

On the positive side, transport by air has opened up markets that were previously inaccessible, benefiting the exporting and importing countries. Firstly, local farmers in poor countries may be able to improve their income and standard of living when they can sell to faraway foreign markets rather than only producing staple crops for local markets or their own consumption. In addition, people in the countries that receive the food have the opportunity to try a variety of produce and new exotic fruits that they would not otherwise be able to sample as the food would deteriorate if moved by land or sea.

However, a negative side to this development is the impact that this has on the environment. One of the biggest problems in the world today is global warming, and one of the major contributors to this is the burning of fossil fuels in the form of oil. Transporting millions of tonnes of food every day by air will add significantly to this problem as just one flight releases large amounts of carbon dioxide and other gases into the environment. Climate change may therefore worsen if this trend continues.

To sum up, it is clear to me that although there are advantages to exporting food by air, there are also drawbacks. This methods of exporting food should continue but with regulations on the amount of flights in order to protect the environment.

(277 Words)

You can of course completely agree with one side but still discuss both sides. In other words have a counter-argument (present the other persons view that you do not agree with). Your essay would then follow the same pattern as the essay above, but instead of stating that you can see both sides, you firmly come down and support one side.

Here is an example:

An essay that disagrees with the opinion but looks at both sides:

Focus Question:

Is using air transport to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season a positive development?

Answer: *No*

With the growth in aviation, many countries now choose this mode of transport to export food such as fruit and vegetables to places where they are not in season or cannot be grown. I would argue that this is a negative development.

Supporters of this development argue that transport by air has opened up markets that were previously inaccessible, benefiting the exporting and importing countries. Firstly, local farmers in poor countries may be able to improve their income and standard of living when they can sell to faraway foreign markets rather than only producing staple crops for local markets or their own consumption. In addition, people in the countries that receive the food have the opportunity to try a variety of produce and new exotic fruits that they would not otherwise be able to sample as the food would deteriorate if moved by land or sea.

However, the damage that this does to the environment outweighs the positive factors. One of the biggest problems in the world today is global warming, and one of the major contributors to this is the burning of fossil fuels in the form of oil. Transporting millions of tonnes of food every day by air will add significantly to this problem as just one flight releases large amounts of carbon dioxide and other gases into the environment. Climate change may therefore worsen if this trend continues.

To sum up, it is clear to me that although there are advantages to exporting food by air, the impacts on the environment are too serious. Regulations should therefore be introduced in order to reduce transport of fruit and vegetables by air as a matter of urgency in order to protect the environment from further damage.

(287 Words)

So there are various ways of answering the question. If you are a more high-level writer you may not want to pick a particular structure, but just decide in the exam, depending on the question and your opinion.

If you are lower level you may want to choose the way you think is easiest and focus on practicing that. For example, just choosing one side and finding ideas to support that has the advantage (if you can come up with enough ideas) that the thesis is easier to write than trying to do one that examines both sides.

Discuss Both Views and Give Your Opinion

This kind of essay throws up the same questions as ‘agree / disagree’ essays. Where do you put your opinion? How do you structure the essay?

Again, there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer to this. You may hear different advice, but this may simply be teachers choosing a particular method that they find is the best way to train their students. It does not mean another way is wrong.

How do I structure the essay and where do I write my opinion?

The public IELTS band descriptors do not set out certain criteria for the organization of particular essay types. They do, however, need to **answer the question** and be organized in a way that is **logical** and **clear**.

These are some possible ways to structure the essay:

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Body 1: First View Body 2: Second View	Body 1: First View Body 2: Second View (making this second view your opinion)	Body 1: First View Body 2: Second View Body 3: Your opinion
Conclusion (= your opinion in extended conclusion)	Conclusion	Conclusion

All of these choices include the three parts of the question:

- View 1
- View 2
- Your Opinion

As long as you are doing all these things, it really does not matter whether you also choose to put your opinion as part of the thesis statements in all of the options, or leave it till the end. But you **must** of course have your opinion as this is specifically asked for as part of the task.

As it is part of the task, it is advisable not to make your opinion simply one sentence at the beginning or end of the essay. It is possible that the examiner may decide that not all of the tasks have been fully addressed if you do this i.e. you may be seen to have a *partial* answer.

My personal recommendation is to use options 1 or 2. The problem with the last option is that many IELTS students struggle to write body paragraph 3. They will tend to end up repeating ideas that they have already used in the previous arguments. So it will entail coming up with new ideas. If you use new ideas it then means further brainstorming and learning a new essay structure format.

If you feel comfortable with the third option, that is fine, but here we will look at sample answers for the first two options using the same essay question and ideas as before.

Option 1

Air transport is increasingly used to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season. Some people think this is a positive development, but others believe the use of air transport for this purpose is not justified.

Discuss both sides and give your opinion.

With the growth in aviation, many countries now choose this mode of transport to export food such as fruit and vegetables to places where they are not in season or cannot be grown. While some argue that this is a positive development, others believe there are no justifications for this.

On the positive side, transport by air has opened up markets that were previously inaccessible, benefiting the exporting countries. Local farmers in poor countries may be able to improve their income and standard of living when they can sell to faraway foreign markets rather than only producing staple crops for local markets or their own consumption. In addition, people in the countries that receive the food have the opportunity to try a variety of produce and new exotic fruits that they would not otherwise be able to sample as the food would deteriorate if moved by land or sea.

However, a negative side to this development is the impact that this has on the environment. One of the biggest problems in the world today is global warming, and one of the major contributors to this is the burning of fossil fuels in the form of oil. Transporting millions of tonnes of food every day by air will add significantly to this problem as just one flight releases large amounts of carbon dioxide and other gases into the environment.

In conclusion, I would argue that this method of transporting fruit and vegetables is not justified. Although local farmers in poorer countries may benefit, as will some consumers, the export of these fruits and vegetable is not essential for those countries as every country can simply consume their own produce. The priority must be on reducing aviation due to the negative affects this has on our planet.

(295 words)

Option 2

Air transport is increasingly used to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season. Some people think this is a positive development, but others believe the use of air transport for this purpose is not justified.

Discuss both sides and give your opinion.

With the growth in aviation, many countries now choose this mode of transport to export food such as fruit and vegetables to places where they are not in season or cannot be grown. While some argue that this is a positive development, I believe that there are no justifications for this.

Those that support this development argue that transport by air has opened up markets that were previously inaccessible, benefiting the exporting and importing countries. Firstly, they claim local farmers in poor countries may be able to improve their income and standard of living when they can sell to faraway foreign markets rather than only producing staple crops for local markets or their own consumption. In addition, they argue that people in the countries that receive the food have the opportunity to try a variety of produce and new exotic fruits that they would not otherwise be able to sample as the food would deteriorate if moved by land or sea.

However, I would argue that the negative impacts on the environment do not make this a positive development. One of the biggest problems in the world today is global warming, and one of the major contributors to this is the burning of fossil fuels in the form of oil. Transporting millions of tonnes of food every day by air will add significantly to this problem as just one flight releases large amounts of carbon dioxide and other gases into the environment. Climate change may therefore worsen if this trend continues.

To sum up, although there are advantages to exporting food by air, the drawbacks are too serious. Regulations should be implemented in order to control the use of air to transport food and to prevent further damage to our planet.

(291 words)

You will see that the first body paragraph is clearly marked as someone else's opinion (not the writer):

“Those that support this development...”

However, the next body paragraph is clearly the writer's opinion:

“However, I would argue that...”

This satisfied the requirements – both opinions have been discussed and the writer's opinion is given.

Advantages and Disadvantages

In some advantage and disadvantage essays you are not asked your opinion. For example:

Air transport is increasingly used to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?

This is fairly straight forward. You just need a two body paragraph essay – one discussing the advantages and another one the disadvantages. And your thesis may be something like this:

There are benefits and drawbacks of transporting food by air to other countries.

However, if the question is worded like this, or similar, you **MUST** give your opinion as to whether there are more benefits or drawbacks:

Air transport is increasingly used to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season.

Do the benefits of this trend outweigh the drawbacks?

OR

Do you think this has more positive or negative effects?

When you answer an essay question like this, you therefore do need to look at **both sides**. The question is implying that there are both advantages **and** drawbacks.

You could do a straight forward two body paragraph. However, in your opinion you need to say whether there are more advantages or disadvantages, so it makes sense to reflect this in your essay response.

For example, if you think there are **more advantages**, your essay may look like this:

Option 1	Option 2
Introduction	Introduction
Body 1: Advantage	Body 1: Advantages
Body 2: Advantage	Body 2: Disadvantages
Body 3: Disadvantage	
Conclusion	Conclusion

Option 1 is easier as it is easier to write a thesis / conclusion. This is because you don't need to try and explain why you are choosing one particular side as you have clearly shown already from your body paragraphs that there are more advantages.

Option 1

Air transport is increasingly used to export fruit and vegetables to countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season.

Do the benefits of this trend outweigh the drawbacks?

OR

Do you think this has more positive or negative effects?

With the growth in aviation, many countries now choose this mode of transport to export food such as fruit and vegetables to places where they are not in season or cannot be grown. I would argue that this has more positive than negative effects.

The first positive effect is that it helps local farmers in poorer countries. This is because they may be able to improve their income and standard of living when they can sell their produce to faraway foreign markets rather than only producing staple crops for local markets or their own consumption. This is not possible with exports by land or seas as items such as vegetables and fruit will perish before they reach their destination.

In addition, it will benefit the people who are receiving the produce. People in the countries that receive the food have the opportunity to try a variety of vegetables and new exotic fruits that they would not otherwise be able to sample. Not only this, the costs will reduce for customers as the food can be bought in bulk by big supermarkets, thus keeping prices low.

However, a negative side to this development is the impact that this has on the environment. One of the biggest problems in the world today is global warming, and transporting millions of tonnes of food every day by air will add significantly to this problem as just one flight releases large amounts of carbon dioxide and other gases into the environment.

On balance, therefore, I believe that the advantages of exporting fruits and vegetables by air outweigh the disadvantages. This trend should be encouraged so that countries around the world can continue to enjoy the benefits of the development.

(284 words)

Unit Summary

As you can see with these opinion essays, they are all fairly similar and can be based around the same brainstorming ideas. They basically need to you consider two sides of an issue (or one side if you 100% agree/disagree in this type of essay).

Although there are slight differences in the way you need to organize them, don't get overly worried about whether your opinion should be in the introduction, conclusion or both. Any will be ok as long as it is very clear what your opinion is, and that your essay supports the opinion you have given.

It is a good idea to put your opinion in the introduction so the examiner can see from the start what your position is and then can follow this within the essay, but it is not a requirement to do this.

You need to look through the possible essay organizations and practice them using some essay questions. Then decide which organization you are most comfortable with.

Links

Here are some links to other sample opinion essays. Take a look at them and decide what organisational pattern they follow:

[Agree / Disagree – Human Cloning](#)

[Agree / Disagree – Social Interaction and the Internet](#)

[Agree / Disagree – Free University Education](#)

[Agree / Disagree – Scientific Research](#)

[Agree / Disagree – Banning Smoking](#)

[Discuss Two Opinions – University Education](#)

[Discuss Two Opinions – Reducing Crime](#)

UNIT 10: Coherence and Cohesion

Coherence

Your essay will be assessed for its coherence. This refers to the linking of ideas through logical ordering and grouping of sentences. Your writing will be assessed as coherent if there is evidence of the following:

- sentences and ideas that flow well and are easy to read;
- sentences that lead into each other in a logical way; and
- sentences that are grouped into logical paragraphs.

Your arguments will also need to be presented in a clear way, so that they are convincing and coherent. This is best done by the use of paragraphing.

It is not necessary to say much more about coherence here as this has been discussed in the previous units. If you follow what you have been told so far in this book, then you will have a coherent essay. To summarise though, you will need to make sure you have the following:

<i>An introduction</i>	Introduce the topic and give a summary of the main points / your opinion in your essay. In IELTS, only a very short introduction is necessary.
<i>Body paragraphs</i>	<p>You should have two or three body paragraphs after the introduction.</p> <p>Each should deal with one main point. Begin each paragraph with a summary sentence - a sentence which contains the main point of the paragraph.</p> <p>Continue the paragraph by giving more information about the main point. This supporting information will include explanations, examples, reasons or additional details.</p>
<i>A concluding paragraph</i>	<p>Conclude the essay by summarizing your main points. To help round off the essay, the paragraph should also make a final, general comment about the topic.</p> <p>Again, in IELTS, only a very short concluding paragraph is needed.</p>

Cohesion

You will also get marked on your essay's cohesion. Cohesive devices are used to signal the relationship between different ideas or parts of your writing. These help someone who is reading to see how everything is connected together.

Writers use the following devices to make their writing more coherent:

1. *Referent pronouns*
2. *Synonyms and other phrases*
3. *Linking words*

First, let's look at each of these, and then we'll examine how they can be used in an essay.

There will be references made to sentence clauses, coordinating and subordinating conjunctions and transitions in this unit. This would take another eBook in itself to explain all of these and, although we'll cover some grammar points in this section, the focus of this eBook is not on grammar.

If you are unsure of what these are you can find an explanation at www.ieltsbuddy.com/ielts-grammar.html

1. Referent pronouns

A **referent** is a pronoun that refers back to a noun that was previously used in that sentence or in another sentence. Referents include:

- Personal pronouns: *I, you, he, she, it, we, they, one, them.*

Global warming is now top of the agenda for most governments. However, *they* are unlikely to take the steps necessary to tackle ***it***.

- Demonstrative pronouns: *this, that, these, those.*

*These days, it is often the case that ***children are neglected***. ***This*** may be because of the fact that many parents in cities now both have to work so are often not around to give their children support when needed..*

- Possessive adjectives: *my, your, his, her, their, one's, its, our.*

Parents also have to take more responsibility for ***their*** children's actions.

Exercise 1

Now take a look at the following paragraph. The referent pronouns have been highlighted / underlined. In the space below, identify which nouns they refer back to.

There are several reasons for the increase in youth crime. The first reason is connected with the family. In order for a child to grow up in a balanced way, it is very important that **he or she** is nurtured well by **his or her** parents. However, these days, it is often the case that children are neglected. **This** may be because of the fact that many parents in cities now both have to work so **they** are often not around to give **their** children support when needed. Another factor is the increasing levels of poverty around the world. We have seen with globalization the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, and **this** inevitably means that **those** who are poorer will have to resort to illegal means to get what others have. Of course, **this** will include the children in the poorer families.

1. **he or she**
2. **his or her**
3. **This**
4. **they**
5. **their**
6. **this**
7. **those**
8. **this**

Answers on page 100

2. Synonyms and Other Phrases

Synonyms are an important way to avoid repetition in your writing and to show that you have an extended range of vocabulary. They also stop you from depending too much on conjunctions and transitions to connect your ideas and sentences.

They are words or phrases that have the same or similar meaning as other words or phrases. Using them will improve the cohesion and the quality of your writing.

Here are some examples:

*The **problems** arising from teenage crime are affecting people living in certain neighbourhoods. These **issues** need to be tackled.*

The staff has made various recommendations to improve the curriculum. They are hoping their suggestions will be implemented.

There has been a large increase in health related diseases amongst children, especially diabetes. This debilitating illness means a child has to be injected with insulin for the rest of their life.

Secondly, setting up community projects to help foster more community spirit and help keep young people off the street is a good idea. For example, youth clubs or evening classes for teenagers would keep them occupied.

Preserving certain old buildings is important for several reasons. Firstly, these structures provide an insight into the history of our countries, showing us how people many centuries ago lived their lives.

Exercise 2

Have a look at the following sentences and identify which phrase or synonym is used to replace the words in red / underlined in the following sentence. Write it in the space below.

1. Taking drug companies as an example, governments usually require rigorous trials for new medicines that can take many years.

.....

2. The arts such as theatre and dance need a lot of money to operate. If they don't have the necessary funds, they may have to close.

.....

3. Traffic congestion in many cities around the world is severe. One possible solution to this problem is to impose heavy taxes on car drivers and use this money to make public transport better. This essay will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of such a measure.

.....

4. I believe that it is very important to protect and preserve old buildings as we can learn about our history as can others from other countries. Such knowledge can also help us to understand how to modernize our countries in the best way.

.....

Answers on page 100

Here is another important point about synonyms. You have to be very careful how you use them. You often cannot simply look up a synonym and replace it with the other word.

Although the word may have the same or similar meaning, it may not fit grammatically into the sentence in the same way so you will need to look at some example sentences to check how it is used.

In addition, some synonyms that are given to you in books or on the internet have a slightly different meaning or connotation to the other word, so you may not be able to use it without changing the meaning of what you are saying.

So always check new vocabulary carefully before using it.

3. Linking words

When we talk about *linking words* we are referring to words that show how ideas within and between sentences are related. These also give coherency to your writing.

The two types of linking words are *conjunctions* and *transitions*.

Examples of conjunctions:

*Children are eating more junk food, **so** obesity is becoming a major problem.*

***Although** the government is promoting healthy living, illnesses are increasing.*

*Obesity is becoming a major problem **because** children are eating more junk food.*

There are many types of conjunctions with different purposes so there is not the space to cover them all here, but we'll look at some of the most important ones that you will use in your writing.

You can find a full list of all the type of conjunctions used in adverbial clauses here:

www.ieltsbuddy.com/adverbial-clauses.html

Transitions usually start the sentence and are followed by a comma. Examples of transitions:

*More children are getting diseases. **For example**, since 1996 the number of people diagnosed with diabetes has increased from 1.4 million to 2.9 million.*

*Children are eating more junk food. **As a result**, obesity is becoming a major problem.*

*The government is trying to promote healthy living. **However**, children still eat far too much junk food.*

Here is a list of common transitions:

COMMON TRANSITION WORDS

<p>Listing Points to Show New Ideas:</p> <p>Firstly, First of all, To begin, Secondly, Finally, Furthermore, In addition, Also, Moreover,</p>	<p>Showing an Example:</p> <p>For example, For instance, To illustrate, A case in point,</p>
<p>Showing Contrast:</p> <p>However, On the other hand, In contrast,</p>	<p>Showing a Result:</p> <p>Therefore, As a result, Consequently, Thus,</p>
<p>Showing time: (commonly in essay introductions)</p> <p>These days, Nowadays, At present,</p>	<p>To introduce concluding comments:</p> <p>To conclude, In conclusion, In brief, All in all,</p>

Reasons and Results

We use linking words to show reasons and results (or cause-effect) relationships. It is very common to discuss how one thing leads to another in essays because the question usually means that you have to give explanations as to why something is occurring.

Therefore you should ensure you know how to use this language.

REASON	Transition / Linking Phrase	RESULT
Children are eating more unhealthy food.	<p><i>Therefore,</i> <i>As a consequence,</i> <i>Consequently,</i> <i>As a result,</i> <i>Hence,</i> <i>Thus,</i> <i>Because of this,</i> <i>For this reason,</i></p>	obesity is becoming a major problem.
RESULT	Subordinating Conjunction	REASON
Obesity is becoming a major problem.	<p><i>as</i> <i>since</i> <i>because</i></p>	children are eating more unhealthy food.
Subordinating Conjunction	REASON	RESULT
<p><i>As</i> <i>Since</i> <i>Because</i></p>	children are eating more unhealthy food,	obesity is becoming a major problem.

Verbs can also be used to show cause-effect relationships. If the result is placed first, then the passive is used.

REASON	Verb (active)	RESULT
A high consumption of fast foods	<p><i>leads to</i> <i>results in</i> <i>causes</i></p>	obesity in children.
RESULT	Verb (passive)	REASON
Obesity in children	<p><i>is a result of</i> <i>is a consequence of</i> <i>is caused by</i></p>	a high consumption of fast foods

Exercise 3

Choose which word to place in the gap, or if there are two gaps, choose which two words you would use:

1. Historic buildings are important to our culture. , they should be preserved. (*For this reason / Since / Leads to*)
2. AID stigmatises developing countries, other methods should be used. (*Consequently / Since / Therefore*)
3. Deforestation is a serious problem it flooding and landslides. (*leads to / because / caused by*)
4. Diabetes can be an unhealthy diet. (*as / a result of / a cause of*)
5. Corporal punishment should be allowed in schoolsit helps to control children's behaviour. (*results in / as / thus*)

Answers on page 100

Contrast

You will also need to show how things contrast when you write an IELTS essay, or indeed graphs in Task 1. Often we are contrasting positive and negative points.

Look at these sentences. How could you join them to make the ideas coherent?

Genetically modified crops could increase food supplies. People are concerned how they may affect health.

You could use a coordinating conjunction:

*Genetically modified crops could increase food supplies, **but** people are concerned about how they may affect health.*

You could use a subordinating conjunction:

***Although** genetically modified crops could increase food supplies, people are concerned about how they may affect health.*

Or a transition:

*Genetically modified crops could increase food supplies. **However**, people are concerned about how they may affect health.*

Here are some common examples:

Coordinating Conjunction		
GM crops are grown widely in the US,	<i>but</i> <i>yet</i>	they are less common in Europe.
Subordinating Conjunction		
GM crops are grown widely in the US	<i>although</i> <i>though</i> <i>while</i>	they are less common in Europe.
Subordinating Conjunction		
<i>Although</i> <i>Though</i> <i>While</i>	(they are) less common in Europe,	GM crops are grown widely in the US,
Transition / Linking Phrase		
GM crops are grown widely in the US.	<i>However,</i> <i>By / In comparison,</i> <i>Nevertheless,</i> <i>On the other hand,</i>	they are less common in Europe.

Exercise 4

1. Having a smaller family is now common in many countries, some cultures still view a larger family as more viable. (*however / yet / although*)
2. Single parent households are now commonplace in the West., they are much more unusual in Asian countries. (*On the other hand / But / Though*)
3. the age that people can legally drink alcohol has increased to 18, the age that people can smoke has remained the same. (*Although / Nevertheless / But*)

Answers on page 101

Important: Please note that the purpose of these exercises on cohesion is to help you become aware of the types of things the examiner is looking at when he/she gives you a score. There are lots of different transitions and conjunctions you can use so you should try to study these further on your own or with a teacher so you have a good understanding of them and a range of vocabulary and sentence structures to use.

Examples of coherency and cohesion in an essay

Now we'll have a look at a full essay with some examples of how some of the devices from this chapter have been used.

Take a look at this question and then the model answer.

Smoking not only harms the smoker, but also those who are nearby.
Therefore, smoking should be banned in public places.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Medical studies have shown that smoking not only leads to health problems for the smoker, but also for people close by. As a result of this, many believe that smoking should not be allowed in public places. Although there are arguments on both sides, I strongly agree that a ban is the most appropriate course of action.

Opponents of such a ban argue against it for several reasons. Firstly, they say that passive smokers make the choice to breathe in other people's smoke by going to places where it is allowed. If they would prefer not to smoke passively, then they do not need to visit places where smoking is permitted. In addition, critics believe a ban would possibly drive many bars and pubs out of business as smokers would not go there anymore. They also argue it is a matter of freedom of choice. Smoking is not against the law, so individuals should have the liberty to smoke where they wish.

However, there are more convincing arguments in favour of a ban. First and foremost, it has been proven that tobacco consists of carcinogenic compounds which cause serious harm to a person's health, not only the smoker. Anyone around them can develop cancers of the lungs, mouth and throat, and other sites in the body. It is simply not fair to impose this upon another person. It is also the case that people's health is more important than businesses. In any case, pubs and restaurants could adapt to a ban by, for example, allowing smoking areas.

In conclusion, it is clear that it should be made illegal to smoke in public places. This would improve the health of thousands of people, and that is most definitely a positive development.

Practice

Now, before you look at the essay on the next page, go through and highlight the (1) *transitions* (2) *conjunctions (subordinating and coordinating)* (2) *pronouns* and (3) *synonyms*.

When you have done this, look at the essay and examine how the whole essay has coherency in terms of an *introduction*, *body paragraphs*, *topic sentences*, and a *conclusion*.

Model answer showing examples of cohesive devices within the essay

Red (Bold) – transitions

Blue (Underlined) – Subordinating and coordinating conjunctions

Highlighted – Pronouns

Green (Italics) – Synonyms

Medical studies have shown that smoking not only leads to health problems for the smoker, but also for people close by. **As a result of this**, many believe that smoking should not be allowed in public places. Although there are arguments on both sides, I strongly agree that a ban is the most appropriate course of action.

Opponents of such a ban argue against it for several reasons. **Firstly**, they say that passive smokers make the choice to breathe in other *people*'s smoke by going to places where **it** is *allowed*. If **they** would prefer not to smoke passively, then **they** do not need to visit places where smoking is *permitted*. **In addition**, *critics* believe a ban would possibly drive many bars and pubs out of business as smokers would not go **there** anymore. **They** **also** argue it is a matter of *freedom* of choice. Smoking is not against the law, so *individuals* should have the *liberty* to smoke where they wish.

However, there are more convincing arguments in favour of a ban. **First and foremost**, it has been proven that tobacco consists of carcinogenic compounds which cause serious harm to a person's health, not only the smoker. Anyone around **them** can develop cancers of the lungs, mouth and throat, and other sites in the body. It is simply not fair to impose **this** upon another person. It is **also** the case that people's health is more important than businesses. **In any case**, pubs and restaurants could adapt to a *ban* by, **for example**, allowing smoking areas.

In conclusion, it is clear that it should be *made illegal* to smoke in public places. This would improve the health of thousands of people, and that is most definitely a positive development.

In case you are unsure, these are the synonyms:

- *opponents / critics*
- *people / individuals*
- *allowed / permitted*
- *freedom / liberty*
- *ban / make illegal*

Coherency in the overall structure

Introduction

(TOPIC IS INTRODUCED) Medical studies have shown that smoking not only leads to health problems for the smoker, but also for people close by. As a result of this, many believe that smoking should not be allowed in public places. **(THESIS IS GIVEN)** Although there are arguments on both sides, I strongly agree that a ban is the most appropriate course of action.

First body paragraph

(TOPIC SENTENCE) Opponents of such a ban argue against it for several reasons. Firstly, they say that passive smokers make the choice to breathe in other people's smoke by going to places where it is allowed. If they would prefer not to smoke passively, then they do not need to visit places where smoking is permitted. In addition, critics believe a ban would possibly drive many bars and pubs out of business as smokers would not go there anymore. They also argue it is a matter of freedom of choice. Smoking is not against the law, so individuals should have the liberty to smoke where they wish.

Paragraph has 3 clear ideas which support the topic sentence and relate to the question

Second body paragraph

(TOPIC SENTENCE + TRANSITION CLARIFYING IT IS THE OPPOSING ARGUMENT) However, there are more convincing arguments in favour of a ban. First and foremost, it has been proven that tobacco consists of carcinogenic compounds which cause serious harm to a person's health, not only the smoker. Anyone around them can develop cancers of the lungs, mouth and throat, and other sites in the body. It is simply not fair to impose this upon another person. It is also the case that people's health is more important than businesses. In any case, pubs and restaurants could adapt to a ban by, for example, allowing smoking areas.

Paragraph has 3 clear ideas which support the topic sentence and relate to the question

Conclusion

(TRANSITION MAKES IT CLEAR THE ESSAY IS ENDING) In conclusion, it is clear that it should be made illegal to smoke in public places. This would improve the health of thousands of people, and that is most definitely a positive development.

Unit Summary

This unit has explained how to ensure that you have coherence and cohesion in your writing.

This counts for 25% of your writing grade so it is important.

By following the guidelines in this unit and the previous units of the eBook you will have a coherent and cohesive essay.

The important thing is that you understand how to **structure a whole essay** and that you know how to use transitions and conjunctions to **link ideas within your essay**.

You can find further information in this link about [how to use transitions and vary them in your writing](#).

You can also learn more about [pronouns and practice using them](#).

ANSWER KEYS

Unit 2 Answers

Exercise 1

1	<p>In many countries the proportion of older people is increasing. Could this have more positive or negative effects on society?</p>
Facts	<i>In many countries the proportion of older people is increasing.</i>
Opinions	<i>None</i>
Task	<i>Could this have more positive or negative effects on society?</i>

2	<p>The best way to help developing countries is to give them financial aid.</p> <p>Write an essay either agreeing or disagreeing with this statement.</p> <p>Suggest alternatives to this policy.</p>
Facts	<i>None</i>
Opinions	<i>The best way to help developing countries is to give them financial aid.</i>
Task	<p><i>1) Write an essay either agreeing or disagreeing with this statement.</i></p> <p><i>2) Suggest alternatives to this policy.</i></p>

3	<p>Smoking is a habit that claims many lives and is a great drain on health services. One way to combat smoking would be to make it illegal.</p> <p>What are the pros and cons of such a government policy? What alternative strategies can you suggest to combat smoking?</p>
Facts	<i>Smoking is a habit that claims many lives and is a great drain on health services.</i>
Opinions	<i>One way to combat smoking would be to make it illegal.</i>
Task	<p><i>1) What are the pros and cons of such a government policy?</i></p> <p><i>2) What alternative strategies can you suggest to combat smoking?</i></p>

4	<p>Air transport is increasingly used to transport fruit and vegetables to other countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season. Some people say this is good but others believe the use of air transport for this purpose is not justified.</p> <p>Discuss both views and give your opinion.</p>
Facts	<i>Air transport is increasingly used to transport fruit and vegetables to other countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season.</i>
Opinions	<i>Some people say this is good but others believe the use of air transport for this purpose is not justified.</i>
Task	<p>1) Discuss <i>both</i> views</p> <p>2) Give your opinion.</p>

5	<p>The crime rate among teenagers has increased dramatically in many countries.</p> <p>Discuss some possible reasons for this increase and suggest solutions.</p>
Facts	<i>The crime rate among teenagers has increased dramatically in many countries.</i>
Opinions	<i>None</i>
Task	<p>1) Discuss some possible reasons for this increase</p> <p>2) Suggest solutions.</p>

6	<p>In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong while others consider it as valuable work experience.</p> <p>Discuss both views and give your opinion.</p>
Facts	<i>In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work.</i>
Opinions	<i>Some people regard this as completely wrong while others consider it as valuable work experience.</i>
Task	<p>3) Discuss <i>both</i> views</p> <p>4) Give your opinion.</p>

Unit 3 Answers

Exercise 1 – Analysing essay questions and developing focus questions

Don't worry if you have some slightly different answers for the topic and detail, or if your focus questions are slightly different. It is not a science – you may have viewed it in a slightly different way.

This does not matter as long as you can see from these answers that you understood the key points you need to discuss, identified the task (i.e. what you need to write about) and can see that you will be discussing the relevant issues to answer the question.

-
1. The best way to help developing countries is to give them financial aid. Write an essay either agreeing or disagreeing with this statement. Suggest alternatives to this policy.

Topic: *Financial Aid*

Other detail / narrowing down of topic: *The best way; Developing countries*

The task:

- *Agree or disagree*
- *Suggest alternatives*

Focus Questions:

- *Is giving financial aid to developing countries the best way to help them?*
- *What are other alternatives?*

-
2. The crime rate among teenagers has increased dramatically in many countries. Discuss some possible reasons for this increase and suggest solutions.

Topic: *Crime*

Other detail / narrowing down of topic: *Increased dramatically; Teenagers*

The task:

- *reasons*
- *solutions*

Focus Questions:

- *Why has teenage crime increased?*
- *What are some solutions to teenage crime?*

3. Air transport is increasingly used to transport fruit and vegetables to other countries where they cannot be grown or are out of season. Some people say this is good but others believe the use of air transport for this purpose is not justified. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Topic: *Air Transport*

Other detail / narrowing down of topic: *Fruit and vegetables; Cannot be grown/out of season; good / not justified*

The task:

- *Discuss **both** views*
- *Give your opinion*

Focus Questions:

- *What are the advantages of using air to export fruit and vegetables to other countries?*
 - *What are the disadvantages of using air to export fruit and vegetables to other countries?*
-

4. Smoking is a habit that claims many lives and is a great drain on health services. One way to combat smoking would be to make it illegal. What are the pros and cons of such a government policy? What alternative strategies can you suggest to combat smoking?

Topic: *Smoking*

Other detail / narrowing down of topic: *Claims lives; costs money; make it illegal*

The task:

- *Pros*
- *Cons*
- *Alternatives*

Focus Questions:

- *What are the advantages of making smoking illegal?*
 - *What are the disadvantages of making smoking illegal?*
 - *What other solutions are there to stop smoking?*
-

5. In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong while others consider it as valuable work experience. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Topic: *Child labour*

Other detail / narrowing down of topic: *Completely wrong; valuable work experience*

The task:

- *Discuss both views*
- *Give your opinion*

Focus Questions:

- *Why is letting children work wrong? Or What are the disadvantages of letting children work?*
 - *Why is it valuable work experience? Or What are the benefits of the work experience gained?*
-

Unit 5 Answers

Exercises 1 and 2 - Introductions and Conclusions

Sample Answers

Remember that these sample answers are just to give you a rough guide as to the mix of responses you could develop. In reality, what you write will obviously be influenced by the ideas you brainstorm and the opinion that you develop subsequent to this.

1. *As global trade increases, many goods, including those we use on a daily basis, are produced in other countries and have to be transported long distances.*

Do the benefits of this trend outweigh the drawbacks?

Introduction

There has been a significant increase in global trade over recent decades and this has meant that goods that we consume each day are often transported over long distances. Although this trend has drawbacks, I believe that overall this is a positive development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that the advantages of increased trade across international borders outweighs the negative effects. I would hope that further improvements in transport in the future will enable more people around the world to enjoy the benefits of access to goods from around the world.

2. *In many countries, children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong while others consider it as valuable work experience.*

Discuss both opinions and give your opinion.

Introduction

It is common these days to find children in some form of paid employment in many countries around the world. Although some people view this as potentially providing valuable experience for adult working-life, I believe that it is wrong for children to be working as they should be in education.

Conclusion

To sum up, children should not be working when they are under the age of sixteen. Governments must take steps to legislate against this practice and ensure that children are at school receiving a good education.

3. *Unpaid community service should be a compulsory part of high school programs (for example, working for a charity, improving the neighbourhood, or teaching sports to younger children).*

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Introduction

Some high schools now insist that their students engage in some form of voluntary community service, such as charity work, neighbourhood improvement, or sports tuition to young children. Although this may be beneficial, I do not believe that this should be compulsory for all students.

Conclusion

In brief, making community service compulsory at high school will not necessarily benefit every student so it should be an optional program. Schools must continue to develop a broad range of programs that will meet the specific needs of each of its pupils.

UNIT 8 Answers

1. Advantages and disadvantages
2. Agree or disagree
3. Causes and solutions
4. Discuss two opinions (and your opinion)
5. Advantages and disadvantages
6. Agree or disagree
7. Problems and solutions
8. Causes and solutions
9. Causes and effects
10. Discuss two opinions (and your opinion)
11. Advantages and disadvantages and solutions
12. Other - this is asking for your opinion, so you need to give reasons – so if you think it is important to concentrate on the future you would state this and give reasons why and also explain why the present is as important / less important. So maybe a paragraph on each side.
13. Other – in the first part you need to give causes (reasons) and then secondly simply explain things we need to achieve happiness e.g. happy family life.
14. Causes and effects
15. Solutions
16. Advantages and disadvantages
17. Causes and solutions
18. Discuss two opinions (and your opinion)

Unit 10 Answers

Exercise 1

1. **he or she** a child
2. **his or her** a child
3. **This** children are neglected
4. **they** parents
5. **their** parents
6. **this** the rich get richer and the poor get poorer
7. **those** people (who are poorer)
8. **this** (poorer will have to) resort to illegal means to get what others have

Exercise 2

5. Taking **drug** companies as an example, governments usually require rigorous trials for new **medicines** that can take many years.
6. The arts such as theatre and dance need a lot of **money** to operate. If they don't have the necessary **funds**, they may have to close.
7. Traffic congestion in many cities around the world is severe. **One possible solution** to this problem is to impose heavy taxes on car drivers and use this money to make public transport better. This essay will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of **such a measure**.
8. I believe that it is very important to protect and preserve old buildings as we can **learn about our history** as can others from other countries. **Such knowledge** can also help us to understand how to modernize our countries in the best way.

Exercise 3

1. Historic buildings are important to our culture. **For this reason**, they should be preserved.

'since' does not fit grammatically here. 'Leads to' is not used to give reasons and it is a verb so it cannot fit here.

2. **Since** financial AID stigmatises developing countries, it should not continue.

'Consequently' and 'therefore' give results, not reasons, and they do not fit grammatically.

3. Deforestation is a serious problem **because** it **leads to** flooding and landslides.

'Caused by' does not have the right meaning or grammar to fit in either of the spaces.

4. Diabetes can be **a result of** an unhealthy diet.

'As' is a subordinating conjunction to join clause and 'cause of' cannot be used as it would need to be 'caused by' to be correct.

5. Corporal punishment should be allowed in schools **as** it helps to control children's behaviour.

'As' needs to be used as the word in the gap is introducing a reason.

Exercise 4

1. Having a smaller family is now common in many countries, **yet** some cultures still view a larger family as more viable. (however / yet / although)

'However' is followed by a semi-colon or full-stop and 'although' does not have a comma before it

2. Single parent households are now commonplace in the West. **On the other hand**, they are much more unusual in Asian countries. (On the other hand / But / Though)

We don't normally start sentences with 'but' in academic writing and 'though' would not have a full-stop before it as it is joining the clauses.

3. **Although** the age that people can legally drink alcohol has increased to 18, the age that people can smoke has remained the same. (Although / Nevertheless / But)

A subordinating clause is being used to a subordinating conjunction is needed.