

WRITING TASKS 1 & 2

IELTS

**Academic & General
Covers All Common
Task Types**

About the author

I have been teaching English as a second language for over twenty years, in Taiwan and Australia, in language centres and universities. I have also been working as an IELTS examiner. My area of specialization is teaching students how to pass the IELTS exam. I particularly enjoy teaching IELTS because I find it challenging to teach students the necessary skills and strategies that they need to pass, and I also find that my students are highly motivated – this is a joy for a teacher!

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank those responsible for their help in completing this book. I sincerely thank Phil Biggerton for his time editing this book. I would also like to thank some of my faithful students, Nhi Phan, Andrey Polyakov, and Maria Gvozdeva, for providing valuable feedback on this book. Thanks to all my past students as well, for giving me the inspiration and desire to write this book.

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Contents

1. Introduction to the IELTS Writing test.....	5
2. Task 1: Academic Reports	8
2.1. Overview	9
2.2. Single time (static) task.....	13
2.3. Change over time task	32
2.4. Process diagram or flow chart	50
2.5. Map or floor plan.....	61
2.6. Common errors.....	80
3. Task 1 General: Letters	81
3.1. Overview	82
3.2. Parts of letters	85
3.3. Types of letters	88
3.4. Requesting information	91
3.5. Giving information.....	94
3.6. Making a complaint:	97
3.7. Making an apology	100
3.8. Thanking someone	103
3.9. Useful language for letters	106
3.10. Common errors.....	107
4. Task 2: Essay Writing	116
4.1. Overview	117
4.2. Opinion essay	121
4.3. Both sides and opinion essay.....	137
4.4. Two question essay	152
4.5. Improving your score.....	163

4.6. Improving grammar	175
4.7. Vocabulary for common topics.....	181

1. Introduction to the IELTS Writing test

For the writing test, you are given one hour to complete two written tasks. The key difference between the two versions of the test is for Task 1. For the General Test, you are required to write a letter, whereas for the Academic Test you are required to write a report. Task 2 is essentially the same for both versions of the test, but for any given test day there will be separate tasks for each version of the test. If you have the option, it is most likely better to take the General Test because preparing for a letter is much easier than preparing how to write reports for the wide range of visual information that occur in the tests.

	General	Academic
Task 1	Minimum 150 words. Write a formal semi-formal or informal letter in response to a situation.	Minimum 150 words. Write a formal report to interpret, describe, or compare information
Task 2	Minimum 250 words. Write a formal style essay on a given topic in response to a given question.	

The three biggest mistakes when taking the IELTS writing exam

I have graded thousands of papers for the IELTS exam. The purpose of this article is to tell you the three major mistakes that candidates keep making in order that you may avoid them.

The first problem is poor time management. About 30% of my students who write IELTS exams under timed conditions fail to complete both Task 1 and Task 2. In this case, their score for Task Response (one of the four grading criteria) is reduced, and to make matters worse their score is penalized for being under length. Therefore, this is like a double penalty and so you should make sure you can write sufficient words for both tasks by controlling your time. This means 150 words for Task 1 and 250 words for Task 2.

The second problem is rushing to start the task without properly reading the question.

Again, also about 30% of my students will write an essay that is off-topic, which again not only lowers their score for Task Response but also makes it difficult to score well in the grading category of Cohesion and Coherence because often the essay does not make sense to the reader who is looking for a response to the question. A common example of this is with a question like “to what extent do you agree or disagree.” This requires YOUR opinion, and therefore saying things like “some people believe that...” is off-topic, unless you state whether you agree with them or not.

The final issue is the frequency of errors. Try to allow time to proofread what you have written. In order to get above a six for vocabulary, you may only produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and word formation. The biggest error is the singular/plural form of words, so always check your nouns and verbs to see if they should have an “s” ending. For a grammar score of 7, you must produce frequent error-free sentences. The most common errors are with articles (a, an, the), so look at each noun and think about whether it needs an article. In other words, if you can proofread your writing and cut-down the number of errors you stand a better chance of getting over the 6 hurdle for vocabulary and grammar.

How to Improve

In order to improve and score well in the exam I recommend you focus on the following aspects:

1. Learn how the test is structured and graded
2. Learn skills to improve your answers
3. Practice skills. If you want to have your essay assessed by an experienced examiner and tutor visit this page: <http://www.ieltsanswers.com/writing-correction-ielts.html>
4. Do lots of practice tests.
5. Receive feedback on practice tests
6. Use the feedback to improve your answers



2. Task 1: Academic Reports



2.1. Overview

Writing Task 1 is designed to test your ability to write a report explaining information shown in different types of graphs and diagrams. You must present the information in your own words as complete sentences within paragraphs. You are required to write over 150 words, and the task should be completed in about 20 minutes (both part 1 and 2 must be finished in 1 hour).

Sample question:

WRITING TASK 1

how long you should spend

task introduction

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The graph below shows information about the activities that New Zealand and Australian children enjoy doing the most in 2007.

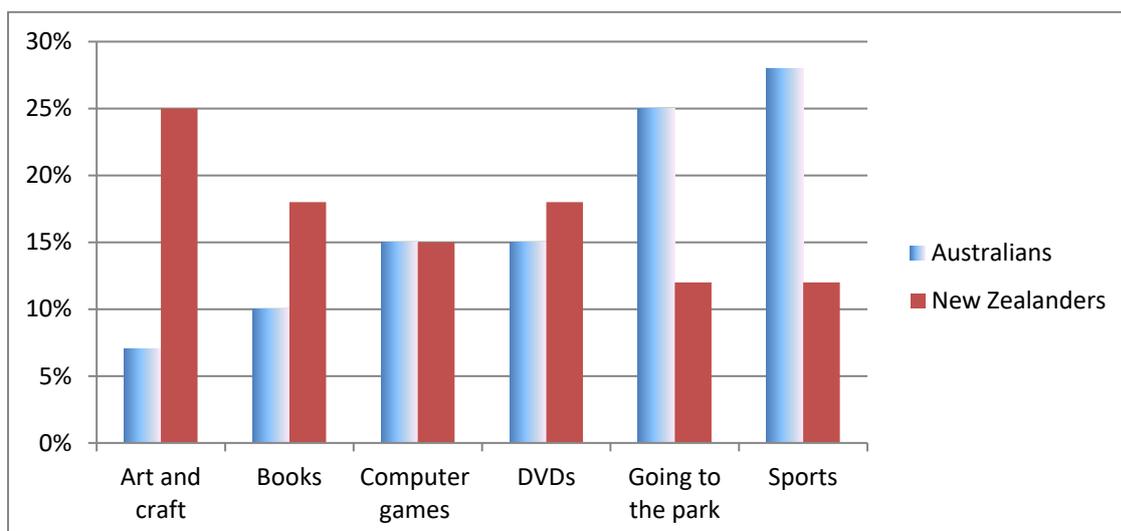
Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.

how many words you should

requirements

What Children Enjoy Doing



Grading of tasks

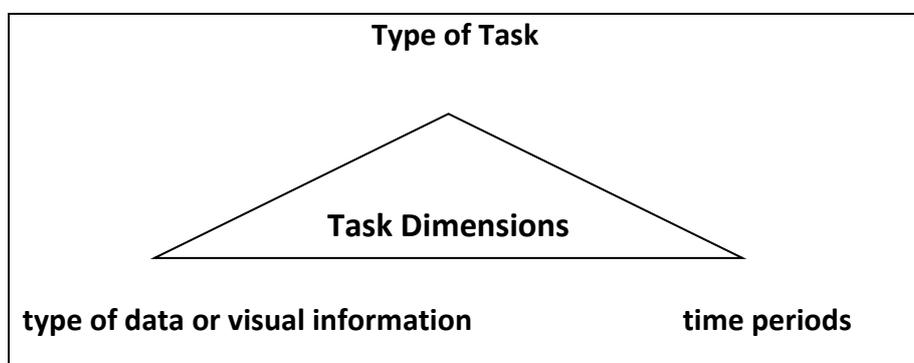
Criteria	Requirement
Task Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ write over 150 words✓ satisfy all the requirements of the task✓ introduce the task (rephrase the question)✓ give a summary of the key features✓ highlight key features
Coherence and Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ sequence information and ideas logically✓ use paragraphing appropriately✓ make sure there is a clear progression throughout✓ use a range of cohesive devices appropriately✓ avoid unnecessary repetition of information
Lexical Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ rephrase vocabulary to show your range of vocabulary✓ use adverbs and adjectives to show precision✓ use less common lexical items✓ awareness of style and collocation✓ avoid errors with word formation✓ avoid errors with spelling✓ avoid errors with word choices
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ use a mix of simple and complex sentence forms✓ produce error-free sentences✓ avoid errors with grammar and punctuation

Tip!

You will only achieve a high overall score by focusing on all four criteria for the writing exam.

Types of tasks

Task 1 of the IELTS writing exam includes different types of tasks. The most common ones are line graphs, bar graphs, pie charts, tables, process diagrams, flow charts, maps, and floor plans, which should all be looked at to be well prepared. Then, task 1 of the IELTS writing exam can be separated into different time periods. Static tasks, which are tasks that have only one time period; and change over time tasks, which have two or more different time periods. Finally, with task 1 of the IELTS writing exam, different types of language is needed depending on whether the task consists of numbers, percentages, steps in a process, or describing a map. Therefore, there are three key dimensions of task 1 of the IELTS writing exam:

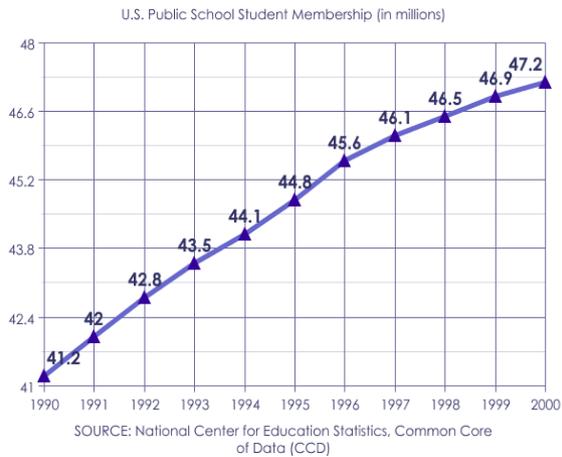


Tip!

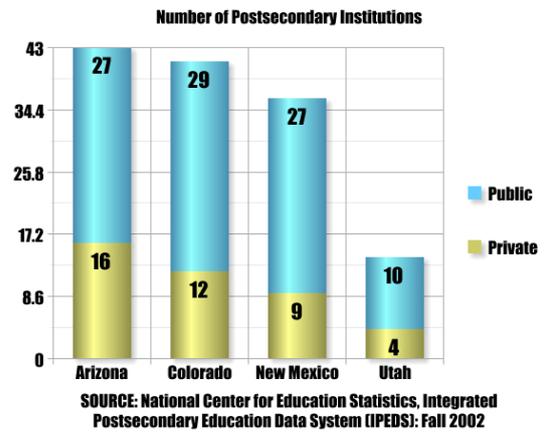
Before you start writing, make sure you are very clear about the type of task, whether the task is about numbers or percentages, and whether the task involves a single time period or many.

The names of common types of graphs and diagrams

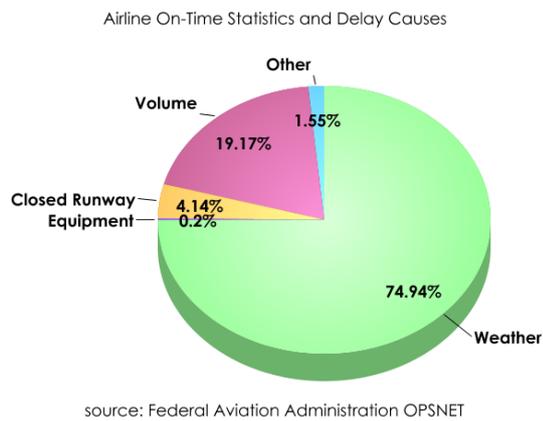
Line Graph



Bar Chart



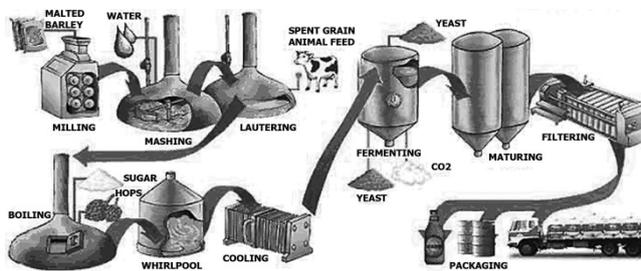
Pie Chart



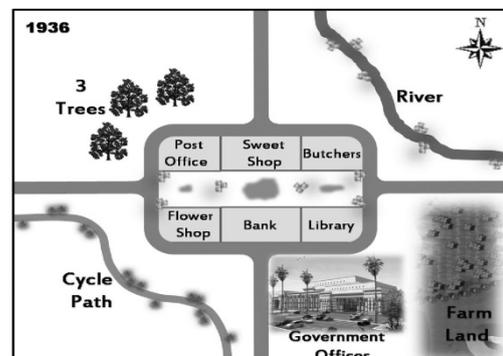
Table

Purchases	%
DVDs	5%
Books	10%
Going out	15%
Transport	15%
Food	25%

Process diagram



Map



2.2. *Single time (static) task*

Task Instructions

The IELTS static task is designed to test your ability to compare and contrast information shown in a **line graph, bar graph, pie chart, table, process diagram, or map** (the last two tasks will be covered in a separate section). You must present the information in your own words as complete sentences within paragraphs. You are required to write over 150 words, and the task should be completed in 20 minutes (both part 1 and 2 must be finished in 1 hour).

Requires:

- 1 comparison vocabulary to describe differences and similarities of data
- 2 describing numbers and percentages
- 3 past or present tense

Useful language for static tasks:

Adjectives: Comparing and contrasting

A static task requires you to compare and contrast information, and in order to achieve this, it's important to use comparatives and superlatives. The following provides guidelines on how to form comparatives and superlatives.

All one syllable words and most two syllable words that end in "y" add *er* and *est*. All other two syllables or more words need to use *more* and *most*. Refer to the chart below.

One syllable	comparative	superlative
cheap	cheaper	cheapest
large	larger	largest

Two syllables	comparative	superlative
expensive	more expensive	most expensive
modern	more modern	most modern

Note: There are also some exceptions, such as the ones below:

good better best

bad worse worst

Exercise: Comparatives and Superlatives

Complete the table with the correct comparative and superlative forms. [The answers follow this table

word	comparative	superlative
1. accurate	<i>more accurate</i>	<i>most accurate</i>
2. certain		
3. slow		
4. fast		
5. correct		
6. dangerous		
7. easy		
8. modern		
9. tiny		
10. new		
11. possible		
12. probable		
13. up-to-date		

Tip!

Use comparatives and superlatives to compare data and increase your score for task achievement. It also helps increase your score for vocabulary.

Answers: Comparatives and Superlatives

	comparative	superlative
1. accurate	more accurate	most accurate
2. certain	more certain	most certain
3. slow	slower	slowest
4. fast	faster	fastest
5. correct	more correct	most correct
6. dangerous	more dangerous	most dangerous
7. easy	easier	easiest
8. modern	more modern	most modern
9. tiny	tinnier	tinniest
10. new	newer	newest
11. possible	more possible	most possible
12. probable	more probable	most probable
13. up-to-date	more up-to-date	most up-to-date

Describing numbers and percentages

When writing your report, you must carefully identify whether the information that is given involves countable data (trees), uncountable data (water), or percentages (15%). This is because the language used with the three types is different. If you use the incorrect language the examiner will easily identify it and your vocabulary score will be lowered.

Countable numbers

The number of trees was 100.

The quantity of trees was 100.

Uncountable numbers

The amount of water used was 100 litres.

Percentages

The rate of water usage was 15 per cent.

The proportion of water usage was 15%

The water usage was fifteen per cent.

The water usage increased by 15 percent.

The percentages of water usage (15%) and power usage (16%) were about the same.

The water usage and power usage were 15% and 16%, respectively.

Exercise: Describing numbers and percentages

Circle the correct word. The answers are on the next page.

1. The number/amount of cars was over 1,000.
2. The rate/ number of electricity usage was 15 per cent.
3. The amount /percentage of power was 15%.
4. The number/amount of trains was 100.
5. The number /proportion of lamb consumed was 15 per cent.
6. The percentage/amount of lamb (15%) and chicken (16%) were about the same.
7. The number/amount of beer consumed was 100 litres.
8. The proportion/ amount of water usage and power usage were 15% and 16%, respectively.
9. The number/percentage of apples was 10 on Fridays.
10. The number/amount of oil produced was 100 litres.

Answers: Language with numbers and percentages

1. The number/amount of cars was over 1,000.
2. The rate/ number of electricity usage was 15 per cent.
3. The amount /percentage of power was 15%
4. The number/amount of trains was 100.
5. The number /proportion of lamb consumed was 15 per cent.
6. The percentage/amount of lamb (15%) and chicken (16%) were about the same.
7. The number/amount of beer consumed was 100 litres.
8. The proportion/ amount of water usage and power usage were 15% and 16%, respectively.
9. The number/ percentage of apples was 10 on Fridays.
10. The number/amount of oil produced was 100 litres.

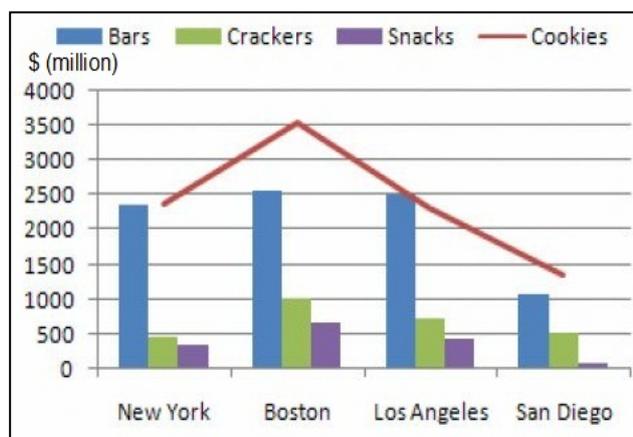
Deciding on the tense

In order to decide whether to use the past, present, or future tense you should look at the title of the chart. The title will help you determine the tense you should use:

Example 1: present tense

The chart below has no time period mentioned, so you should write it using the present tense. Note also that the words in the title: “spend monthly” is written in the present tense and it involves a reoccurring event so you should use the present simple tense.

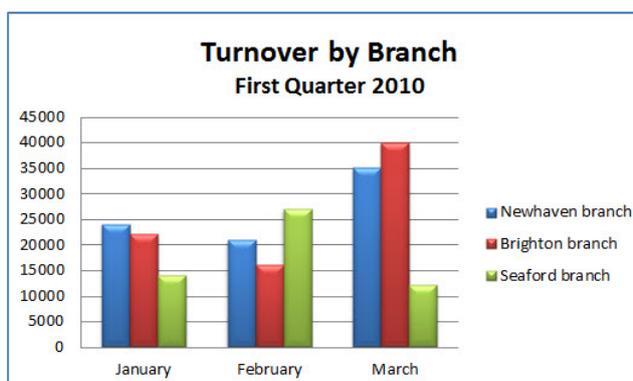
The chart below shows how much people spend monthly on four types of food in four cities.



Example 2: past tense

The time is in the past, 2010, and so you must use the past tense.

The chart below shows the sales revenue in dollars at three branches of a bank in 2010.

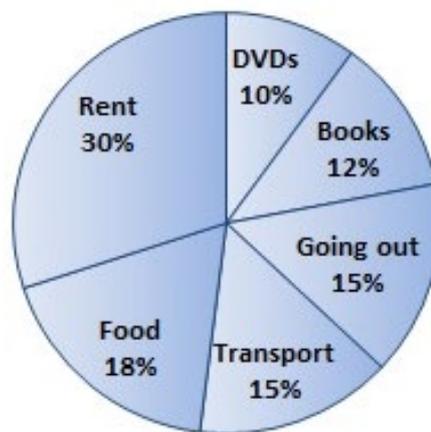


Example 3: future tense

The pie chart below refers to the future and so we'll need the future tense to describe the information in it.

(Note that I've never seen future tense required for a static task. I have only seen for a change over time task. For this reason, future tense is covered in the next section on change over time tasks).

The chart below shows a prediction of the proportion of average household expenses, in 2030, In the United Kingdom.



Structuring the task

Introduction

1. Rephrase the question
2. Give an overall summary of the task. If there is only one chart state the categories with the highest and lowest figures. If there is more than one chart, you should just state the category with the highest figure for each chart.

Body

If there is only one chart then look for a logical separation point in the chart. For instance, you could divide the data in the chart into two paragraphs, by putting the categories with the highest figures in one chart and the categories with the lowest figures in another. If there is more than one chart, you could have a paragraph to describe each chart. In this case structure the paragraphs by describing the categories from the highest to the lowest.

Note: you should not write a conclusion unless you have less than 150 words. If you need to write a conclusion, you can write a paragraph that rephrases your first paragraph to get to the required 150 word limit.

Sample static task

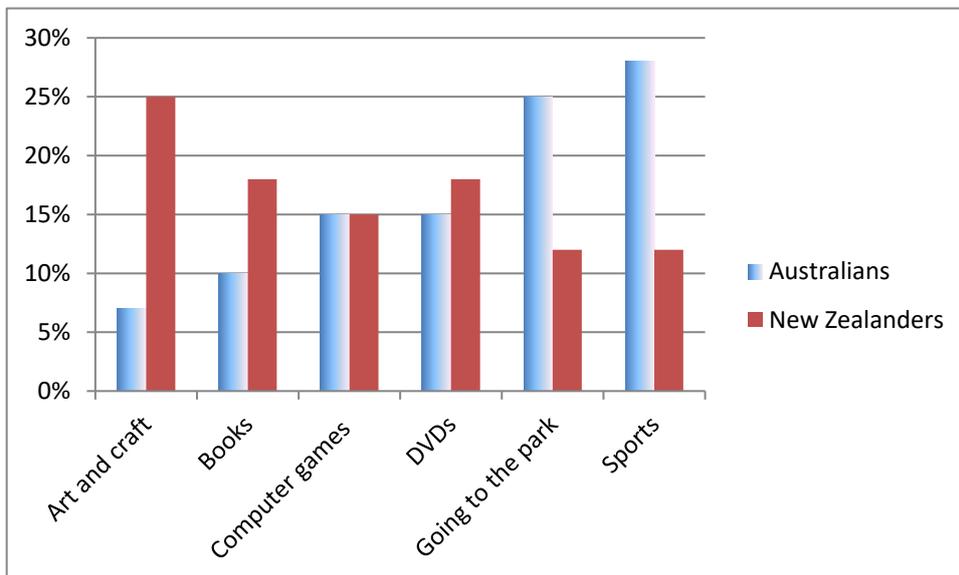
You should spend about 20 minutes on this task

The graph below shows information about the activities that Australian and New Zealand children enjoy doing the most in 2007.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words

What Children Enjoy Doing



Model answer:

The bar graph illustrates data about the favourite recreational pursuits of children in two nations in 2007. Overall, Australians were more likely to do outdoor activities, whereas New Zealanders were more involved in indoor activities.

For Australian youths, the most popular activity was doing sporting activities, which accounted for approximately 28%. Next, a quarter of Australians enjoyed visiting parks. The third most popular leisure pursuits were video games and watching movies, which both attracted 15%. The least popular activities were reading, and art and craft, which accounted for about 10% and 7 %, respectively.

Turning to the young New Zealanders, the highest proportion of young people enjoyed doing art and craft, which accounted for a quarter of them. This was followed by reading books and watching movies, which each accounted for roughly 17%. The proportion who played video games was only 15%. The least popular were trips to the park and playing sports at 13%. [155 words]

Tip!

Note that the model answer above does not include a conclusion. You are not required to write a conclusion for a task 1 report.

Steps in completing the model task:

1. Read and underline key vocabulary in the question and write words with the same or related meaning.

The graph below shows information about the activities that Australian and New Zealand

bar graph illustrates data recreational pursuits Australians New Zealanders

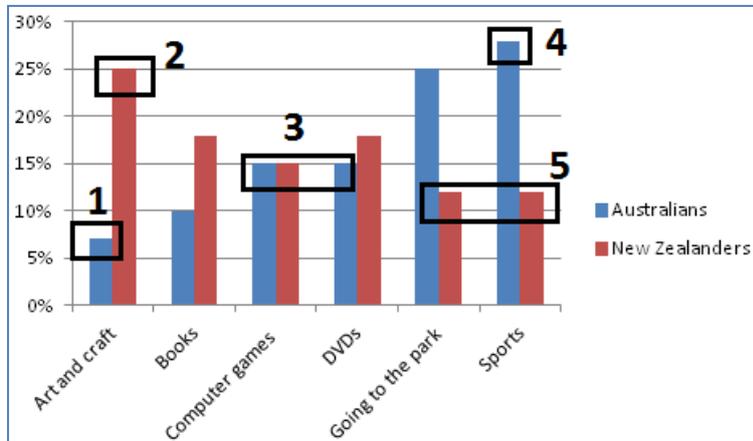
children enjoy doing the most in 2007.

youths favourite

2. Check whether the data is about percentages or numbers.

percentages

3. Brainstorm key points for the answer, look for the following:



1 = lowest % for Australians

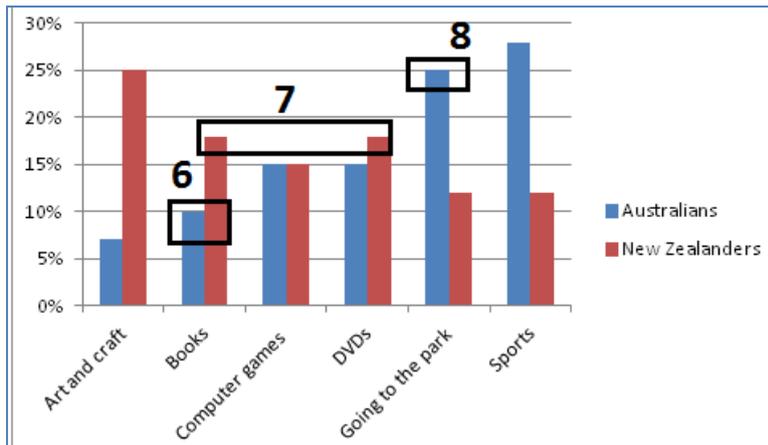
2= highest % for New Zealanders

3= same % for Australians AND same % for both nationalities for computer games

4= highest % for Australians

5=same % for New Zealanders

Below are some additional points worth mentioning.



6= the second lowest % for Australians

7= the second to highest % for New Zealanders (for two categories)

8 = the second to highest % for Australians

4. Work out the overall summary.

For this task, it could be the highest and lowest percentage for each country. But even more cleverly, it can be pointed out that Australians preferred outdoor activities and New Zealanders preferred indoor ones. This is because the top two percentages for Australians are both of the outdoor activities; and for New Zealanders, the top two percentages are for indoor activities.

5. Plan the structure of the answer (how can the data be grouped)

Introduction = rephrase of the task introduction + overall summary

Australians = highest to lowest percentages

New Zealanders = highest to lowest percentages

6. Write the task (The model answer is written above).

7. Proofread the task

Double Graph Task

Often in the IELTS Task 1 academic exam, you are given two charts. With two charts you can structure the body of your report either with a paragraph for each chart or by the categories of each chart. Each one has advantages. Structuring the essay with a paragraph about each chart is an easy structure, and you have two clear body paragraphs. You focus mostly on the highest and lowest figures of each chart and the comparison usually comes in the overall summary. It is also quicker to write.

Structuring the essay by categories of the chart allows for more comparisons to be made and can result in a better coverage of the data. It can be more difficult for the reader to see your structure if it is not written carefully. It can be harder to get logical body paragraphs and can just end in one big body paragraph. Getting logical separation of data has to be done on a case by case basis depending on the data of the particular task. For instance, a paragraph could be written about the highest proportions and another one about the lowest proportions only if the highest and lowest proportions are the same in each pie graph.

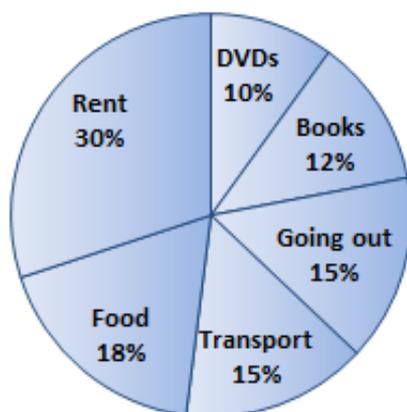
I would pick ONE way, and always use this structure, so that you have it perfected before your exam. If your goal is 7 the safest way is by pie, but if you really want to get to 8 it could be worth the risk of going by category. Examples of both ways of writing the task are given below.

Tip!

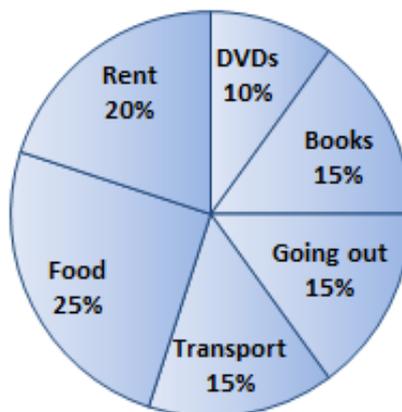
Develop habits for writing each type of task. These habits will help you speed up your writing, so you can finish on time in the exam.

The graphs below show a comparison of the weekly expenses, of the average household, in the UK and the US, in 2010.

Expenses in the UK



Expenses in the USA



Model answer by category

[In the model report written below the structure is by category. One paragraph has the categories which have a different percentage in each country, and the other paragraph has the categories which are the same in both countries.]

The pie charts compare weekly expenses of the six most common categories, in typical households, in America and United Kingdom, in 2010. Overall, it is obvious from the charts that spending on rent accounted for the largest proportion in the UK, whilst in the United States it was food. In addition, expenditures on DVDs were the lowest in both of the nations.

Looking first at the expenses that varies between countries, rent accounted for a high proportion in both countries at 30% and 20% of the weekly spending in Great Britain and the USA, respectively. Americans spent a significantly higher proportion on food and books, which accounted for 25% and 15% of their weekly expenses, respectively. However, British spent only 18% and 12% on food and books.

Turning to items that both nations spent an equal proportion on, the expenditure for transportation, going out for entertainment, and DVDs were the same proportion. People in both countries spent 15% of their weekly budget on transport and also on visiting places. The rate of spending on DVDs was slightly lower at 10%. [180 words]

Model answer by pie chart

[In the model answer below the structure is by pie charts. One paragraph describes the first pie chart and the second one describes the second pie chart.]

The pie charts compare weekly expenses of the six most common categories, in typical households, in America and United Kingdom, in 2010. Overall, it is obvious from the charts that spending on rent accounted for the largest proportion in the UK, whilst in the United States it was food. In addition, expenditures on DVDs were the lowest in both of the nations.

In Britain, the highest proportion was spent on accommodation, which accounted for 30%. Food was the second highest item of expense at 18%. The British spent exactly the same proportion on going out for entertainment and transportation [15%]. The lowest item of expenditure was DVDs at 10%.

Turning to America, groceries accounted for the highest proportion of expenditure at 25%. Transportation entertainment and reading materials each accounted for exactly fifteen per cent. As was the case in the UK, the lowest proportion was spent on DVDs, with the same percentage of 10%.

[154 words]

Steps in completing the model task above:

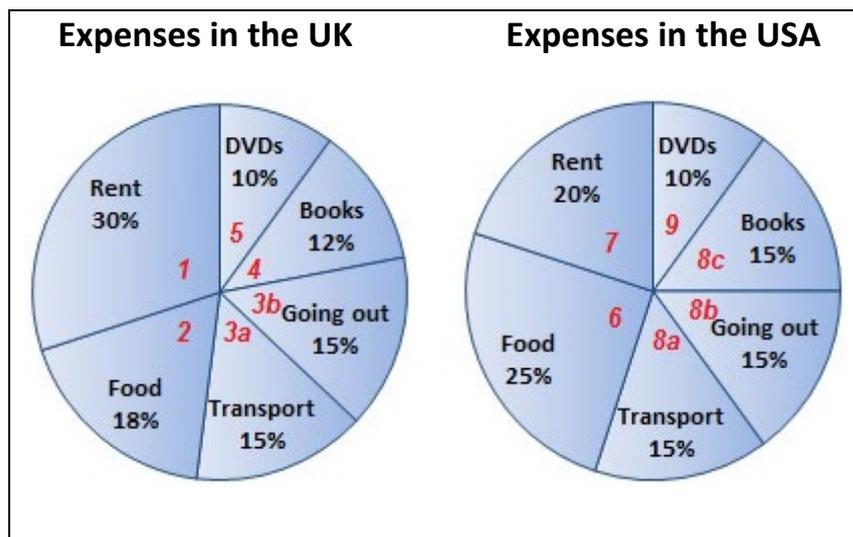
1. Read and underline key vocabulary in the question and write words with the same or related meaning.

The graphs below show a comparison of the weekly expenses in the UK and the US, in 2010.
Pie charts illustrate differences weekly spending United Kingdom America

2. Check whether the data is about percentages or numbers.

percentages

3. Brainstorm key points for the answer, look for the following:



1 = highest % for the UK

6 = highest % for the USA

2= second highest % for the UK

7= second highest % for the USA

3= same % for the UK

8= same % for the USA

4= second lowest % for the UK

9= lowest % for the USA

5= lowest % for the UK

4. Work out the overall summary.

For this task, it is best to compare the relative percentages for each country and point out the categories with the highest and lowest percentage for each nation.

5. Plan the structure of the answer (how can the data be grouped)

Introduction = rephrase of the task introduction + overall summary

UK = highest to lowest percentages

USA = highest to lowest percentages

6. Write the task (The model answer is written above).

7. Proofread the task

2.3. *Change over time task*

Task Instructions

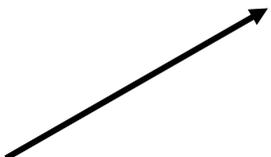
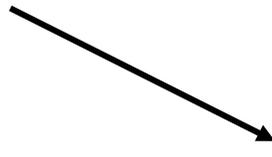
The IELTS change over time task is designed to test your ability to explain information during different time periods shown in a **line graph, bar graph, pie chart, table, process diagram, or map** (the last two tasks will be covered in a separate section). You must present the information in your own words as complete sentences within paragraphs. You are required to write over 150 words, and the task should be completed in 20 minutes (both part 1 and 2 must be finished in 1 hour).

Requires:

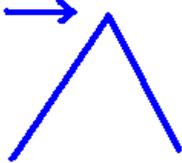
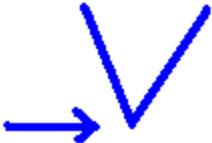
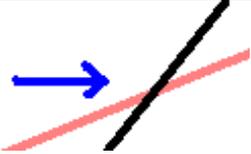
- 1 describing trends verb and noun phrases.
- 2 describing data levels using verbs and nouns
- 3 adverbs and adjectives to describe trends precisely
- 4 prepositions for time and data
- 5 describing numbers and percentages
- 6 past tense and sometimes future tense.

Useful language for change over time tasks

Describing Trends:

			
Noun phrases			
an increase	a decrease	at a similar level	a fluctuation
a surge	a decline	a steady trend	an oscillation
a rise	a drop	maintained stability	
a jump	a tumble	a period of stability	
a leap	a plunge		
Verb phrases			
increased	decreased	stabilized	fluctuated
surged	declined	remained unchanged	oscillated
rose	plunged	remained static	
soared	tanked	stayed the same	
rocketed	sunk		

Describing specific data levels

a peak (noun) peaked (verb)	
a low point (noun) a nadir (noun)	
was overtaken by (verb) overtook (verb)	

Exercise: Describing trends and data levels

Practice using language to describe trends by matching the trends on the right with the correct phrase on the right. The first one is done as an example. The answers are on the next page

<p>1. <u>B</u></p> 	<p>A. fluctuated</p>
<p>2. ____</p> 	<p>B. a slight increase</p>
<p>3. ____</p> 	<p>C. bikes overtook cars</p>
<p>4. ____</p> 	<p>D. a steady trend</p>
<p>5. ____</p> 	<p>E. decrease slightly</p>
<p>6. ____</p> 	<p>F. cars overtook bikes</p>
<p>7. ____</p> 	<p>G. a dramatic decrease</p>
<p>8. ____</p> 	<p>H. increased dramatically</p>
<p>9. ____ cars</p>  <p>bikes</p>	<p>I. peaked</p>
<p>10. ____ bikes</p>  <p>Cars</p>	<p>J. a low point</p>

Answers: Describing trends and data levels

Question	Answer
1. 	B. a slight increase
2. 	H. increased dramatically
3. 	E. decrease slightly
4. 	G. a dramatic decrease
5. 	D. a steady trend
6. 	A. fluctuated
7. 	I. peaked
8. 	J. a low point
9. cars  Bikes	C. bikes overtook cars
10. bikes  Cars	F. cars overtook bikes

Sentence structure

For a change over time task, you should use the past tense and you should try to modify nouns with adjectives and verbs with adverbs to improve the precision of your task, which will improve your score for *task response* as well as for *vocabulary*. Vary your sentence types to increase your score for grammar. Here are the two most common:

1. **adjective + NOUN:** was + adjective + NOUN

There was a slight INCREASE in the number of unemployed people.

The amount of water ROSE dramatically.

2. **VERB + adverb:**

There was a dramatic RISE in the amount of water.

The number of unemployed people INCREASED slightly.

Tip!

Modify your nouns and verbs with adjectives and adverbs in order to increase precision of describing data which increases your score for task achievement.

Adjectives and adverbs according to the degree of change

(biggest to smallest)

adjectives that modify the size	adjectives that modify the time
a dramatic...	a sudden...
a steep	a quick...
a sharp...	a rapid...
a significant...	a steady...
a substantial...	a gradual...
a moderate...	a slow...
a slight...	

adverbs that modify the size	adverbs that modify the time
...dramatically	...suddenly
...steeply	...quickly
...sharply	...rapidly
...significantly	...steadily
...substantially	...gradually
...moderately	...slowly
...slightly	

Describing numbers and percentages

When writing your report you must carefully identify whether the information that is given involves countable data (trees), uncountable data (water), or percentages (15%). This is because the language used with the three types is different. If you use the incorrect language the examiner will easily identify it and your vocabulary score will be lowered. Use **number** with things that can be counted and **amount** with things that cannot be counted.

Countable numbers

The number of trees planted increased by 15.

Uncountable numbers

The amount of water used increased by 15 litres.

Percentages

The proportion of water used rose by 15%.

Describing the time

from 1900 to 2000

during the period from 1900 to 2000

from 1940 onwards

in 1940

Steps to complete a change over time task

1. Read and underline key vocabulary in the question and try to rephrase them.

2. Check whether the data is about percentages or numbers.

- For percentages use: proportion, %, per cent, rate, one-third, two-thirds
- For numbers use: amount for uncountable nouns, number for countable nouns

3. Brainstorm key points for the answer, look for the following:

- beginning numbers
- ending numbers
- highest points
- lowest points
- data series that overtake other ones (e.g. line chart where one line crosses over another line)
- period of fluctuation or stability
- sudden changes of increase or decrease
- comparisons or similarities

4. Work out the overall summary. Usually, this will be the overall trends for each category. You can establish these by comparing the numbers at the start of the period with those at the end of the period.

5. Plan the structure of answer.

Decide how the data can be grouped into paragraphs.

6. Write the task

7. Proofread the task

Structuring the task

Introduction

1. Rephrase the task introduction
2. Give an overall summary of the task. If there is only one chart state the categories which increased and decreased the most. If there is more than one chart, you should just state the category which increased the most for each chart.

Body

If there is only one chart then look for a logical separation point in the chart. For instance, you could divide the data in the chart into two paragraphs, by putting the categories that increased in one chart and the categories that decreased in another. If there is more than one chart, you could have a paragraph to describe each chart. In this case structure the paragraphs from the categories that increased the most to the categories that decreased the most.

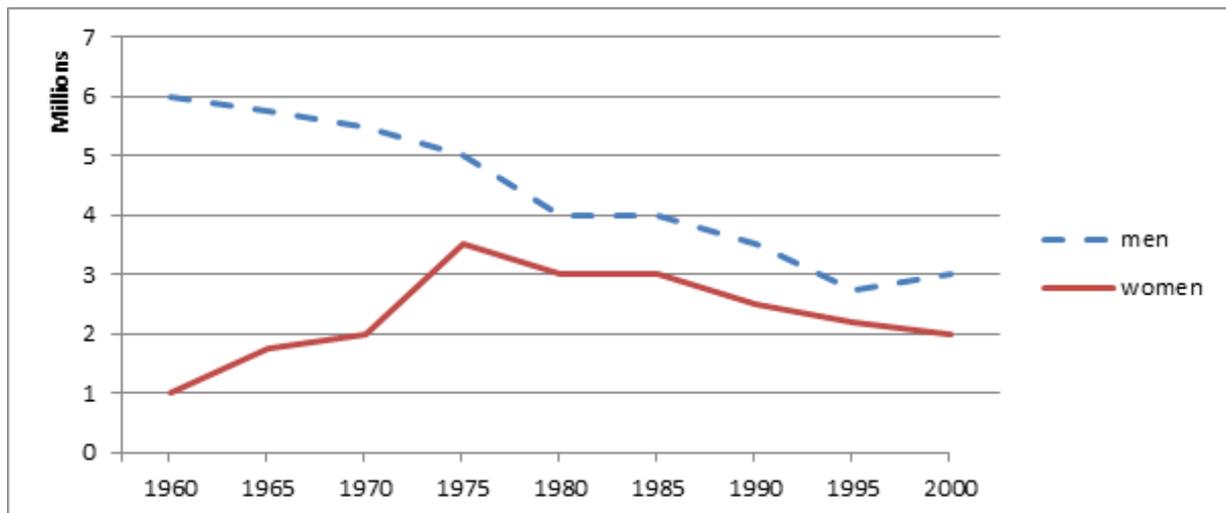
Note: you should not write a conclusion unless you have less than 150 words. If you need to write a conclusion, you can write a paragraph that rephrases your first paragraph to get to the required 150 word limit.

Sample change over time task

The line chart below shows the number of men and women that smoke cigarettes in Australia.

You should write at least 150 words.

Cigarette Smoking In Australia



The graph reveals statistics about female and male smokers in Australia between the years 1960 and 2000. Overall, the number of male smokers halved, whereas the figure for female smokers rose slightly. In addition, there were always more male smokers than females throughout the entire period.

The number of men who smoked in 1960 was approximately 6 million but this decreased gradually to 4 million by 1980. It plateaued for a couple of years and then it dropped below 3 million by 1995. Subsequently, it increased slightly to 3 million in 2000.

The number of females smoking in 1960 was much lower at only about 1 million. It rose sharply over the next fifteen years and reached a peak at 3.2 million around 1975. This was followed by a drop back to 3 million in 1980, where it levelled-off for the next five years. From this point on it declined slowly to 2 million smokers, by the end of the period. [161 words]

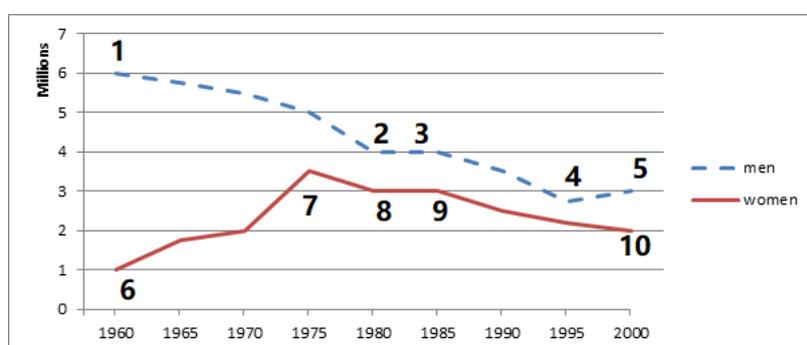
Steps to complete the model task

1. Read and underline key vocabulary in the question and write words with the same or related meaning.

2. Check whether the data is about percentages or numbers.

It's about numbers, and note the numbers are in millions.

3. Brainstorm key points for the answer, There should be about 10 to 12 key points that should be mentioned for each task)



- 1 = start number for men
- 2 = decreased
- 3 = plateaued
- 4 = dropped
- 5 = increased slightly to end number
- 6 = start number for women
- 7 = rose sharply to the peak
- 8 = a drop
- 9 = levelled-off
- 10 = declined slowly to the end number

3. Work out the overall summary.

1. Male smokers halved, whereas female smokers rose slightly.
2. There are always more male smokers than females throughout the entire period.

4. Plan the structure of answer. Work out how the data can be grouped into paragraphs.

Generally speaking, it is easier to organise data by the fewest types of categories; so in this case, it makes sense to group data by gender and not by time periods. The structure is as follows:

Introduction = rephrase the task introduction + overall summary

Men = describe from the starting time period to the end

Women = describe from the starting time period to the end

5. Write the task. The model answer is written above.

6. Proofread the task

Change over time with future period tasks

Sometimes in the exam, you are given data that concerns a future time period. In this case, the future data is a prediction or forecast, and you must make this clear when writing your report. You cannot state it in the present tense as a fact. You must make it clear to the examiner that this information is only a forecast. If you fail to do this you are making a factual error and your score for task achievement will be lowered.

Language for expressing a prediction:

Words to express a prediction: predicted, expected, forecasted, anticipated

Future tense: will, is going to

It is predicted that the use of solar energy will rise.

It is anticipated that the use of solar energy is going to rise.

Tip!

When describing data about the future it is essential you make it clear that the data is only a prediction.

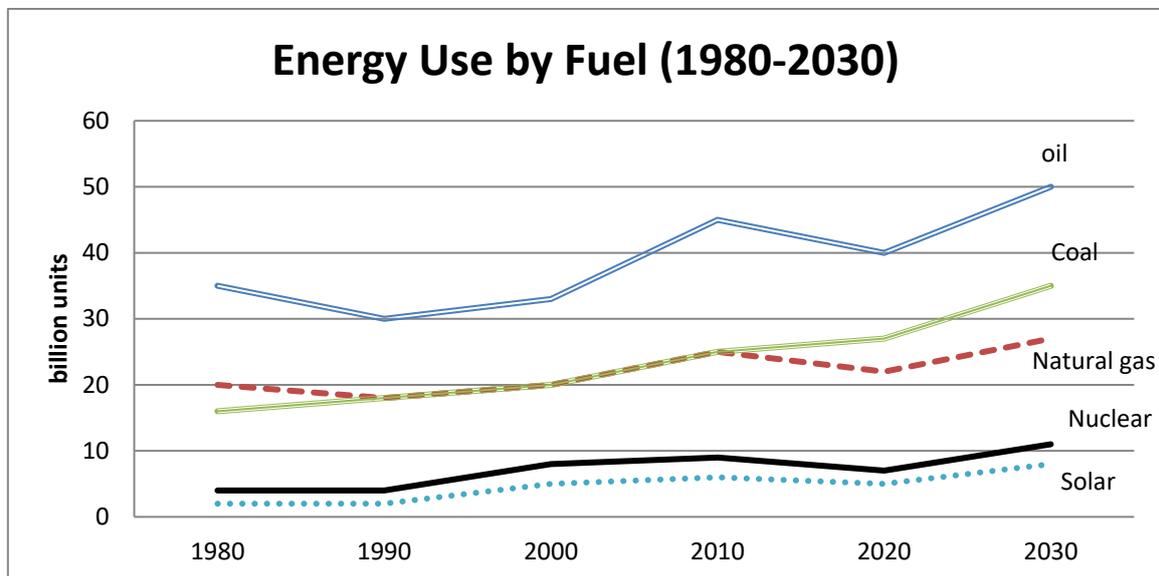
Sample future task

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task

The graph below gives information from a report in 2010 about the use of energy in Australia since 1980 with projections until 2030.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words



Note: about this task

The report is produced in 2010 so we can establish that all data before this point has actually occurred and everything after this date is a projection.

Model answer with the future predictions underlined

The line graph shows five different sources of energy consumption in Australia from 1980 to 2030. Overall, it can be seen that there is an upward trend for all types of energy during the period from 1980 to 2010, and this trend is predicted to continue to 2030.

The main source of energy was oil. In 1980, approximately 35 billion units of oil were used, and the consumption experienced a steady growth to about 45 billion units by 2010. The usage is projected to continue to rise and hit 50 billion by 2030.

The next highest sources of energy were natural gas and coal with 20 billion units and approximately 16 billion units, respectively, in 1980. The usage of coal and gas were the same by 2010, with each accounting for about 25 billion units. They are both expected to consistently climb and end at roughly 35 billion and 28 billion units, respectively.

The minor energy sources were nuclear and solar energy, which both started at below 5 billion units in 1980, and increased to roughly 8 billion and 6 billion units, respectively, by 2010. They are expected to reach about 10 billion and 8 billion units, respectively, in 2030.

[199 words]

Steps to complete the model task

1. Read and underline key vocabulary in the question and write words with the same or related meaning.

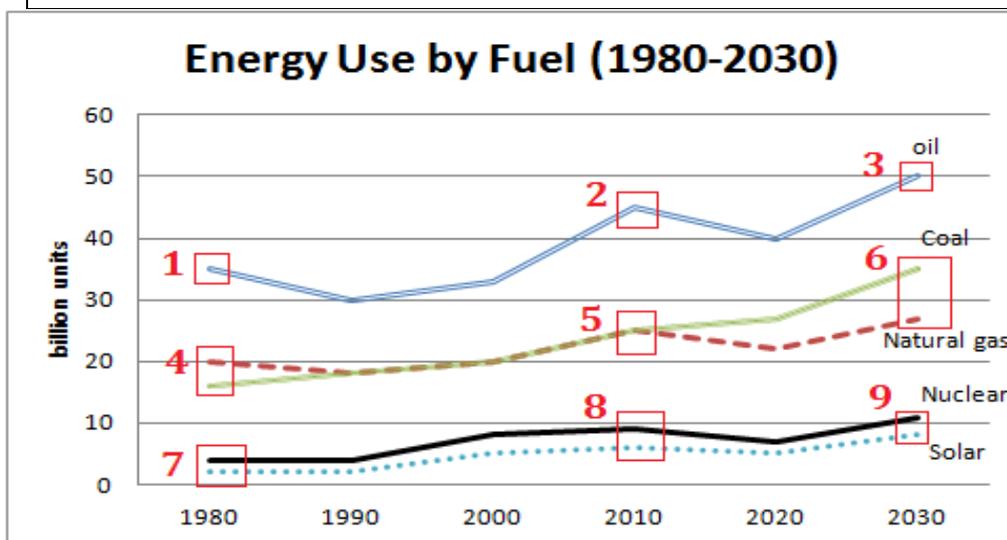
2. Check whether the data is about percentages or numbers.

It's about numbers, and note that the units are in billions.

3. Brainstorm key points for the answer (there should be about 10 key points that should be mentioned for each task)

The graph below gives information from a report in 2010 about the use of energy in Australia since 1980 with projections until 2030.

The graph below gives information from a report in 2010 about the use of energy in Australia since 1980 with projections until 2030.



1 = start number for oil

2 = end number for oil, before the forecast

3 = forecasted end number for oil

4 = start number for coal and natural gas

5 = end number for coal and natural gas, before the forecast

6 = forecasted end number for coal and natural gas

7 = start number for nuclear and solar energy

8 = end number for nuclear and solar energy, before the forecast

9 = forecasted end number for nuclear and solar energy

4. Work out the overall summary.

Overall, usage of all types of energy increased from 1980 to 2010, and it is predicted to continue increasing up to 2030.

5. Plan the structure of the answer. Work out how the data can be grouped into paragraphs.

Generally speaking, it is easier to organise data by the fewest types of categories; so in this case, it makes sense to group data by energy type and not by time periods. The structure is as follows:

introduction = rephrase the task introduction + overall summary

highest sources of energy [oil, coal and natural gas]

lowest sources of energy [nuclear and solar energy]

6. Write the task. The model answer is written above.

7. Proofread the task

2.4. Process diagram or flow chart

Task Instructions

The IELTS process task is designed to test your ability to compare and contrast information shown in a **process diagram, or flow chart**. You are required to write over 150 words, and the task should be completed in 20 minutes (both part 1 and 2 must be finished in 1 hour).

Requires

1. Sequencing words: (first, subsequently, after that, finally).
2. Describing the location of objects.
3. Passive form. This is where the sentence starts with the object and the subject of the sentence is often missed out (especially for a man-made process where the subject is often unknown)
4. Verbs of process: Verbs are needed to describe putting things in, taking them out, changing one thing into another, or throwing away waste items. (inserted, extracted, transformed into, discarded)
5. Articles: Every countable noun needs an article (a, an, the).

Useful language for processes

Sequencing words

The first step

The first step in the process is...

The first stage in the process is...

The process begins with...

The process commences with...

Subsequent steps

Subsequently,

After this,

The next step is

In the next stage,

In the following stage,

Following this,

The final step

The process finishes with...

The process concludes with...

The last step is...

Expressing purpose - why something is done

... in order to ...

... so as to...

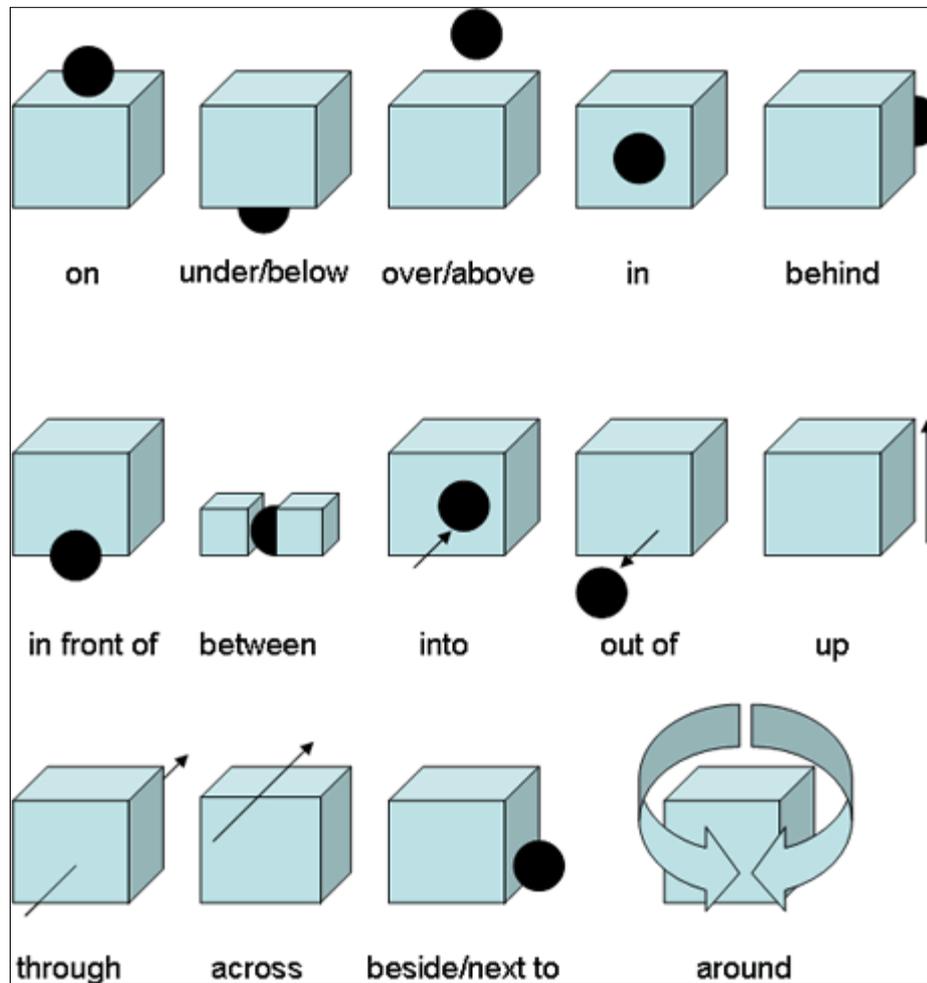
As a result,

Eventually,

Consequently,

Describing the location of objects

Prepositions are needed to make it clear where a process is occurring. The prepositions you are likely to need are in the figure below:



Passive Form

The passive begins with the object (receiver of the action) and is followed by an auxiliary verb and a main verb in the past participle form. The table below compares the passive to the active tense.

Tense		Verb	
Present Active	Mike	writes	a book.
Present Passive	A book	is written	by Mike.
Past Active	Mike	wrote	a book.
Past Passive	A book	was written	by Mike

Verbs describing change (using present passive tense)

Adding	1 is inserted 2 is added
Removing	3 is removed 4 is extracted
Changing	5 is converted into 6 is turned into

Exercise: Passive Form

Practice the passive form to ensure you can get this right in the test. Complete the passage below by adding an auxiliary verb (is/are) and changing the verbs to their past participle form. The answers are given on the next page.

The flowchart illustrates how chips are made [make]. First of all, a twenty ton bag of potatoes 1. _____ [deliver] to a restaurant by a big truck. The potatoes 2. _____ [unload] and then they 3. _____ [store] in a cool dry place. Next the peeled potatoes 4. _____ [insert] into a special machine that slices them into chips. Subsequently, the chips 5. _____ [wash] by the machine. After this, the chips 6. _____ [take out] of the machine and left to dry for one hour. Then, the chips 7. _____ [put] into a deep fryer that cooks them at 200 degrees. After this, the chips 8. _____ [remove] with a special tool. Salt and pepper are added to improve the flavor. Finally, the chips 9. _____ [put] on a plate and the plate 10. _____ [give] to a customer.

Answers: Passive form

The flowchart illustrates how chips 1. are made. First of all, a twenty ton bag of potatoes 2. is delivered to a restaurant by a big truck. The potatoes 3. are unloaded and then they 4. are stored in a cool dry place. Subsequently, the chips 5. are washed by the machine. After this the chips 6. are taken out of the machine and left to dry for one hour. Then, the chips 7. are put* into a deep fryer that cooks them at 200 degrees. After this, the chips 8. are removed with a special tool. Salt and pepper are added to improve the flavor. Finally, the chips 9. are put on a plate and the plate 10. is given to a customer.

* NOTE: "Put" is an irregular verb and it does not change for the present, past or past participle form.

Articles (a, an, the, zero)

As processes often involve lots of nouns it is important to use articles accurately.

An article is a word that is used with a noun to indicate to the reader whether the noun is a particular and specific noun or an instance of a noun in general. There are three types of articles the indefinite (a/an), which refers to the general usage of a singular noun; the definite article (the) which refers to a specific noun that will be identifiable by the reader; the zero article (no article used) when a plural non-specific noun is used.

An **indefinite** article (a/an) indicates that its noun is not a specific one that can be identified by the reader. It may be something that the writer is mentioning for the first time, or the writer may be making a general statement about something. They are only used with singular nouns.

Example: A bag of potatoes are put into a machine.

A **definite** article (the) is used with a noun that refers to something specific the reader should be aware of. It may be used with a noun that has only one possible instance (The internet is very fast) or to refer back to something that the writer has already mentioned

Example: A bag of potatoes are put into a machine. The machine dries the potatoes.

A **zero article** is when no article is used for a noun. They are used when a plural non-specific noun is used. With processes, this usually occurs with plural nouns that are mentioned for the first time.

Example: *Some apples are sliced.*

Steps to complete a process diagram task:

1. Read the question and the process diagram and underline key words. Paraphrase key words where possible.
2. Look for a logical start point for the process.
3. Number steps in the process to make sure you will not miss out any of the steps when you write your report. Make sure you don't forget the last step!
4. Work out the overall summary. This will usually be the total number of steps in the process. Other options might be the number of pieces of equipment or the number of different materials used in the process.
5. Plan the structure of answer (how can the data be grouped). Try to look for a middle point in the process. This way you can separate the steps of the process into two paragraphs.
6. Write the report.
7. Proofread the report.

Structuring the task

Introduction

1. Rephrase the question
2. Give an overall summary of the process [such as the number of steps, number of materials used, amount of equipment used]

Body

Make sure you write about every stage of the process. If there are less than nine steps in the process, I suggest you write a sentence for every step to make sure you can get to the 150 word requirement. If there are more than ten steps you will need to start to combine these steps in your sentences in order to be able to finish on time.

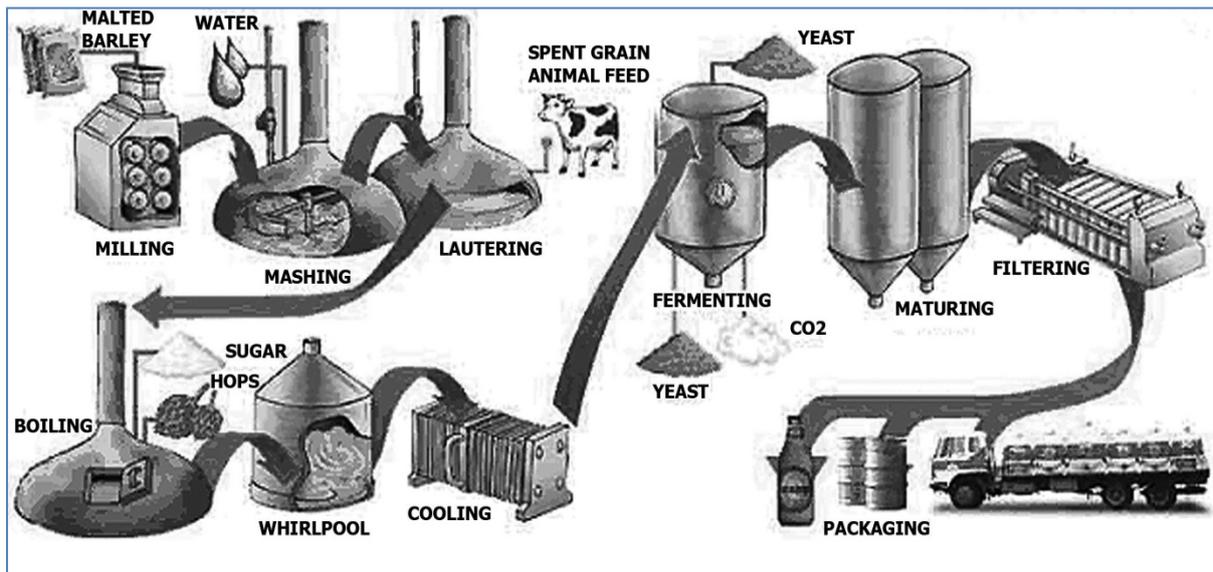
If there is a logical separation point in the process you could divide the steps in the process into two or even more paragraphs.

Note: you should not write a conclusion unless you have less than 150 words. If you need to write a conclusion, you can write a paragraph that rephrases your first paragraph to get to the required 150 word limit.

Sample process task

The diagram below shows the various stages involved in the production of beer.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



Task taken from: The Complete Guide to Task 1 Writing by Phil Biggerton.

Model answer for a process

The figure illustrates the different steps used to manufacture beer. Overall, there are eleven stages in the process, beginning with the milling of malted barley and ending with packaging the beer.

Looking at first stages of the process, we can see that in order to get liquid from malted barley, it has to be milled, mashed with water and lautered in special tanks. In order to get a pure liquid, the spent grain is taken out and used for feeding of animals. Then, the liquid has to be boiled with sugar and hops and mixed in a whirlpool before cooling.

In the next stages, the cooled liquid has to be fermented by adding yeast and carbon dioxide. Then, it goes to storage tanks, in order to be matured. In the second to last stage, the matured beer is transferred to a filter for filtering. Finally, the beer is packed in bottles or barrels or put on trucks for delivery.

[159 words]

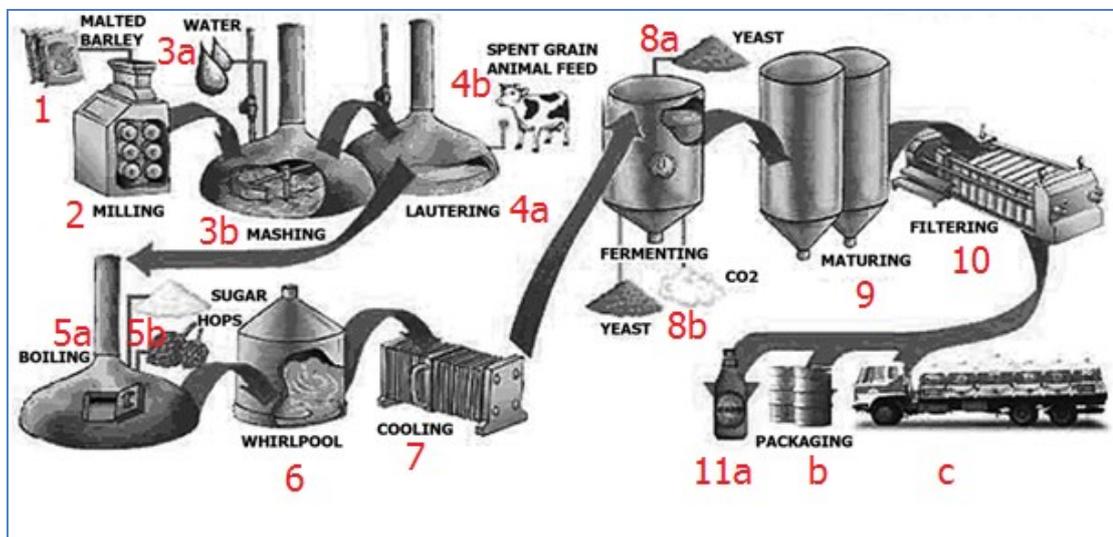
Steps to complete the process task

1. Read the question and the process diagram and underline key words. Paraphrase key words where possible, and turn nouns into verbs, and verbs into nouns

The diagram below shows the various stages involved in the production

figure illustrates different steps used manufacture
of beer.

2. Look for a logical start point for the process.
Step one Adding malted barley [top-left corner of the illustration]
3. Number steps in the process to make sure you will not miss out any of the steps



4. Work out the overall summary= *eleven stages in the process*

5. Plan the structure of answer (how can the data be grouped)

Introduction

Steps 1-7 before fermentation

Steps 8-11 fermentation and after

6. Write the report (a model answer is written above)

7. Proofread the report

2.5. *Map or floor plan*

Task Instructions

The IELTS map or floor plan task is designed to test your ability to compare and contrast information shown in a **map** or **floor plan** of a building. You are required to write over 150 words, and the task should be completed in 20 minutes (both part 1 and 2 must be finished in 1 hour).

Requires

1. Language to describe locations (north, south, adjacent to, across from).
2. Passive form: This is where the sentence starts with the object and the subject of the sentence is often missed out (especially for developments where the subject is often unknown, for example, "a building was constructed").
[Note this is explained in the previous section on process tasks.]
3. Verbs of change: Verbs are needed to describe things being added, removed, or changed (constructed, demolished, transformed).
4. Articles: Every countable noun needs an article: a, an, the. (These were covered in the previous section on processes).

Tip!

If you get a map or floor plan task always look to see if there is a compass on it so that you can use it to describe the location of objects.

Useful language for maps

Describing locations using compass points

You can use the table below to describe the points on the compass.

Note the following rules about capitalisation:

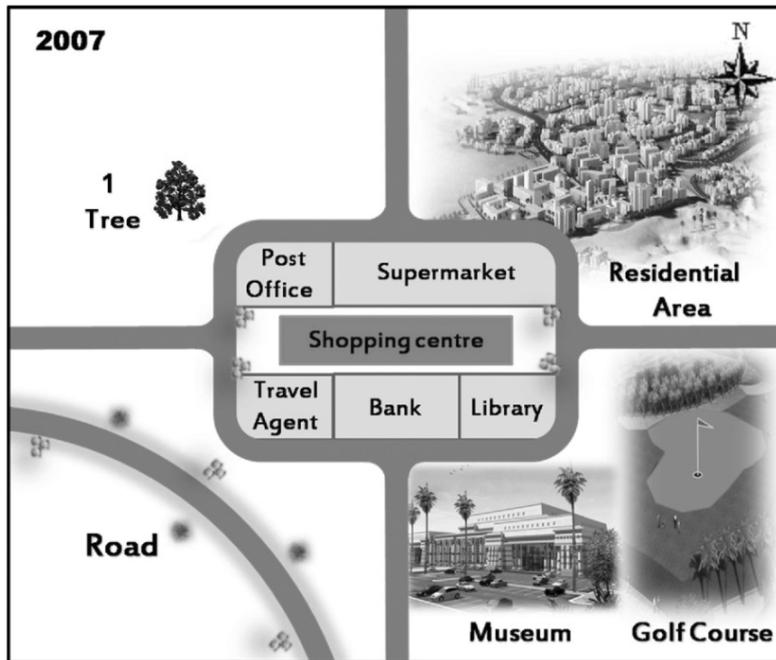
1. Don't capitalise points of a compass when describing a general location or direction. For example: *In the north of the map is a house.*
2. Capitalise names. For example: *The house is in North America.*

northwest	north	northeast
west		east
southwest	south	southeast

Describing locations if there is no compass or to rephrase compass points

Every real test paper I have seen has had a compass on it. If you ever get one that doesn't or if you want to show your ability to rephrase you can use the expressions below. For example: *In the top left of the map is a house.*

top-left	top	top-right
left	center	right
bottom-left	bottom	bottom-right



DESCRIBING LOCATIONS

The residential area is **located in the north-west**

South of the residential area is a golf course

A museum is **Next to/ Adjacent to** the golf course.

In the central part of the map, there is a supermarket

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST WORDS

The bank is **twice as big as** the library.

The library is **half the size of** the bank.

The supermarket is **closer to** the residential area than the post office.

The post office is **further away from** the residential area than the supermarket.

Steps to complete a map task

1. Read the task introduction for the map/floor plan and underline key words. Paraphrase keywords that are given in the question where possible.
2. Look for a compass so that you can know whether you can use it for describing locations.
3. Brainstorm key points for the answer. There should be about ten key points that should be mentioned for each task.
4. Work out the overall summary. There should be one or two important characteristics of the map that should be mentioned.
5. Plan the structure of answer (how can the data be grouped).
6. Write the task.
7. Proofread the task.

Single map task

A task where you are only given one map usually requires you to choose between two proposed locations. Past test papers have included things like where to build a new shopping centre, supermarket, and train station. In order to complete this task, you should compare the two proposed sites in terms of the feature of their surrounding areas. You may also compare the actual sizes of each of the sites. Sometimes each site will be the same size but sometimes there may be a difference in the size of buildings, and even other aspects such as car parks.

Structuring a single map task

When you get a task with two proposed sites on a map you can use the structure below.

Introduction

1. Rephrase the task introduction.
2. Give an overall summary of the differences between the two locations on the map. Essentially you need to point out what is the key difference between the two locations. The main differences are likely to be the relative size of each of the sites and their proximity to amenities such as roads, transportation networks or buildings such as hospitals and recreational facilities. If you are given a floor plan the most likely changes are aspects such as the proximity to entry ways, or facilities such as coffee making machines or photocopiers.

Body

As with other tasks you should always look for a logical way to separate the data into paragraphs in the body. For this type of task, it is very easy to separate data. You can have a paragraph for each of the sites. When describing each site you can first discuss the advantages of the site and then possibly the disadvantages. It may not always be appropriate to discuss the disadvantages because sometimes the disadvantages of one site are the advantages for the other.

The other important thing about writing the body of this type of task is to pick a logical starting point to begin your description and then state clearly where this is located on the map. Remember that your report should always make sense without the examiner looking at the map. After you have just described the location of the first feature you can then move on to discuss other features in relation to that first feature. Note that for Western logic it is usual to describe things from left to right [which on the map is going to be west to east, and from north to south]. The worst way to write the body paragraphs is to just jump around all different locations of the map at random.

Note: you should not write a conclusion unless you have less than 150 words. For the conclusion, you can write a paragraph that rephrases your first paragraph to get to the required 150 word limit.

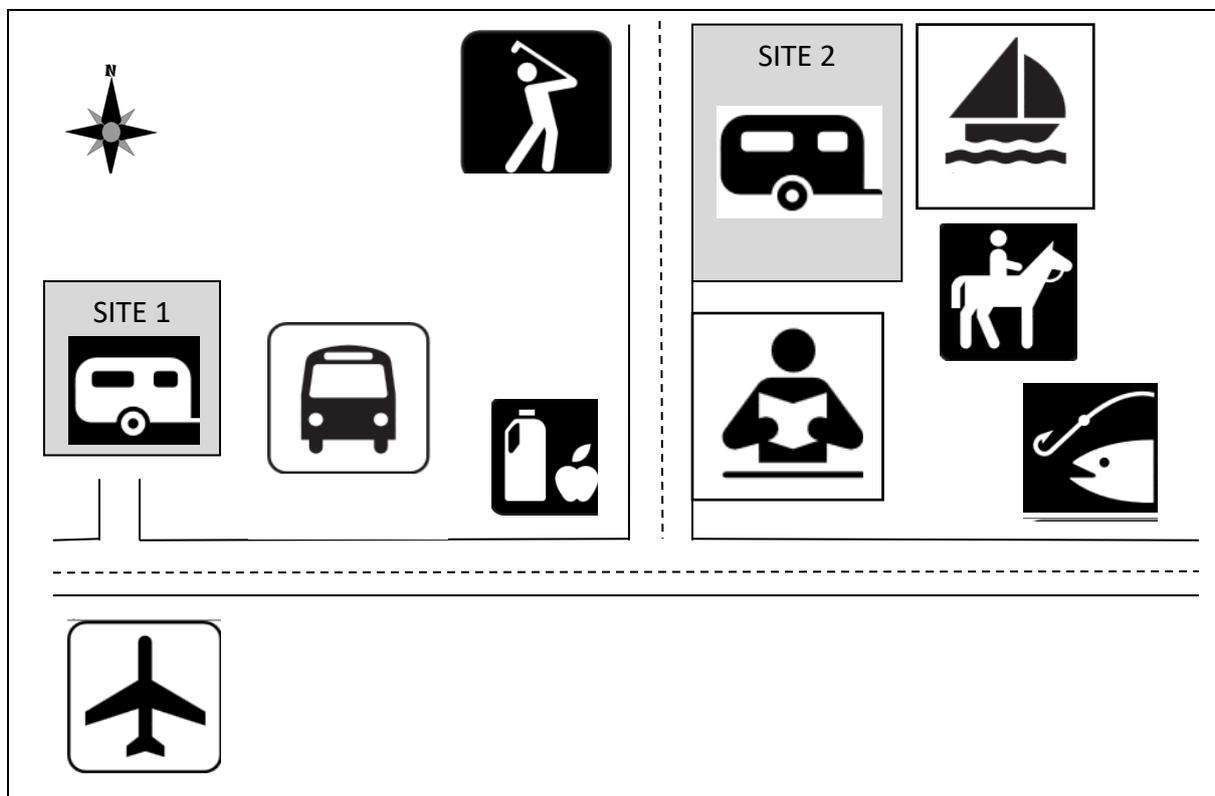
Sample task for a single map

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The map below shows two different proposed locations for a camping ground.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Model answer

The picture illustrates two potential positions for camping sites. Overall, site one is smaller and located nearer to amenities, while site two is larger and closer to recreational activities.

Site 1 is located on the west side of the map and it is the smaller of the two sites. The main advantage of this site is its proximity to transportation facilities. It is across the road from the airport and has a bus stop next to it. In addition, there is a grocery store down the road to the east.

Turning to site 2, which is located in the north-east of the map, it is a much larger site. Moreover, it is located very close to many entertainment activities. To the east, campers can go boating or horse riding. South of the site, there is a library and a place to go fishing. As well as this, across the road to the west, there is a golf course.

[157 words]

Steps to complete the model task

1. Read the task introduction for the map and underline and rephrase key words.

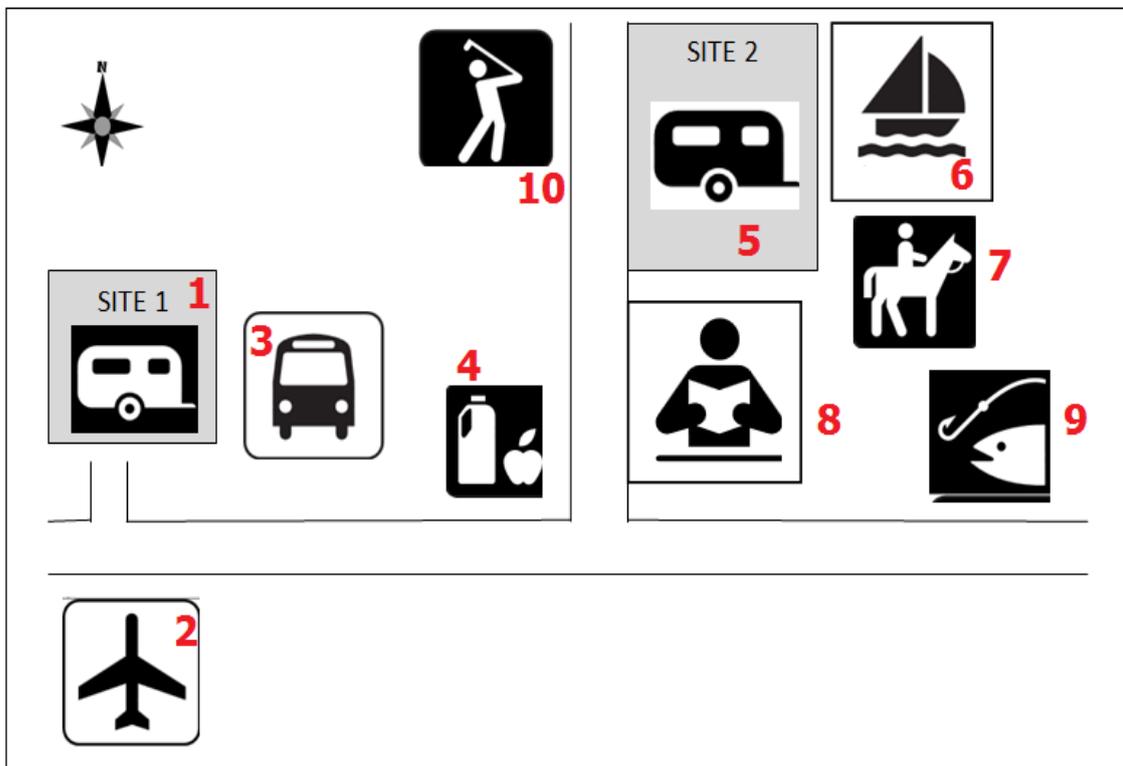
The map below shows two different proposed locations for a camping ground.

picture illustrates potential positions camping sites

2. Look for a compass so that you can know whether you can use it for describing locations.

Yes, there is a compass! [In the top left corner]

3. Brainstorm key points for the answer. There should be about ten critical points that should be mentioned for each task.



4. Work out the overall summary.

Site 1 is smaller and it is closer to transportation facilities

Site 2 is larger and it is closer to entertainment facilities

5. Plan the structure of answer (how can the data be grouped).

Introduction

site 1

site 2

6. Write the report.

7. Proofread the report.

Model report with the comparative words underlined

The picture illustrates two potential positions for camping sites. Overall, site one is smaller and located nearer to amenities, while site two is larger and closer to recreational activities.

Site 1 is located on the west side of the map and it is the smaller of the two sites. The main advantage of this site is its close proximity to transportation facilities. It is across the road from the airport and has a bus stop next to it. In addition, there is a grocery store down the road to the east.

Turning to site 2, which is located in the north-east of the map, it is a much larger site. Moreover, it is located very close to many entertainment activities. To the east, campers can go boating or horse riding. South of the site, there is a library and a place to go fishing. As well as this, across the road to the west, there is a golf course.

Model report with the location words underlined

The picture illustrates two potential positions for camping sites. Overall, site one is smaller and located nearer to amenities, while site two is larger and closer to recreational activities.

Site 1 is located on the west of the map and it is the smaller of the two sites. The main advantage of this site is its proximity to transportation facilities. It is across the road from the airport and has a bus stop next to it. In addition, there is a grocery store down the road to the east.

Turning to site 2, which is located in the north-east of the map, it is a much larger site. Moreover, it is located very close to many entertainment activities. To the east campers can go boating or horse riding. South of the site, there is a library and a place to go fishing. As well as this, across the road to the west, there is a golf course.

Double map task

When you are given two maps the key point is to compare these maps and highlight the main changes that have occurred. These are likely to be things being added, removed or being turned into different things.

Describing changes using past passive tense

Added	was constructed was built was erected
Removed	were cut down was replaced
Changed	was converted was turned into was transformed was replaced with was changed into
Stayed the same	remained

Tip!

Tasks with two maps are used to test your ability to identify changes that have occurred between these two maps.

Structuring a double map task

When you get a task with two or more maps you can use the structure below.

Introduction

1. Rephrase the task introduction.
2. Give an overall summary of the differences between the maps. Essentially you need to point out what is the key difference. For maps of a town, it is usually from a small undeveloped place into a much larger more developed place. The more developed place is often a tourist centre or has a much better transportation network.

Body

As with other tasks you should always look for a logical way to separate the data into paragraphs in the body. There are two ways to do this. The first is to write a paragraph about each map. In this case, the first paragraph will describe the most notable features of the first map. The second paragraph will describe the changes that have occurred, which are likely to be things being removed added or changed.

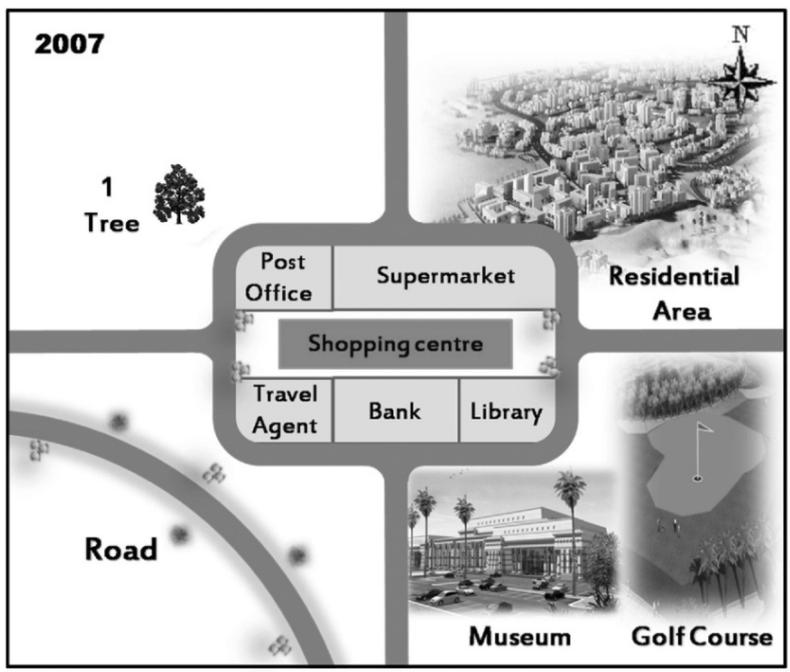
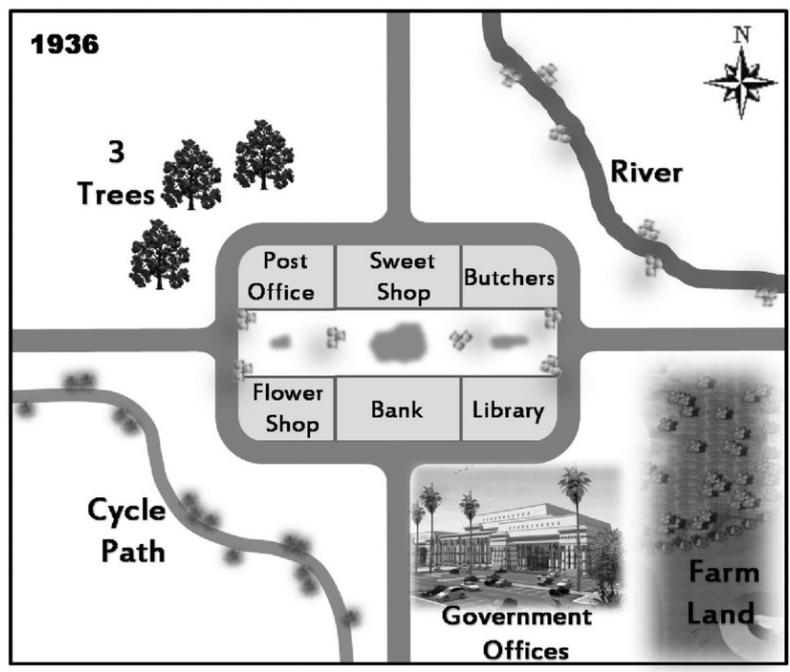
The second way to structure the body is to look for a dividing feature in the map like a river or road in the middle of it. Then each of the body paragraphs describes each of the sides. Even if you follow the previous structure of writing a body paragraph about each map, it is still a good idea to look for a dividing feature and structure each of these paragraphs according to that dividing feature.

The other important thing about writing the body of this type of task is to pick a logical starting point to begin your description and then state clearly where this is located on the map. Remember that your report should always make sense without the examiner looking at the map. After you have just described the location of the first feature you can then move on to discuss other features in relation to that first feature. Note that for Western logic it is usual to describe things from left to right [which on the map is going to be west to east, and from north to south]. The worst way to write the body paragraphs is to just jump around all different locations of the map at random.

Note: you should not write a conclusion unless you have less than 150 words. For the conclusion, you can write a paragraph that rephrases your first paragraph to get to the required 150 word limit.

Sample of a double map task

The maps below show how the town of Harborne changes from 1936 to 2007. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



Task taken from: The Complete Guide to Task 1 Writing by Phil Biggerton.

Model answer for a map

The illustrations reveal changes that occurred in the township of Harborne from 1936 to 2007. Overall, the town became a much larger residential area with more shops.

Many changes occurred west of the city. In the north-west, most of the trees were cut down; and in the south-west, the bicycle track was converted into a roadway. In the centre of the city, the post office, bank, and library remained. However, in the northern section, the candy store and butcher shop were converted into a grocery store. A shopping centre was constructed in the centre of the downtown replacing most of the open space there. In the southern part, the flower shop became a travel agent.

North-east of the downtown area, a large residential area was built on both sides of the river's shores with lots of high-rise apartments. Meanwhile, in the south-east, the government offices were transformed into a museum and the farmland became a golf course.

[157words]

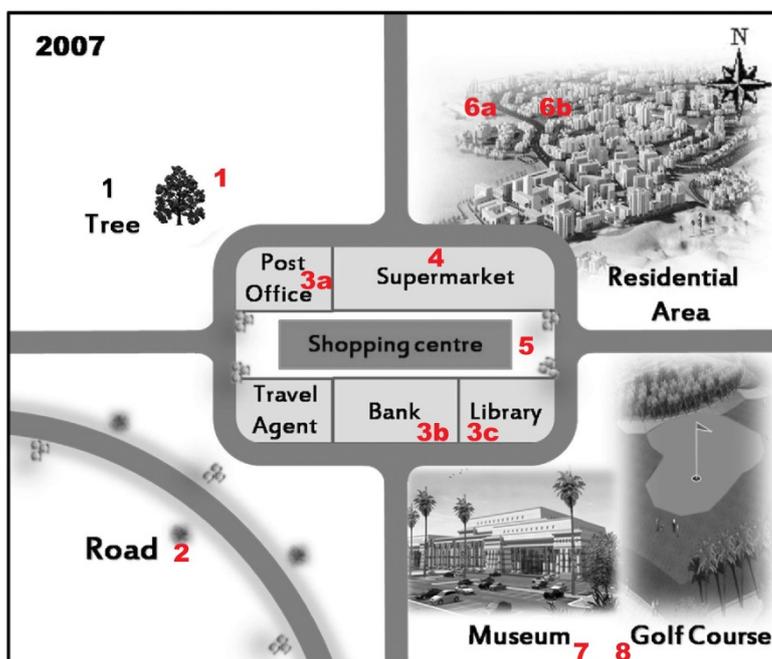
Steps to complete the model task

1. Read the task introduction for the map and rephrase key words. Paraphrase key words where possible.

The **maps** below **show** how the **town of Harborne** **changes** from 1936 to 2007.

illustrations reveal township changes that occurred

2. Look for a compass so that you can know whether you can use it for describing locations - *yes there is a compass!*
3. Brainstorm key points for the answer. There should be about 10 critical points that should be mentioned for each task.



4. Work out the overall summary. You need to identify the major difference between the two maps. In this case: *the town has more houses and shops*

5. Plan the structure of answer (how can the data be grouped)

Introduction

West and downtown area

East area

6. Write the report
7. Proofread the report

Verbs used to describe changes are underlined below

The illustrations reveal changes that occurred in the township of Harborne from 1936 to 2007. Overall, the town became a much larger residential area with more shops.

Many changes occurred west of the city. In the north-west, most of the trees were cut down; and in the south-west, the bicycle track was converted into a roadway. In the centre of the city, the post office, bank, and library remained. However, in the northern section, the candy store and butcher shop were converted into a supermarket. A shopping centre was constructed in the centre of the downtown replacing most of the open space there. In the southern part, the flower shop became a travel agent.

North-east of the downtown area, a large residential area was built on both sides of the river's shores with lots of high-rise apartments. Meanwhile, in the south-east, the government offices were transformed into a museum and the farmland became a golf course.

Exercise: Verbs describing change

All the verbs used to describe the changes made are underlined above try to categorise these according to the function of these verbs in the table below. You can check your answers on the next page.

added	1
	2
removed	3
changed	4
	5
stayed the same	6

Answers: Verbs describing change

added	1 was constructed 2 was built
removed	3 were cut down
changed	4 was converted 5 were transformed
stayed the same	6 remained

Sample task for a floor plan

The floor plans below show the changes that were made to a house over a six-month period.



Model answer for a floor plan

The illustrations reveal the alterations that occurred at a residential building. Overall, the main difference is that the renovated building has one less internal wall.

Looking at the point of entry to the house in the middle, there is no longer a porch in the updated house. In addition, on the left side of the house, the wall has been removed between the sitting room and kitchen to make one large living space, with a dining table placed in the middle. The cooking area has been moved to the right-hand wall of the kitchen, and there is no longer an area for eating in the rear of the kitchen.

Turning to the right-hand side of the house, in the rear, the bathroom has been modified by moving the toilets to the middle of the room and replacing the bathtub with a shower. The wardrobes have been removed from both bedrooms. In addition, the window has been removed from the rear bedroom, while the front bedroom has a smaller window.

[169]

Steps to complete the model task

1. Read the task introduction for the floor plan and rephrase key words.

The floor plans below show the changes that were made to a house.

illustrations reveal alterations occurred residential building

2. Look for a compass so that you can know whether you can use it for describing locations. There is no compass so you cannot describe north, south and so on. Instead, you can use language like left and right.
3. Brainstorm key points for the answer. There should be about 10 critical points that should be mentioned for each task.



4. Work out the overall summary = *the renovated house has one less wall*

5. Plan the structure for the answer (how can the data be grouped).

Introduction

entrance and left side of the house

right side of the house

6. Write the report.
7. Proofread the report.

2.6. Common errors

1. Don't copy the words from the task introduction for your own introduction. You should paraphrase the words from the task (rewrite it using some different words). If you do this these words will not be counted towards the minimum 150 words you need to write, and it will make a bad first impression with the examiner!
2. Not providing an overall summary. It is absolutely vital that you write an overall summary for your task one report. This is a statement about what all the information shows. My suggestion is that you start the sentence with the word overall and you place the sentence at the end of your introduction. The end of the introduction is the most logical place for it and putting it here prevents the chance of you forgetting to write it; or in the event of running out of time not having written it. I cannot stress enough that this is the most important sentence of the whole report. Without it, you cannot score beyond five for task achievement.
3. Not covering all key data. As mentioned above the overall summary is the most critical sentence of the whole report. In order to score well, you also need to cover the most important highlights of the task. For static tasks, this is often the lowest and highest figures, and for tasks with multiple time periods it is often the categories that have changed the most; and also, you should always cover the start and end numbers for the period. For processes you must cover every stage in the process. For maps, you must cover every important feature of the map.
4. Not including data. Another key aspect is to make sure that you always include data. Without this, you cannot score above five for task response. For most tasks, this requires you to put in some numbers or percentages.
5. Confusing numbers and percentages. If the task is about percentages and you talk about more people instead of a higher proportion of people your task score will be dramatically reduced!



3. Task 1 General: Letters

Model letters and how to write them!



3.1. Overview

Writing Task 1 of the IELTS general exam is designed to test your ability to write a letter. You must present the information in your own words as complete sentences within paragraphs using a letter format. You are required to write over 150 words, and the task should be completed in about 20 minutes (both part 1 and 2 must be finished in 1 hour).

Sample question:

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You travelled by long distance bus recently and your suitcase was damaged. Write a letter to the bus company. In your letter

- inform the bus company of when and to where you travelled
- describe your suitcase and what happened to it
- explain why the company should pay for a new suitcase

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear,

how long you should spend

task introduction

how many words you should

requirements

How to improve your letter writing

1. Learn how to structure different types of letter
2. learn vocabulary for different types of letters
3. Learn skills to improve your answers
4. Practice these skills
5. Do lots of practice tests.
6. Receive feedback on practice tests
7. Use the feedback to improve your answers

Grading criteria

Criteria	Requirement
Task Achievement [Task Response]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ write over 150 words✓ respond to each bullet point✓ use an appropriate tone and level of politeness
Coherence and Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ sequence information and ideas logically✓ use paragraphing appropriately✓ use a range of cohesive devices appropriately✓ avoid unnecessary repetition of information
Lexical Resource [Vocabulary]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ use of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision✓ use less common lexical items✓ awareness of style and collocation✓ avoid errors with word formation✓ avoid errors with spelling✓ avoid errors with word choices
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms✓ produce error-free sentences✓ avoid errors with grammar and punctuation

Task sequence for writing a letter

In order to complete your task efficiently and within about 20 minutes you should complete the task in the following manner:

1. Read the question and identify the purpose of the letter. (Asking for help, requesting information, apologizing, complaining, or thanking someone)

2. Underline key words to help you understand the purpose better and also so you can rephrase these words when you write your letter.

3. Brainstorm how you will answer the task You always need to respond to three bullet points. In some cases, this may require you to "invent" information. For instance, you will need to think of a piece of equipment if you are asked to: *describe a problem you had with a piece of equipment.*

4. Write the letter

5. Proofread your letter

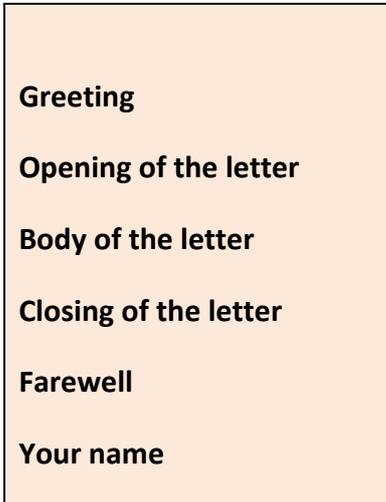
Tip!

Practice writing your letters using the same sequence over and over so that you have it perfected before your test.

3.2. *Parts of letters*

There are six main parts to an IELTS letter.

[Note: You do NOT need to write any addresses or dates]



Greeting: *Dear Marie, Dear Ms. Smith, Dear Sir or Madam,*

The greeting should be appropriate for the type of letter you are writing. If you are writing to a friend or family member, it is most appropriate to just write that person's first name. If you are writing a more formal letter to someone you know - such as your boss, you should use that person's last name. Do not use *Dear Sir or Madam* in this instance because that is only for letters to people who you do not know. *Dear Sir or Madam* is only for instances where you do not know the person you are writing to.

Opening of the letter: *It was great to see you last weekend; I am writing with regard to...*

With a formal letter, you should go straight to the purpose of the letter. With a personal letter to a friend or family member it is usually appropriate to start with a warm comment and then the purpose of the letter:

Formal letter

I am writing with regard to...

I am writing to inquire about...

Informal letter

I hope you are enjoying your new home. Anyway, the reason I'm writing to you is because I have some good news to share with you...

Body of the letter

The body of the letter contains the message the writer needs to communicate, which in the case of IELTS is the three bulleted points that need to be addressed. Sometimes the first bulleted point will appear in the same paragraph as the opening of the letter described above and sometimes it may follow the opening in a new paragraph. Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that introduces the main point of the paragraph. This main point should be one of the three bullet points that you have been asked to write about. By writing a clear topic sentence you send a clear signal to the examiner about which bullet point you are covering and this makes it easy for the examiner to assess the quality of your task response and also increases your score for cohesion and coherence, due to the ease with which the examiner can read your letter. It also helps you to focus on the bullet points, which makes it easier to finish your task on time. Topic sentences can begin with phrases like: *With regard to..., As for..., I would also like to mention...*

Closing of the letter

If the letter is to a friend or family member you might finish with a warm comment. For more formal letters the closing of the letter consists of a closing sentence to the letter like: *I appreciate your time and attention to this matter*. Without this sentence, the letter may seem to finish too abruptly and therefore the TONE of the letter may not be appropriate, which will result in a lower score for task achievement.

Farewell: *Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely, Best regards,*

There are lots of phrases to end letters. I suggest you pick something that works and always use the same way to finish your letters. You can use the following phrases depending on whether you are writing a formal or informal letter.

Formal (to someone you haven't met)

Yours faithfully,

Mike Duntree

Formal (to someone you have met)

Yours sincerely,

Mike Duntree

Semi-formal (To someone you know really well)

Best regards,

Mike

Your name: Mike; Mike Wattie [FIRST name; FIRST LAST names]

If you are just writing to a friend or family member you can just write your first name. If the letter is more formal and it is to a company or person you do not know well you need to write your first and last names. In most situations it will be appropriate to write your first and last names; even to a friend, this is appropriate. In this case, you should generally use both names. However, it would be strange to write your last name if you were writing to your mother, so you should try to remain a little flexible.

3.3. *Types of letters*

Task one of the IELTS writing exam includes different types of letters. The most common ones are to write a letter to ask for information, respond to a request for information, to make a complaint, to thank someone, or to make an apology. The usual subject areas are related to finding accommodation, difficulties with accommodation, making travel arrangements, planning holidays, thanking friends or relatives for holidays, and responding to requests for social events.

The other factor to take note of in this section is whether it is a semi-formal letter to someone you know or a more formal letter to someone you don't know. This influences the tone or attitude of the letter. If you are writing to a friend or someone who is known to you, you might choose to use a more friendly tone, whereas this should be avoided if you are writing to a stranger.

Tip!

Getting the correct level of formality is critical to scoring well for *task achievement!*

Formality of letters

Certain styles of letters are required for certain occasions. When deciding what style of letter to write, consider the **audience** of the letter, and the **purpose** of the letter. Turning first to the audience in the exam you will have to write a letter to a business, acquaintance, or friend or family member.

Formal letters

The body of a letter written to a business or a person you don't know well is written in formal language, unlike the more casual and friendly language of a letter to a friend or family member.

Semi-formal letters

These letters are to acquaintances, friends or family and so the tone should be friendlier than with a letter to a business. An appropriate tone is an important element of task achievement.

Informal letters

I suggest you do not write this type of letter in the IELTS exam. These are letters written to very close friends and have features such as slang and abbreviations of words. You should NEVER use overly informal language or texting language such as *wanna*, *cos*, and *LOL*. Using the right tone influences the TASK score for your letter.

The reason why I suggest you do not write this way is because it may lower your score for task achievement as it is easy for the tone to be inappropriate. In addition, it may decrease your score for vocabulary because many features of informal writing use unsophisticated language. It's always better to be too formal than not formal enough!

Purposes of letters

It's very important that when you get your task you work out the purpose of the letter you need to write. You need to focus on this purpose throughout the letter in order to score well for task achievement. You can make the purpose of the letter clear by stating it in the introduction. For the IELTS exam you need to be able to write the following types of letters:

Requesting information

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to ask for information from a business or acquaintance.

Giving information

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to respond to a request for information.

Making a complaint

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to complain about a product or situation.

Making an apology

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to apologise for making a mistake or disturbing someone.

Thanking someone

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to thank someone for his or her thoughtfulness or kindness.

3.4. Requesting information

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to ask for information from a business or acquaintance. When you are asked to make a request for information the most important thing is to use a polite tone. If you do not use an appropriate tone your score for task achievement will be lowered.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You are planning to spend a weekend at a hotel with your family. Write a letter to the hotel making the arrangements. Ask them the following:

- when you want to arrive and leave
- what type of rooms you would like and ask how much they will cost
- you are interested to know about activities and places of interest near the hotel

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear,

Useful language for requesting information

To begin letters:

I am writing to ask if you would be so generous as to ...

I am writing to request your kind permission for ...

I wonder if I might ask you for your valuable advice concerning ...

Phrases to make requests:

Could you also provide details of...

I would also like to know...

In addition, could you tell me...

To end letters:

I hope that my request will not inconvenience you too much.

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Tip!

When you request information it is better to be over-polite than not polite enough.

Sample letter of request

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to ask if you would be so kind as to give me some details about your hotel's accommodation.

I would like to book accommodation for my family and me from the 11th of March until the 15th. On the 11th I would like to arrive late in the afternoon, and on the 15th, if possible, I would like to have a late check-out at about 4 pm.

As we are two adults and a child, I would like to book a one-bedroom suite, if possible. I would also prefer a non-smoking room as my daughter has allergies. Please, let me know how much it would be for the entire length of our stay and also whether the price includes anything extra like breakfast.

I would also appreciate any information you can offer about places for sightseeing and leisure activities as we will be spending a few days in the town nearby.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Wattie

3.5. Giving information

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to respond to a request for information. The most important thing about this task is to make sure that you clearly identify what information needs to be given. In most cases, you will need to give three different pieces of information. You will need to make up a lot of the details of information you need to provide for this task.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You recently subscribed to a new magazine. A representative of the magazine has asked you to give some feedback on their magazine. Write a letter to the representative of the magazine that includes the following information:

- *details of why you bought the magazine*
- *what you liked about the latest edition*
- *any improvements you would recommend*

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear,

Useful language for giving information

To begin letters:

I am writing in response to your enquiry about ...

I am writing with regard to...

I am writing to advise you that...

To end letters:

I hope that this information will be of some assistance.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Do not hesitate to contact me should you require further assistance.

Other useful phrases:

Please find enclosed a ...

May I bring to your attention ...

The following information may be of use to you

I would also like to draw to your attention ...

Tip!

When you write to give information it is important to make the purpose of the letter clear.

Sample letter to give information

Dear Mrs. Brown,

The purpose of this letter is to express my opinion about your magazine. I believe it is a wonderful idea to ask for the thoughts of your readers about your recently released publication.

I purchased the magazine because it includes topics that relate to my hobby of bird watching. I often seek out new places to visit to take photos of birds and your magazine seems to provide lots of good recommendations.

What I loved the most about your current issue was the article describing places to go bird watching in local national parks. I especially like the way you covered the latest developments in the parks that support birdwatchers. Moreover, I felt attracted by the images portrayed on the cover page.

I would like to suggest you to continue producing material which is useful and enjoyable to read. Also, I suggest that you make the magazine more concise and with fewer images so it is lighter and even more appealing.

I hope you find my comments and recommendations helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Wattie

3.6. Making a complaint:

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to complain about a product or situation. The tone of complaint letters should not be aggressive or insulting, as this will be considered as an inappropriate tone and lower your score for task achievement. Usually, it is better to be too polite than to be not polite enough!

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Write a letter of complaint to a store where you purchased a faulty new refrigerator. In your letter explain the following:

- where and when you purchased the refrigerator
- what is wrong with it
- what action you would like the store to take

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear,

Useful language for making a complaint

To begin letters:

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with...

I regret to inform you how disappointed I was with...

I am writing to draw your attention to the problem of...

Politely making a complaint:

I would like to draw to your attention...

I would like to respectfully point out that...

In order to rectify the situation I will...

Politely asking for action to be taken

Due to the discomfort and inconvenience we respectfully request compensation for...

I believe the best way to rectify the situation is...

Could you please put this right by...

To end letters:

I hope this matter will be resolved as soon as possible.

I hope this matter will receive your immediate attention.

I would like to request full compensation for...

Sample letter of complaint

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with a product I purchased recently from one of your stores.

I recently bought a Samsung self-defrosting refrigerator from your store on Grote St. in Adelaide. I paid cash for it and it was delivered to my house on the 11th of June. The model number is G11412, and it is shown on page 27 of your spring catalogue.

There is a problem with the defrosting system of the refrigerator. Every time, the refrigerator defrosts itself, a puddle of water forms on the floor in front of it. This is both a nuisance and a danger as someone may slip and fall.

I hope this matter will receive your immediate attention. Please contact me during the day on my mobile 094-980-2675 to arrange a time for a repair man to fix the defrost system.

Thank you in advance for your help in straightening out this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Wattie

Tip!

When making a complaint it is important for the tone of the letter that you do not make threats or insult the person you are writing to.

3.7. *Making an apology*

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to apologise for making a mistake or disturbing someone. When you are asked to write a letter to apologise for a situation it is important to express a high degree of sincerity. In addition, it is usually best to assume responsibility and not try to put any of the blame back on to the person you are writing the letter to.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Recently you had a party at your house. There was a lot of noise late at night and you disturbed your next-door neighbour. Write a letter to your neighbour.

In your letter:

- *explain the reasons for the noise*
- *apologise*
- *describe what action you will take to prevent it from happening again*

Write at least 150 words.

You do NOT need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear,

Useful language for making an apology

To begin letters:

I am writing to sincerely apologise for...

Please accept my profuse apologies for....

I would like to apologise for....

Expressing regret:

Please accept my apology for...

I am sorry that I am unable to...

Regrettably, I cannot ...

Making amends:

Please allow me to offer compensation for....

I insist on making up for your inconvenience by...

To end letters:

Once again, my apologies for the inconvenience caused.

I hope that you will accept my apologies.

I hope that you can overlook this regrettable error.

Sample letter of apology

Dear Mr and Mrs Smith,

I am writing to sincerely apologise for the disturbance caused during my birthday party last Saturday night.

I was celebrating my 25th birthday with my friends and approximately two hours after the party started, two people, who were friends of a friend, started arguing about an issue that is still unknown to me. Initially, it was just a discussion, but then it became a fight and I was forced to call the police.

I deeply regret having interrupted your sleep. Please accept my most sincere apologies. The situation got out of control and noise at that point was inevitable. However, I understand that we all enjoy living in a peaceful neighbourhood and whatever happened at my party should not have disturbed you.

I will refrain from holding parties in my unit in the future in order to avoid further problematic events in our residential area.

Once again, my apologies for the inconvenience caused.

Kind regards,

Mike Wattie

3.8. Thanking someone

Thank you letters are sent as a courtesy to thank someone for his or her thoughtfulness or kindness. It is important to use a polite tone.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

A friend from overseas recently sent you a gift in the mail. Write a letter to your friend to thank him/her. In your letter:

- say how you felt when you received the present
- describe what you like about it
- explain how you will use the present

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear,

Useful language for thanking someone

To begin letters:

I am writing to thank you for...

I am writing to express my gratitude for...

I would like to tell how cheerful I felt when...

Giving thanks

I am indeed indebted to you for...

I very much appreciated your...

I am extremely grateful to you for...

To end letters:

Once again thank you for...

Once again I really appreciated the...

I would like to once again express my gratitude for...

Sample for thanking someone

Dear Peter,

It seems like ages since we were together at university. I am writing to express my gratitude for remembering my birthday.

I felt really excited when I found a parcel from you in my letter box. I was really touched that you have still kept in touch and what's more, you remembered my birthday. It really makes me feel we have a close and special friendship despite the physical distance between us.

When I opened up the box and I found that you had sent a bottle of my favourite maple syrup I was really happy. As you know I just love that sweet syrup and I also liked the oak casket that it was packaged in.

Every Sunday, I am going to pour some of the syrup over my pancakes. I might also make some of those maple syrup toffees I used to make when we were flatmates.

Once again, I really appreciated you remembering my birthday.

Cheers,

Mike

3.9. *Useful language for letters*

To introduce new points:

With regard to...

As far as...is concerned...

I would also like to mention...

To emphasize what you are saying:

Clearly,

Obviously,

Needless to say,

Satisfaction

I thoroughly enjoyed...

I was thrilled about/by...

... was extraordinary

Dissatisfaction

I am discontent about/with...

I am not satisfied about/with...

...is not what I expected...

...does not fulfil my needs...

...is too + [adjective]

Regret/apology

I regret that I...

Please accept my apology for...

I am sorry that I am unable to...

Please forgive me for...

Regrettably, I cannot ...

Making a request

I would be grateful if...

What I am looking for is...

I am very keen to...

I would be indebted to you if you could...

Giving thanks

I am indeed indebted to you for...

I very much appreciated your...

I am extremely grateful to you for...

3.10. Common errors

Task achievement

Poor time management

On any given test day it seems that around 30% of candidates are unable to finish their writing exam. Task one requires you to write a minimum of 150 words and task two requires you to write 250 words. If you do not write enough words your score for task achievement is penalised by 1 to 3 points! In addition to that, if you didn't complete the task you are unlikely to score well for task achievement anyway, as you are unlikely to have completely answered all the requirements of the question. In this case, your score for task achievement would be restricted to 5 and you would still get the penalty on top of this. In other words, you probably will fail your exam! The following are my suggestions for managing your time:

Make sure you make a plan before you start writing. A plan will save you time when you start writing because you will not have to keep stopping to think about what point you want to make next. This is the area that most students do poorly on and in order to do it well, it takes practice. The best way to practice is to look at past exam questions and prepare a plan of how you would write them.

Be careful you don't write too much for task one and then run out of time to write task two. This is a very common mistake in the exam. Some people will write over 200 words for their task one and then just a single paragraph for task two. This is a foolish way to fail your exam!

Make sure you have practiced writing sufficiently before your exam and that you understand how to structure the different types of letters that get asked. If you are familiar with the types of questions that get asked you won't get a nasty surprise and you will be able to answer the question more quickly.

If you really have trouble with finishing on time, learn some stock phrases that you can write quickly in the exam. If you have learnt the sentences well you will be able to write them quickly and without errors. Lots of these types of phrases are provided under the different types of letters in this book.

When practising if you find you are unable to complete both tasks fully within one hour then you are not ready to take your exam and you need to practice more.

Not responding to all parts of the task.

Task 1 always requires that you write a letter in response to 3 bullet points. If you do not address all three bullet points, your score is limited to 5 for task achievement. Scoring higher than this requires a full response to each of the bullet points.

A friend from overseas recently sent you a gift in the mail. Write a letter to your friend to thank him/her. In your letter:

- say how you felt when you received the present
- describe what you like about it
- explain how you will use the present

Not responding to all parts of the bullet point.

As well as responding to all three bullet points of a task, you must make sure that you address all parts of a bullet point. Sometimes, a bullet point requires more than one response. For example, the bullet point below requires you to say two things. The first is the time you want to arrive and the second is the time you want to leave.

- when you want to arrive and leave

Not giving a balanced answer to all three questions

As mentioned above a score of six or above for task achievement requires a full response to each of the bullet points. The best way to achieve this is to answer each bullet point in its own paragraph. Make each paragraph roughly the same size, where possible. It doesn't make sense to just give a single sentence to respond to any of the bullet points because this response is not complete and sufficient enough to get you to 7 and beyond for task achievement.

Tip!

To score well for task achievement you must respond well to all parts of the question.

Inappropriate tone

The tone of your letter is extremely important to scoring above six for task achievement. Some of the common errors are:

Too aggressive a tone in a letter of complaint:

X If you do not solve this immediately I will call my lawyer and sue you in court.

✓ I would appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.

To be overly friendly with a letter that requires more formality. Note, don't think what might actually occur in reality just think that it is an exam and it's better to be overly formal than formal enough. For instance, when you write a letter to your boss, you should keep it formal.

X Hey, can you give me the next week off mate?

✓ I was wondering if it is possible to have leave next week?

Errors with the letter format

The format of your letter is also important for task response. You should not write your name in the body of the letter. It should only be written at the end of the letter. A common mistake student make is to write your name in the body of the letter when they are asked to introduce themselves.

X My name is Mike Wattie I am a teacher from New Zealand.

✓ I'm a teacher from New Zealand with over 15 years' experience in second language acquisition.

Another common mistake is not writing a surname for a formal letter.

x Yours sincerely,

Billy

✓ Yours sincerely

Billy Thompson

Cohesion and coherence

Not clearly answering a question in one place

There are always three bullet points to respond to. The golden rule for letter writing is to put your response to each bullet point in its own paragraph. This achieves a couple of purposes. First of all, your paragraph will focus on one key point and that is an important element of the paragraph. Secondly, you will make it easy for the examiner to read your letter and assess your task achievement.

Don't ask questions unless the task requests it. And, do not ask rhetorical questions

X I remember you said you have a holiday soon. right? Then why don't you come to Vietnam then?

✓ I would like to invite you to visit me in Vietnam when you have sufficient time.

Poor topic sentence

As with essays, paragraphs for letters should begin with a topic sentence. The topic sentence introduces the key point of the paragraph and also sends a signal to the examiner about which bullet point you are addressing.

As an illustrative example lets imagine the bullet point is as follows:

- Discuss relevant work experience for this job.

This bullet point should be responded to by starting the paragraph with a sentence that signals your answer to this question.

X I studied accounting at Northampton University. Now I'm working as an accountant.

✓ With regard to my background, I have over 10 years' experience. For the last two years, I have been working as an accountant. Previously,

Tip!

The golden rule for structuring your letter is to put your respond to each bullet point in its own paragraph.

Vocabulary

"S" endings of words

Almost every letter I read has this mistake. The writer puts an "S" where it's not needed or else forgets to put one where it is needed. Examples below:

Student are always studying hard. [S is needed for students]

Students goes home tired every day. [The verb should be go]

Technologies are developing rapidly. [Technology is uncountable in this context so it should be technology is developing rapidly]

Other errors with word endings and form

Other common errors are errors with word endings such as "ed" for past tense, and errors with word forms such as when a verb is incorrectly written as a noun. A couple of examples:

Last year my uncle work in America. [worked]

We need to management the environment better. [manage]

Repeating words excessively

You should always rephrase words that are given in the task because it shows your ability to rephrase words and that you have a broad vocabulary. In addition to this, try to avoid repeating the same word in the body of your essay. You can achieve this by using different words or by using different forms of the same word.

Example of rephrase: *country*= *nation*

Example of change in form: *young people need to be prepared for their careers* = *preparation of young people for their careers is necessary*

Colloquial expressions

Some phrases are used when speaking, but not when writing. Some examples:

Actually, I would also like to mention, I reckon

Clichés

A cliché is an overused expression. These can be considered as "ugly" English. Examples:

At this point in time...

At the end of the day...

Just like every coin has two sides...

Tip!

To score well for vocabulary you need to not only not make too many errors but also show talent with language. You can do this by using a wide range of vocabulary and using sophisticated language.

Grammar

Articles

Almost every essay I read has errors with articles. The articles are: a, an, the

To reduce these errors, you should read about the rules, do some quizzes, and also practice your writing and get feedback on these.

Avoid using repetitive sentence structures

I am a member of your gym for the last five years. I am under a monthly membership for \$85, which includes two training sessions per week. I am writing this letter in regard to discontinuation of my membership with your gym.

I am very thankful to your gym...

Avoid writing short simple sentences

In order to score six and above you need to show the examiner you have the ability to write complex sentences. These are sentences that have a dependent and independent clause. If you just write short simple sentences like the one below your score is limited to 5.

The advantages of this policy are obvious. It is beneficial for communities and societies in general.

My comment: It would be better to write this as one sentence: "The advantages of this policy for communities and societies are obvious. "

He or she

If you write in plural you don't need to use this awkward expression "*if people like it... they*"; instead of "*if a person likes that he or she...*"

Prepositions

Prepositions are used to locate something in time and space, modify a noun; or tell when or where or under what conditions something happened. The following are guidelines for using prepositions correctly. This covers many common situations.

Prepositions of Time: at, in, on

Preposition	Usage	Example
At	at is for specific times	The exam is <u>at</u> 12:15 PM
In	in is for nonspecific times during a day/month/year.	The exam is <u>in</u> the morning
On	on for days and dates	The exam is <u>on</u> Monday. The exam is <u>on</u> Christmas Day.

Prepositions of Place: at, in, on

Preposition	Usage	Example
At	We use at for specific addresses.	I live <u>at</u> 50 Pong Lai Road.
In	We use in for the names of land-areas (towns, counties, states, countries, and continents).	I live <u>in</u> Taipei.
On	We use on for the names of streets, avenues, etc.	I live <u>on</u> Pong Lai Road.

Prepositions for describing our work:

<u>at</u> company's	I work <u>at</u> Comtrend
<u>in</u> departments	<u>in</u> the marketing department, as a technical writer.
<u>on</u> projects	I am working <u>on</u> a new manual

Tip!

To score well for grammar you need to not only avoid errors but also show talent. You can do this by using a range of sentence types.



4. Task 2: Essay Writing

Model essays and how to write them!



4.1. Overview

Writing Task 2 is designed to test your ability to write an academic style essay. You must present the information in your own words as complete sentences within paragraphs. You are required to write over 250 words, and the task should be completed in about 40 minutes (both part 1 and 2 must be finished in 1 hour).

Sample question

WRITING TASK 2

How long you should spend

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Topic

Write about the following topic:

Some people believe that the fast pace and stress of modern life is having a negative effect on families.

Do you agree or disagree?

Question

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

Write at least 250 words.

How many words you should write

Note that most of the parts of the task are standardised. For instance, you are always advised to spend about 40 minutes on the task and you are always required to write at least 250 words. In addition, you are always advised to include relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. Note that this is not a requirement, and you do not lose marks for not giving examples. Giving examples is only one way of supporting your main ideas. The only part that changes for each task is the part shown in larger letters in the box in the middle of the task [see above]. This consists of a topic and a question. The topic tells you what you need to write your essay about, and the question tells you what you must say about the topic.

Grading of tasks

Criteria	Requirement
Task Response This criterion assesses how well you have focused on the topic and answered the question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ write over 250 words✓ satisfy all the requirements of the task✓ cover all parts of the topic✓ cover all parts of the question✓ develop main points
Coherence and Cohesion This criterion assesses how well you have structured your essay, used paragraphing, and connected your ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ sequence information and ideas logically✓ use a range of cohesive devices appropriately✓ use paragraphing appropriately✓ Have a clear progression throughout✓ avoid unnecessary repetition of information
Lexical Resource This criterion assesses your vocabulary in terms of errors and also ability to use more advanced language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ use of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision✓ use less common vocabulary✓ awareness of style and collocation✓ avoid errors with word choices✓ avoid errors with word formation✓ avoid errors with spelling
Grammatical Range and Accuracy This criterion assesses your grammar in terms of errors and also ability to use more advanced sentence structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms✓ produce error-free sentences✓ avoid errors with grammar and punctuation

Comparing the three types of essays

Requirements

Opinion	Both sides + opinion	Two question Essay
What is your opinion and why?	Discuss two aspects equally of this argument and then give your own opinion.	Discuss two questions equally.

Key question words

Opinion	Both sides + opinion	Two question Essay
<p>What is your opinion?</p> <p>To what extent do you agree or disagree?</p> <p>Do you think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?</p>	<p>Discuss the advantages and disadvantages and give your own opinion</p> <p>Discuss both sides of this argument and then give your own opinion.</p>	<p>What problem does this cause?</p> <p>What are some potential solutions?</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <p>What are some other solutions?</p>

Example Tasks

Opinion	Both sides + opinion	Two questions
<p>Computers are being used more and more in education and some say there will soon be no role for the teacher in education.</p> <p>To what extent do you agree or disagree?</p>	<p>Computers are being used more and more in education. Some people say that this is a positive trend, while others argue that it is leading to negative consequences.</p> <p>Discuss both sides of this argument and then give your own opinion.</p>	<p>Computers are being used more and more in education.</p> <p>What are some of the problems it causes?</p> <p>What are some of the possible solutions?</p>

Structuring the three types of essays

Introduction

Opinion	Both sides + opinion	Two question Essay
Rephrase question opinion = (how much) reasons: "I totally agree because.."	Rephrase question "This essay discusses..." + [both sides] and [opinion]	Rephrase question "This essay discusses..." + [question 1] and [question 2]

Body

Opinion	Both sides + opinion	Two question Essay
reason 1	Side 1 advantages	question 1
reason 2	Side 2 advantages	question 2
[reason 3/concession	[Note: keep your opinion out of the body. It is only about what people in general may think.]	

Final paragraph

Opinion	Both sides + opinion	Two question Essay
Restating of your position + summary of reasons	Your Opinion State that both sides are important/have merits State which one is more important/better	Summary of question 1 and 2

4.2. *Opinion essay*

This type of essay tests your ability to state an opinion on an issue and then support it with logical reasons. To score well you need to explain your reasons clearly and use examples to illustrate the key points you are trying to make.

Typical question words

What is your opinion?

Do you agree or disagree?

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

To what extent do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

Sample task

Some people believe that the fast pace and stress of modern life is having a negative effect on families.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Task Analysis

It is important to realise that every task contains a topic and a question. You must fully address both the topic and the question to score six and above for task response. An analysis of the topic and question is provided below:

Topic: Some people believe that the **fast pace** and stress of modern life is having a negative effect on families.

Whenever you see the word **and** in the topic, you must address both parts of this question. In this case, the essay must address both the fast pace and stress of modern life in order to reach six and above for task response. Failure to address both parts of the topic results in a task response of five or below. This is because not all parts of the topic have been addressed.

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

The question also has two requirements. You must state whether you agree or disagree and also the extent, or how much, you agree or disagree. In order to score a six and above you need to clearly state your response to the question including the extent to which you agree or disagree. In order to make your opinion clear, I believe it is best to give your opinion in both the introduction and conclusion of the essay. Do not forget to mention the extent! Even if the question does not ask the extent; for instance, it just asks do you agree or disagree, I still believe it is a good idea to state the extent. You can give the extent using words like totally or completely if you 100% agree or disagree; or somewhat or partly, if you do not fully agree or disagree. I strongly urge you to not 50-50 agree and disagree. This usually ends up being unconvincing and unclear.

Planning your essay

- 1. Underline key vocabulary in the topic and write words with the same or related meaning.**

Some people believe that the fast pace and stress of modern life is having a

high-speed pressure contemporary lifestyles

negative effect on families.

harmful influence family life

- 2. Decide what kind of response is needed.**

To what extent do you agree or disagree? = *say how much you agree or*

disagree

- 3. Brainstorm key points for the answer.**

Agree with a negative effect on families	Disagree with a negative effect on families
<i>Fast pace leads to less time for families to be together</i>	<i>Due to the increased time pressure and stress families are forced to cooperate more, which brings them closer together</i>
<i>Stress leads to arguments among family members</i>	

4. **Decide on your position** (totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, totally disagree)

You do not need to give arguments for both sides of the topic. It is up to you, as it is your opinion. Rather than thinking about your real opinion, I suggest you look at the points you have brainstormed for each side of the argument, and then choose a side that you think will be the easiest to explain, and for which you have the better language to use. Remember this is a language test and not a test of your knowledge. The key point is to focus on language and structuring your whole task well.

5. **Decide on the structure of the essay**

Based on your position (extent you agree or disagree) put numbers next to each of the points you have brainstormed above in the order you will cover them. You should always cover the side you support more strongly first in the body of the essay. Also, you should always organise your points from strongest and weakest.

Steps in writing your essay

Once you have written a solid plan for your essay, you can begin the task of actually writing the essay. Having a good plan will speed up this process and ensure that you are consistent with your opinion throughout the essay. What I mean here is that the opinion you give in the introduction will fit the body of the essay, and the conclusion will restate the same opinion you gave in the introduction and summarise the body of the essay. If you achieve this high level of fit, you are likely to score well for task response and cohesion and coherence.

WRITING THE INTRODUCTION

1. Paraphrase the question

Given that you have already rephrased the keywords of the topic, in the planning stage, this step should be relatively easy. When you do write this sentence, in addition to rephrasing words also try to rearrange the order of words in the sentence. This may necessitate changing some of the word forms. For instance, you might have to change nouns into verbs. This shows the examiner your ability to use language flexibly and can increase your score for vocabulary and grammar.

Some people believe that the fast pace and stress of modern life is having a negative

high-speed pressure contemporary lifestyles
harmful

effect on families.

influence family life

Many people feel that family life is being harmed by the high-speed and pressure of contemporary lifestyles.

2. State your position [totally/strongly/somewhat + agree/disagree]

It is important to state your position in the introduction of the essay because it makes it clearer for the examiner what your position is and also when the examiner reads the body of your essay, they already have an overall idea of what your essay is about. Then, in the likely event that you have errors with vocabulary and grammar, they may be less serious because the examiner will have more of a context in order to guess the meaning of what you are trying to express. You can simply state your opinion, and this may be best if you only need a score of around six or seven and you struggle to finish your essay on time. However, you can state your opinion and also the reasons. If you are trying to get to 8 I believe it is better to state both your opinion and the reasons. Although this will slightly increase the word length, this adds to the quality of your introduction and also assists your task response as the introduction and conclusion of your essay are considered as important in establishing a clear task response.

I somewhat agree with this opinion because the fast pace leads to less time for families to be together, stress leads to arguments among family members; however, due to the increased time pressure and stress families are forced to cooperate more, which brings them closer together.

[I realise this is quite long and it may be beyond some writers. This is why a sentence of this quality can enable a candidate to get to level eight or nine]

BODY

After you have written the introduction, you will need two or three body paragraphs. For this type of essay, I suggest putting only one reason in each paragraph. A good paragraph should only have one main idea. You may write only two paragraphs if you are a person who likes to explain things in detail and use illustrative examples. If you prefer, you can write three shorter paragraphs. Whether you write two or three paragraphs may depend on the question and also the quality of points you have brainstormed. Personally, I would use three paragraphs if I were writing about both sides of the argument. This is because it is safest to have two paragraphs for the side you support more strongly and only one paragraph for the side you support less. This structure ensures your opinion is supported well, and prevents the risk of the body of the essay not matching your opinion. What I mean here is that sometimes someone says they somewhat agree, but then go on to argue more strongly about why they disagree. This sends both your task response and coherence and cohesion tumbling down!

1. Write topic sentences for each body paragraph

Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence. For this type of essay, the topic sentence consists of three parts, which are the sequencing word, topic, and reason to support the opinion.

Sequencing word + topic + reason

The main reason why I believe family life is being compromised is because families have less time to be with each other.

2. Write supporting sentences for the topic sentences

You can think of the topic sentence you have just written as being the introduction for the paragraph. It introduces the reason for your opinion, which forms the key point for the paragraph. Having a clear key point for the paragraph makes it easy for the examiner to understand what you are saying in the paragraph. In addition, if the key point of the paragraph is clear any errors with vocabulary or grammar will be less likely to prevent communication. This is because the examiner will have more of a context to guess any parts that are unclear. After you have written the topic sentence, you should support it by developing the key point. There are three ways to develop your key point: Explanation, example, adding details

Explanation: *As individual family members are busier at work and with their social lives, they have less time to spend with their family.*

Adding details: *As well as this, people have many things they have to do these days such as checking e-mail, updating their online social status and so less time is left for family life.*

Example: *To illustrate, I spend about two hours online every night attending to daily correspondence before chatting with my family members, whereas ten years ago I would spend time with my family from the moment I walked in the door.*

[The example above could just consist of the first clause. However, to fully make the point the second clause is needed in order to make the difference between now compared to the past clearer. This is the difference between a level 6 writer and a more competent writer.]

CONCLUSION

In order to write an excellent conclusion, you should start by using a phrase that signals you are concluding your essay. Then, you should restate the position to reinforce it in the mind of the examiner. After this, you should summarise the main points you made in the body of the essay because this is a standard feature of a concluding paragraph and also it will remind the examiner of your key points and make your opinion more persuasive. Finally, if you want to write a truly outstanding conclusion, and you have enough time, you could give a final comment based on your summary. If you are short of time, just try to complete as many of the steps below that time permits. Note that if you are aware you are running out of time when writing the body of the essay, try to finish the body quickly and at least write something for this paragraph. If you do not have some sort of concluding paragraph the essay will be incomplete and the examiner may penalise you for cohesion and coherence. It will also make it difficult to get a high score for task response because the concluding paragraph is an important factor in assessing the task response.

1. Send a signal you are concluding your essay

I like *in conclusion*. This is a universally accepted way to finish an academic essay. There are other choices but this works well and can be used for all three types of essays. Some students think it is boring to use this phrase. However, keep in mind there are no marks for creativity and flair. You are not doing creative writing; instead, you are taking a language exam. Every time I read phrases like *in a nutshell*, I am not impressed; in fact, the word yuck comes to mind! You can use phrases like *to summarise*; the reason why I'm against these is because they do not fit my structure for a both sides and opinion essay (for that essay the final paragraph will be your opinion and not a summary). I believe it is better to have a standard phrase that you can use for all three essays to avoid the need to remember different ones and to correctly applied them under pressure in the exam.

2. Restate your position

You should restate your opinion along with the extent. This is good essay writing. This is the way it's done. Many students don't want to do this and feel they have already said it, so they don't want to say it again. Up to you! I believe you should restate your opinion.

I somewhat believe that the rapid pace and stressful nature of contemporary lifestyles are having negative consequences on family relationships.

3. Summarise the main points

If you have the time it is very helpful for your task response to summarise the reasons for your opinion. Note that you should ideally use different words and phrases than in the body of your essay. If you do this well it can increase your score for vocabulary because it shows the examiner your range of vocabulary.

This is because family members have less time, and when they are together, they feel less relaxed. However, I admit that sometimes adversity can bring people closer together.

4. Give your final opinion or recommendation/ restate your position

If you have time, based on a summary, give your final opinion or make a recommendation. This is a way to really show the examiner your talent and reach a score of 8 or 9 for task response. This will really impress the examiner as it will show your understanding of what you've written and your ability to make further comment on it. This is a high-level language function.

Given this situation, it seems that family members should try to be more supportive to one another and also parents need to set aside regular times for families to relax together.

Model essay version 1: somewhat agree

Some people believe that the fast pace and stress of modern life is having a negative effect on families.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Many people feel that family life is being harmed by the high-speed and pressure of contemporary lifestyles. I somewhat agree with this opinion because the fast pace leads to less time for families to be together, and stress leads to arguments among family members; however, due to the increased time pressure and stress families are forced to cooperate more, which brings them closer together.

The main reason why I believe family life is being compromised is because families have less time to be with each other. As individual family members are busier at work and with their social lives, they have less time to spend with their family. As well as this, people have many things they have to do these days such as checking e-mail, updating their online social status and so less time is left for family life. To illustrate, I spend about two hours online every night attending to daily correspondence before chatting with my family members.

In addition, the pressure of life these days means that even when families do get together arguments are more likely. This is because everyone feels tired and they are more likely to get irritated and react to their heightened emotional levels.

However, it does seem reasonable that this pressure may also lead to positive outcomes in some families. One such possibility is that family members will cooperate more in order to overcome time limitations. For instance, they may share household chores, so that everybody has time to relax afterwards.

In conclusion, I somewhat believe that the rapid pace and stressful nature of contemporary lifestyles are having negative consequences on family relationships. This is because family members have less time, and when they are together they feel less relaxed. However, I admit that sometimes adversity can bring people closer together. Given this situation, it seems that family members should try to be more supportive of one another and also parents need to set aside regular times for families to relax together.

[350 words]

Comments about the previous model essay

You may have noticed that the previous essay was rather long. It was about 350 words. This is because of a high level of paragraph development in paragraph 2. Paragraph development can increase the score for task response and also cohesion and coherence. However, if we do a lot of paragraph development we should consider having fewer paragraphs. The following model has only two body paragraphs. In addition, it only covers one side of the argument [totally agree/disagree]. I believe this is a better approach because it is more persuasive and there is less risk that when you cover the other side of the argument you end up contradicting what you have previously said. It also means that your introduction and conclusion will be shorter because there are fewer things you have to mention.

Template for opinion essay

The template below has been used to write the second version of the essay.

Introduction

There is currently a contentious argument over whether XYZ [XYZ is the topic]

I totally agree/disagree with this opinion because [reason 1 + reason 2]

Paragraph 2

The main reason why I believe/don't believe XYZ is because... [reason 1]

Paragraph 3

Another reason why I support/don't support the notion that XYZ is due to the fact that... [reason 2]

Conclusion

In conclusion, I completely agree/disagree that XYZ because [rephrase reason 1] and [rephrase reason 2].

Given this situation, it seems that [give a final recommendation or opinion]

Model essay version 2: totally agree

Some people believe that the fast pace and stress of modern life is having a negative effect on families.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

There is currently a contentious argument over whether family life is being harmed by the high-speed and pressure of contemporary lifestyles. I totally agree with this opinion because the fast pace leads to less time for families to be together, and stress leads to arguments among family members.

The main reason why I believe family life is being compromised is because families have less time to be with each other. This is due to family members being busier at work and with their social lives. As well as this, people have many things they have to do these days such as checking e-mail, updating their online social status and so less time is left for family life. To illustrate, I spend about two hours online every night attending to daily correspondence before chatting with my family members, whereas ten years ago I would spend time with my family as soon as I walked in the door.

Another reason why I support the notion that families are being impacted negatively is that the pressure of life these days means that even when families do get together arguments are more likely. This is because everyone feels tired and they are more likely to get irritated and to react to their heightened emotional levels.

In conclusion, I completely agree that the rapid pace and stressful nature of contemporary lifestyles are having negative consequences on family relationships. This is because family members have less time, and when they are together they feel less relaxed. Given this situation, it seems that family members should try to be more supportive to one another and also parents need to set aside regular times for families to relax together. [281 words]

Model essay version 3: Outweigh

Many people believe that the government should encourage industries and businesses to move from large cities to the countryside.

Do you think that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

Nowadays, there is a contentious issue regarding whether the authorities should provide incentives for factories and other companies to relocate from metropolitan areas to rural sites. In my opinion, the merits outweigh the drawbacks.

There are considerable benefits to locating companies in regional areas. For businesses themselves, they can have a significant decline in costs, such as the leases on premises, which are usually dramatically higher in the big cities. It is also likely to benefit rural communities by boosting their economies and providing job opportunities in the neighbourhood and preventing the need for them to make a long commute to work in the city. Finally, by locating businesses in remote areas it can benefit cities by reducing overcrowding, traffic congestion, and pollution levels.

However, there are potential drawbacks to companies and businesses moving their premises outside metropolises. The main issue is that companies located in regional areas may be further away from their employees. This can make it more difficult to find labour to work in the company. As well as this, the companies may be located further away from their customers, which might weaken their relationships with their customers.

In conclusion, the merits to businesses relocating in more remote areas seem to outweigh the drawbacks as it can benefit the companies themselves, the local communities, and also the metropolitan areas. However, companies may face challenges to find labour and maintain close relationships with their customers. Given this situation, it seems that the government should offer incentives to encourage companies to relocate to the countryside.
[256 words]

Notes:

1. With this particular type of opinion question (outweigh) it is safer to cover both sides of the argument.
2. As with other opinion essays, you MUST clearly express your opinion about which side outweighs the other in the introduction and conclusion. In this case, it is whether the advantages are greater than the disadvantages.
3. Note that the conclusion ends with a recommendation.

More sample questions of opinion essays

Some people believe that arts like museums and art galleries are not essential for a society and they should not be funded by the government.

What is your opinion?

More and more students choose to move to other countries to study their higher education.

Do you think the advantages of this outweigh its disadvantages?

Some people believe that local shopping markets are the best places to shop, while others believe that modern shopping centres are better.

Do the advantages of local markets outweigh the disadvantages?

To improve road safety there should be more severe punishments for drivers who break the rules.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

It is believed that people who read a lot of novels have developed better imagination and language skills than people who prefer to watch TV.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

There are many reasons that can motivate a person to stay working for the same company. Some believe that money is the main reason.

Do you agree or disagree?

Some believe that those who are not talented in language learning should not be required to learn a foreign language.

What is your opinion?

COMMON MISTAKES

Unclear opinion

In the example below the candidate fails to fully make clear their opinion in the introduction. The examiner can only guess that the candidate agrees, and has no idea of the extent. In this case, this is not a good introduction, and this has a negative effect on task response and also cohesion and coherence.

Television has brought great changes to the way many children spend their leisure time. Many people believe these changes have been beneficial.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

The candidate writes:

Nowadays, children spend a lot of time watching television. It seems that there are a wider variety of television shows and many more channels.

Choosing the wrong side to argue

For opinion essays I don't think you should think about what you really believe, you should think which side is easier to argue and use high-level language. In other words, the best side to choose is the one that you can maximize your score for the four grading criteria.

Contradicting your opinion

The example below shows how an opinion can easily be contradicted in the conclusion of an essay. The writer contradicts the opinion stated in the introduction that they somewhat disagree with the widespread use of technology, by stating in the conclusion that technology needs to be learnt.

Today, more and more young children have electronic gadgets such as computers and mobile phones. Some people say that this is a positive development. Do you agree or disagree?

The candidate writes a contradicting opinion

In summary, although it is necessary for children to learn to use these devices at a young age I somewhat disagree that the widespread use of computers among children is a positive development.

Errors when making concessions

Essays that ask for your opinion have words in the question such as “*to what extent do you agree;*” “*what is your opinion;*” “*do you agree or disagree.*” My advice to students is always to say that you totally agree/disagree and only focus on one side of the argument. I would only write “*somewhat agree/disagree*” if I didn't have enough things to say about one side of the argument. I have three main reasons for this.

First, it is more persuasive to totally agree/disagree and therefore leads to a higher score for task response. This is because when the examiner thinks about the extent you have convinced them of your opinion it is more powerful when you have just argued about one side.

The second reason is because it is much easier to structure an essay this way and it is easier to write it. In this case, you are more likely to have fewer issues with cohesion and coherence and it will take less time to write the essay.

The third reason is that it is less likely you will end up arguing against yourself. I have read many essays where the writer says they “*somewhat agree*” but then they have gone on to write the body of the essay and less has been mentioned about agreeing than disagreeing. In this case, your score for task response will be limited to 6 because your opinion does not match the main points of your essay. As well as this your score for cohesion and coherence may be lowered because confusion may be created in the mind of the reader.

Finally, concessions (where you argue against your main position) can lead to total confusion when the candidate makes errors with grammar and vocabulary. In other words, it is risky to write a concession because if you make errors with vocabulary and grammar the meaning can be totally unclear and then your score will go spiralling down for all four criteria.

4.3. *Both sides and opinion essay*

This type of essay tests your ability to discuss both sides of an argument and also give your own opinion and then support it with logical reasons. To score well you need to argue both sides of an argument clearly and give your own opinion along with a logical justification for it.

Typical question words

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages and give your own opinion

Discuss both sides of this argument and then give your own opinion

Sample task

Some people think that the education system should only focus on preparing students for employment, while others believe it has other important functions.

Discuss both sides and then give your own opinion.

Task analysis

It is important to realise that every task contains a topic and a question. You must fully address both the topic and the question to score six and above for task response. An analysis of the topic and question is provided below:

Topic: Some people think that the education system should only focus on preparing students for employment, while others believe it has other important functions.

This type of topic always expresses two points of view. It is important to always see what the two points of view are. In this case, the topic of the essay is about whether schools should only prepare students for their future careers or not. In other words, it is **careers purposes vs. other purposes**.

3. Brainstorm key points for the answer [two main points for each side of the argument is ideal]

Only preparing students for careers	Other functions
<i>Leads to better careers and more \$\$\$</i>	<i>Skills - to make the students well-rounded, such as communication skills and how to use technology</i>
<i>Leads to a better workforce which gives benefits to society</i>	<i>Morals and ethics - to make the society better</i>

Your opinion
<p><i>1. Both sides of the argument are merits</i></p> <p><i>2. more strongly support other functions</i></p>
<p><i>...because if the students are well-rounded, they will be more successful in their lives and contribute more to society</i></p>

4. Decide on the structure of the essay

This essay is easy to structure for every question you can always structure it as follows:

Paragraph 1: Introduction

Paragraph 2: Side A of the argument [**Only preparing students for careers**]

Paragraph 3: Side B of the argument [**Other functions**]

Paragraph 4: Conclusion [**your opinion**]

2. Say what the essay is about

This sentence can always be written the same for every question of this type, as follows:

This essay discusses both sides of this argument, and then I will give my own perspective.

Nothing more is required in the introduction. You should try to memorise a sentence like this for this type of essay because you will be able to write it very quickly and without any errors with vocabulary and grammar. The introduction for this type of essay is the easiest of the three types of essays. If you want to use a slightly different sentence:

The purpose of this essay is to analyse both sides of this argument and then I will explain why I believe the view that schools should have other functions is stronger.

BODY

After you have written the introduction, you will need exactly two body paragraphs. You want a paragraph for each side of the argument. I suggest putting exactly two main points in each paragraph. A good paragraph should only have one main idea. The main idea of each paragraph is the side of the argument that it is focused on. After this, you have two main points to support each side. You can then support each of these main points by explaining it or giving an example to illustrate it. In order to keep the size of your essay manageable, you might choose to have a major and minor point in each paragraph. The major point may use three sentences and the minor point 2 sentences. For instance, you might use this structure:

s1 topic sentence: make it clear which side of the argument you are discussing

s2: make the first main point

s3: explain the main point

s4: give an example to illustrate the main point

s5: make a second main point

s6: explain or give an example to illustrate the second main point

1. Write topic sentences for each body paragraph

Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence. The topic sentence should make it clear to the reader which side of the argument the paragraph is about.

There are merits of schools only focusing on preparing young people for their working lives.

2. Write supporting sentences for the topic sentences

You can think of the topic sentence you have just written as being the introduction for the paragraph. It introduces which side of the argument the paragraph is focusing on, which forms the key point for the paragraph. Having a clear key point for the paragraph makes it easy for the examiner to understand what you are saying in the paragraph. In addition, if the key point of the paragraph is clear any errors with vocabulary or grammar will be less likely to prevent communication. This is because the examiner will have more of a context to guess any parts that are unclear. After you have written the topic sentence, you should support it by developing the key point. There are three ways to develop your key point: Explanation, example, adding details

Explanation: *If young people are better prepared for their careers, they will be more successful in their working lives.*

Adding details: *As well as this, they will also make more money and be able to support themselves better.*

Example: *To illustrate, some recent stories in the media highlighted that students who finish high school are less likely to be unemployed, and more likely to earn higher salaries.*

CONCLUSION

You should always signal the start of your concluding paragraph to the reader by using the words "*In conclusion*". Do not write "*to summarise*" or similar to begin this paragraph as you are not doing this; you are giving your own opinion. For this type of essay you should follow this with a phrase to make it clear that this final paragraph is about your opinion*I believe*. Generally, your opinion can consist of three parts. The first part states that there are merits of both sides of the argument, which makes sense given that you have discussed these in the body of your essay. Second, you should give your opinion on the argument. The best way to do this is to say which side you support more strongly. Third, you should give a justification for your opinion. In other words, you should state the reason why you more strongly support this side of the argument.

Essentially the structure is as follows:

1. Signal that this is the concluding paragraph with the phrase: *In conclusion*,
2. State that both sides of the argument have merits.
3. Say which side you support more strongly.
4. Give a justification for supporting this side more strongly.

Model essay 1:

Some people think that the education system should only focus on preparing students for employment, while others believe it has other important functions.

Discuss both sides and then give your own opinion.

Many people feel that getting pupils ready for their careers should be the main focus of schools, whereas others believe that schools should have additional purposes. The purpose of this essay is to analyse both sides of this argument and then I will explain why I believe the view that schools should have other functions is stronger.

There are merits of schools only focusing on preparing young people for their working lives. If young people are better prepared for their careers, they will be more successful in their working lives. As well as this, they will also make more money and be able to support themselves better. To illustrate, some recent stories in the media highlighted that students who finish high school are less likely to be unemployed, and more likely to earn higher salaries. In addition, by schools preparing young people for jobs, there will be a better-prepared workforce. This benefits society by raising productivity and ensuring that employers have the necessary labour they need.

However, there are also advantages of schools having other functions. First of all, they should teach students skills to make them well-rounded. By teaching communication skills and how to use technology, the students will be better-rounded individuals. Clearly, these are important skills in today's society and so they should be learnt at school. As well as this, schools should teach morals and ethics because this will make the society better. Many people feel that this aspect of schooling has become neglected, and has led to a deterioration of society.

In conclusion, I believe both sides of the argument have their merits. On balance, however, it seems that schools should have other functions. This is because if the students are well rounded, they will be more successful in their lives and contribute more to society.

Template for a both sides and opinion essay

The template below contains about 130 words. The advantage of this template is that it can be used for any type of both sides and opinion essay. Memorising and using this template can help you to speed up the writing of your essay [you have less language to think of], and also help you to increase your score as you have a lower proportion of errors [this is error-free language], and also increase your score for vocabulary and grammar because the template has high-level vocabulary and grammar embedded in it..

INTRODUCTION

A highly controversial issue today relates to whether to have... [issue]... or not.

In this essay, I am going to examine this question from both points of view and then give my own opinion on the matter.

BODY PARAGRAPH 1

There are people who argue that the benefits of considerably outweigh its disadvantages. The main reason for believing this is that It is also possible to say that One good illustration of this is

BODY PARAGRAPH 2

On the other hand, it is also possible to make the opposing case. It is often argued that People often have this opinion because A second point is thatA particularly good example here is.....

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I believe both arguments have their merits. On balance, however, I feel that... This is because....

Model essay 2: [based on the template on the previous page]

Some people believe that there should be the death penalty for extremely serious crimes. Others believe that it is not morally correct to kill criminals.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

A highly controversial issue today relates to whether to have capital punishment or not. In this essay, I am going to examine this question from both points of view and then give my own opinion on the matter.

There are people who argue that the benefits of killing violent criminals considerably outweigh its disadvantages. The main reason for believing this is that the fear of execution acts as a deterrent to commit serious crimes such as rape and murder. It is also possible to say that the execution of a criminal may bring relief to the suffering victims. One good illustration of this is when Saddam Hussein was executed. Many of the victims who were persecuted under his rule expressed joy and relief when he was finally captured and killed.

On the other hand, it is also possible to make the opposing case. It is often argued that sentencing criminals to death is just committing another murder. People often have this opinion because they think that it is immoral to take another person's life, no matter what the reason is. A second point is that many religions are opposed to any form of murder. A particularly good example here is from the bible, which lists killing another person as one of the Ten Commandments that should not be broken.

In conclusion, I believe both arguments have their merits. On balance, however, I feel that capital punishment is justified. This is because in cases of extreme crime and that detering crime is more important than taking the moral high ground. [267 words]

More Sample Questions

There are two main types of questions here. The first kind requires you to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of one thing and the second kind asks you to discuss the advantages of two different things.

Situation one: discuss the advantages and disadvantages of one thing.

Computers are being used more and more in education. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of computers and then give your opinion.

The structure is:

Introduction

advantages of computers

disadvantages of computers

your opinion

Situation two: discuss the advantages of two different things

Some people say that learning online is the best way to learn, whereas some claim that it is still better to attend a class with a teacher. Discuss both sides of this argument and then give your opinion

The structure is:

Introduction

advantages of online learning

advantages of teachers

your opinion

More sample tasks for both sides and opinion essays

These days, many people live or work overseas in a different country than they were born in.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this and then give your own opinion.

Technology allows food to be produced in greater quantities and at lower prices. Some people believe this is a positive development, while others feel that the change is harmful.

Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

It is more important to spend public money on promoting a healthy lifestyle, in order to prevent illness rather than to spend it on the treatment of people who are already ill.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this and then give your own opinion.

Some people think that development in technology causes environmental problems. Other people believe that technology can solve environmental problems.

Discuss both sides of the argument and then give your opinion.

Some people believe that to improve public health more public sports facilities should be provided by the government; others believe that this will have little effect and other measures are needed to improve people's health.

Discuss both sides of the argument and then give your opinion.

Some people think computers and the Internet are important in children's study, but others think students are usually distracted by these and they should not be used during class time.

Discuss both sides of this argument and give your own opinion.

Common mistakes

Putting your opinion in the introduction of the essay

For this type of essay, it is best to keep your opinion for the final paragraph. Writing this here makes it seem like this essay is just about your opinion. Instead, you should write: "*This essay discusses both sides of this argument and then I will give my own perspective.*"

Some people think that spending a lot on holding wedding parties, birthday parties and other celebrations is just a waste of money. Others, however, think that these are necessary for individuals and the society.

Discuss both views and give your opinion

The candidate writes a misleading introduction below:

Today, holding parties or other activities is a common practice for individuals and organisations to celebrate some special events. Some people, however, claim that these celebrations are wasteful, while others argue that they have favourable effects on individuals and the society. Personally, I believe that holding these celebrations does more good than harm.

Putting your opinion in the body of the essay

The question asks for both views and your opinion. Try to have three clear responses. Hold your opinion until the final paragraph. It is extremely dangerous to mix your opinion with one of the sides because some examiners will then feel you have not satisfactorily completed the task of both sides and your opinion. They might think you have only discussed one side and your opinion. It's very risky to mix your opinion with the discussion of one side of the argument. Taking this risk may mean you will not get to 7 for task response; it will depend on the examiner's interpretation. To get rid of this risk I suggest you structure the essay the way I have outlined, with your opinion given in the final paragraph only. You can see the previous model essay in this section for examples of this.

Not writing enough for your opinion

With a both sides and opinion essay, your opinion is one of the three requirements of the task. You must give more than a sentence for your opinion. In addition, you should not only say what your opinion is but also give the reason. You can see the previous model essay in this section for examples of this. I suggest you say the following:

1. Start with a signal "In conclusion, I believe..."
2. State that both sides of the argument are important/have merits
3. State which one is more important/better
4. Say why. Justify your selection. This is the key to reaching 7 and above for task response. Remember that YOUR opinion is one of the three parts of the question and although this paragraph may be briefer than the body paragraphs it is a very important one.

4.4. Two question essay

This type of question is sometimes known as a *problem and solution essay*. I do not call it this because it is not always about *problems* and *solutions*. This type of question tests your ability to discuss two aspects of an issue. To score well you must answer BOTH questions well. Therefore you should respond to each of the questions equally.

Sample question words

What problem does this cause?

What are some potential solutions?

What are the causes of this problem?

What are some potential solutions?

Do you agree or disagree?

What are some solutions?

Sample task

Some people think that in the future lots of changes will occur that will improve our society.

Do you agree or disagree?

What kind of changes will occur?

Task analysis

It is important to realise that every task contains a topic and a question. You must fully address both the topic and the question to score six and above for task response. An analysis of the topic and question is provided below:

Topic: In the future many changes will occur and many people feel these will improve our society.

Question 1: *Do you agree or disagree?*

Question 2: *What kind of changes will occur?*

Planning the essay

1. **Underline key vocabulary in the topic and write words with the same or related meaning.**

in the future many changes will occur and many people feel these will
in the years to come developments are going to happen

improve our society.

make life better

2. **Decide what kind of response is needed.**

Do you agree or disagree? = Say whether you agree or disagree

What kind of changes will occur? = State what changes might happen

3. **Brainstorm key points for the answer.**

Question one: agree the changes will be positive	Question two: changes that will occur
<i>Life is becoming more convenient [technology leads to convenience]</i>	<i>More time-saving technology, such as robots to do our housework.</i>
<i>Better entertainment</i>	<i>New technologies to enhance our entertainment. For instance, 3-D television will soon become commonplace in our living rooms.</i>

4. Decide on the structure of the essay

This essay can always be structured the same based on the two questions that are asked:

introduction = rephrase the topic and introduce both questions

question one = write two main points, in a paragraph, to support your response

question two = write two main points, in a paragraph, to support your response

conclusion = summarise your main points about each question

Steps in writing your essay

Once you have written a solid plan for your essay, you can begin the task of actually writing the essay. Having a good plan will speed up this process and ensure that you are consistent with your opinion throughout the essay. What I mean here is that the introduction will fit the body of the essay, and the conclusion will summarise the points from the body of the essay. If you achieve this high level of fit, you are likely to score well for task response and cohesion and coherence.

INTRODUCTION

1. Paraphrase the question

Given that you have already rephrased the keywords of the topic this step should be relatively easy. When you do write this sentence, in addition to rephrasing words also try to rearrange the order of words in the sentence. This may necessitate changing some of the word forms. For instance, you might have to change nouns into verbs. This shows the examiner your ability to use language flexibly and can increase your score for vocabulary and grammar.

in the future, many changes will occur and many people feel these will
in the years to come developments are going to happen

improve our society.

make life better

As a result of developments that are taking place, a lot of people believe that life will become better.

2. Introduce what the essay is about

It is important to make it clear what the essay is about because it makes it clear to the examiner you understand that there are two questions. Also, when the examiner reads the body of your essay, they already have an overall idea of what your essay is about, and in the likely event that you have errors with vocabulary and grammar they may be less serious because the examiner will have more of a context in order to guess the meaning of what you are trying to express. You can simply state what the essay is about using a phrase like:

This essay discusses,

...and then add on a rephrase of the two questions:

This essay discusses the reasons why the changes that are coming are positive, and also suggests what kind of changes will occur.

BODY

After you have written the introduction, you will need exactly two body paragraphs. You should have a paragraph for each of the questions. A good paragraph should only have one main idea. The main idea for each paragraph is the question you are responding to. You should then have exactly two main points to support each question. This ensures that you get the right balance for the essay. What I mean here is that you should say about the same amount for each of the questions. You should not focus on one of the questions more than the other. You can then support each of these main points by explaining it or giving an example to illustrate it. In order to keep the size of your essay manageable, you might choose to have a major and minor point in each paragraph. The major point may use three sentences and the minor point 2 sentences. For instance, you might use this structure:

S1: topic sentence: make it clear which question you are discussing

S2: introduce the main point

S3: explain the main point

S4: give an example to illustrate the main point

S5: minor point

S6: explain or give an example to illustrate the minor point

1. Write topic sentences for each body paragraph

Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence. For this type of essay, the topic sentence should clearly identify which of the questions is being responded to.

The changes that are coming are positive for two main reasons.

2. Write supporting sentences for the topic sentences

You can think of the topic sentence you have just written as being the introduction for the paragraph. It introduces the question you are responding to, which forms the key point for the paragraph. Having a clear key point for the paragraph makes it easy for the examiner to understand what you are saying in the paragraph. After you have written the topic sentence, you should support it by developing the key point. There are three ways to develop your key point: Explanation, example, adding details

Explanation: *The main reason is that they will make our lives more convenient.*

Adding details: *We are likely to have more free time as a result of technology taking over many of our everyday tasks.*

Example: *For example, we may have robots capable of doing many household chores.*

CONCLUSION

You only need to do three things in the final paragraph of this type of essay and they are always the same:

1. Signal that this is the concluding paragraph with the phrase: *In conclusion,*
2. Summarise your main points for each question.
3. Give a final opinion or recommendation based on the summary.

In conclusion, the future looks promising because we will have technology takeover many of life's mundane tasks and we will have better forms of entertainment. The most likely changes appear to be technologies to save us time and also enhance our leisure time. This means that we are likely to have more time for relaxation and better ways to spend it.

Model essay one:

In the future many changes will occur and many people feel these will improve our society.

Do you agree or disagree?

What kind of changes will occur?

As a result of developments that are taking place, many people believe that life will become better. This essay discusses the reasons why the changes that are coming are positive, and also suggests what kind of changes will occur.

The changes that are coming are positive for two main reasons. The main reason is that they will make our lives more convenient. We are likely to have more free time as a result of technology taking over many of our everyday tasks. For example, we may have robots capable of doing many household chores, and this will enable us to have more free time for enjoyment and relaxation. Another factor is that our recreational time will be enhanced by new technologies that make our entertainment even more fun. If we enjoy ourselves more, we will be happier and more relaxed.

There are two main types of developments that are likely to occur. The first of these is time-saving technologies. Future enhancements of robotics are likely to lead to even more household tasks being performed by machines. As well as this, the entertainment industry looks likely to soon make enhancements to our recreational experiences by making new technologies available. A good example of this is 3-D television, which will make watching movies more fun.

In conclusion, the future looks promising because we will have technology takeover many of life's mundane tasks and we'll have better forms of entertainment. The most likely changes appear to be technologies to save us time and also enhance our leisure time. This means that we are likely to have more time for relaxation and better ways to spend it.

[274 words]

Template for a two-question essay

It is difficult to build a standardised template for our two-question essay because a wide variety of questions can be asked. First, a general template will be given and then a more specific template will be given for a typical problem and solution essay.

General template

Introduction

Rephrase the topic

this essay discusses...[Question one] + [question two]

Body

Question one [try to write two main points to respond to this question]

Question two [try to write two main points to respond to this question]

Conclusion

In conclusion,

[summarise the two main points about question one]

[summarise the two main points about question two]

Template for the problem and solution essay that follows with gaps for the topic

Note that this is the original form of a two question essay that gets asked and it is essentially the same as the essay above and follows the same format. The question type is quite commonplace and you can use the template below for any essay of this type.

..... is becoming increasingly serious in many nations. Although
Threaten[s] many societies, its /their effects can also be combated successfully.
This essay looks at some of the problems caused by on society, and
suggests some solutions to the problems.

..... causes multiple problems. The effects are very obvious. For
example, In some cases, such as even leads to (death). The
second effect is People who become

However, the menace of can be fought. Education is the main way to
tackle this issue. People need to be aware of the effects so that they can avoid
this problem. In addition, the government could also This is a good
approach because

In conclusion, is a serious issue because it causes harmful effects on
people's health and people who are The best approaches to deal with
it are to educate people about its damaging effects, and also for the
government to Although the problem is unlikely to be entirely
eliminated in the short term there are concrete steps to reduce the effects it is
having on the current society.

[about 175 words]

Model essay two:

[problem and solution]

The use of illegal drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, are becoming more and more common in many countries.

What are some of the problems associated with drug abuse, and what are some of the possible solutions?

Change the underlined parts according to your topic

Drug abuse is becoming increasingly serious in many nations. Although drugs threaten many societies, their effects can also be combated successfully. This essay looks at some of the problems caused by drug use on society, and suggests some solutions to the problems.

Drug abuse causes multiple problems for countries and communities. The medical effects are very obvious. For example, addicts abuse their bodies and neglect their health, and so eventually require expensive treatment or hospitalization. In some cases, such as Marilyn Monroe, a drug overdose even leads to death. The second effect is crime. People who take drugs become crazy and irrational and often cause harm and danger to themselves and others.

However, the menace of drugs can be fought. Education is the main way to tackle this issue. People need to be aware of the effects so that they can avoid this problem. In addition, the government could also use infomercials to educate their citizens. This is a good approach because they can alert all citizens about the negative aspects of using drugs.

In conclusion, drug abuse is a serious issue because it causes harmful effects on people's health and people who are high often commit crimes. The best approaches to deal with it are to educate people about its damaging effects, and also for the government to ensure all people are aware of the consequences through public service advertising. Although the problem is unlikely to be entirely eliminated in the short term these are concrete steps to reduce the effects it is having on the current society.

[260 words]

More sample questions

Nowadays we communicate less with our family members face to face.

What are the causes of this?

What are some potential solutions?

More people use their own cars rather than public transport; so many people believe it is up to the government to encourage people to use public transport.

Do you agree?

How else can people be encouraged to use public transportation?

The development of technology has influenced the ways people interact with each other.

What are the main changes in the types of interactions people have?

Do you think this is positive or negative?

Developed countries often give financial aid to developing countries, but it does not solve poverty, so developed countries should give other types of help to the poor countries rather than financial aid.

Do you agree or disagree?

What other kind of aid could be provided?

There are many reasons that can motivate a person to stay working for the same company. Some believe that money is the main reason.

Do you agree or disagree?

What are some other reasons why people may stay?

Common mistakes

Not responding fully to both questions

Level 6 for task response requires that you: *Address all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others.* Level 7 requires that you: *Fully address all parts of the task.* From this perspective, it is vital that you answer both questions fully in order to reach 7 and above.

Not introducing BOTH questions in the introduction.

As mentioned above it is vital that your essay focuses on both questions in the essay. It is misleading to only introduce one of the questions in the introduction.

4.5. *Improving your score*

This section will help you to improve your score by outlining some of the common errors that occur with essays written in the exam and also to make suggestion about how to enhance your score for each of the four grading criteria.

Common mistakes with task response

From my experience working as an IELTS examiner, IELTS tutor, and also as an online editor of thousands of IELTS essays I have discovered that students make the following mistakes on their essays.

Poor time management

If you do not write enough words your score for task response is penalised by 1 to 3 points! In addition to that, if you didn't complete the task, you are unlikely to score well for task response anyway, as you are unlikely to have completely answered the question. In this case, your score for task response would be restricted to 5 and you would still get the penalty on top of this. In other words, you probably will fail your exam! The following are my suggestions for managing your time:

Make sure you make a plan before you start writing. A plan will save you time when you start writing because you will not have to keep stopping to think about what point you want to make next. This is the area that most students do poorly on and in order to do it well, it takes practice. The best way to practice is to look at past exam questions and prepare a plan of how you would write them.

Make sure you have practiced writing sufficiently before your exam and that you understand how to structure the three types of essays that get asked. If you are familiar with the types of questions that get asked you won't get a nasty surprise and you will be able to answer the question more quickly.

If you really have trouble with finishing on time, learn some stock phrases that you can write quickly in the exam. If you have learnt the sentences well you will be able to write them quickly and without errors. The best way to learn these is to look at model answers and underline sentences you think you would like to use in your own writing. Then you need to memorize the sentences by writing them, and even better, practice writing them in an essay.

Not responding to all parts of the topic.

For the task below, the topic includes two parts that must be both referred to in the body of the essay. These two parts are cheaper and easier. If you have failed to answer both, your score would be limited to 5 for task response.

These days, due to advances in technology, it is cheaper and easier to travel abroad.

Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

Misstating the topic

This error occurs when a candidate gives an answer that is not directly related to the topic; or in other words, is tangential to the topic. This commonly occurs in the introduction to the essay but also it can happen in the body of the essay. See the example below, the question talks about space travel but the candidate talks about science and technology in general.

Some people think space travel is important for the development of humanity; while other people believe it is a waste of money. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Candidate writes:

Many people believe that we should invest more money on science. However, others disagree and think we should not waste money on technology. This essay discusses both sides of the argument and then I will give my opinion.

In the example below the candidate changes the topic by saying that people *rely on computers* instead of talking about whether they will be able to use *computers to view art*.

Some people claim that public museums and art galleries will not be needed because people can see historical objects and works of art by using a computer. Do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Candidate writes:

Nowadays, people tend to rely on computers too much. Some people even think the need for public museums and art galleries will gradually disappear in the future. I totally disagree because I believe museums and galleries will always be essential.

In the example below the candidate changes the topic by rephrasing power of advertising to deceptive advertising. The task does not say that advertising is deceptive only that it is powerful.

Today, the high sales of popular consumer goods reflect the power of advertising and not the real needs of the society in which they are sold.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Candidate writes:

These days, we can see some consumer goods are in high demand in our society. There exists a perception that such high demand is the result of deceptive advertising. I somewhat agree with this.

The question says more not only

Some people said the government should not spend money on building theatres and sports stadiums. It should spend more money on medical care and education. Do you agree or disagree?

Candidate writes:

When it comes to how to allocate the governmental budget, one topic now under debate is whether the money should be spent only on medical services and education instead of on constructing theatres and sports stadiums.

Not fully answering the question

For the question below note that you need to not only mention the advantages and disadvantages but also state which one is stronger. A common error is to just state the advantages and disadvantages. The problem here is that the candidate appears to be focusing on the advantages and disadvantages and not on which one outweighs the other, as required by the question.

Some museums and art galleries charge admission fees, while others have free entry.
Do you think the advantages of free admission outweigh the disadvantages?

Candidate writes:

Some museums and art galleries are free, whereas others require payment for entry. This essay discusses the advantages and disadvantages.

Misstating the question

In the example below the candidate makes it seem like the question is only asking for their opinion instead of both sides of the argument and their own opinion.

Technology allows food to be produced in greater quantities and at lower prices. Some people believe this is a positive development, while others feel that the change is harmful.

Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

The candidate writes:

Nowadays our food supply is more plentiful and cheaper due to scientific advances. I believe this is totally advantageous for individuals and society for the reasons that follow.

Over-generalisation

Overgeneralisation occurs when something is exaggerated. Something that only applies to some or the majority is said to apply to all of a population.

For example: *As we all know, all politicians are corrupt.*

Improving task response

Read the task carefully

Do not rush reading the task, even though you are under pressure to finish the writing exam in one hour. Read every word carefully and underline key words. Think carefully what the topic is about and what the question is asking you to say about the topic.

Planning

The planning stage should also not be rushed. You should spend at least 5 minutes planning your essay. You need to make sure that you have strong main ideas and a good structure for your essay. This will enable you to focus on the topic and question. Also, if you make an effective plan, this can actually speed up the writing of your essay. This is because a lot of time can be wasted when writing if you need to think of what you are going to say. The plan can reduce the time spent trying to think of what to say when writing. Essentially, it's more time efficient to do all the thinking at the start, in the planning stage, in order to reduce the time spent thinking during writing.

Developing strong main ideas

A lot of my students tell me they struggle to come up with good ideas. My main suggestion is to practice this. Look at lots of sample questions and think how you would answer them. You may get lucky and get one of these questions in your exam! As well as this, brainstorming in English is a skill and if you practice it you will get better at it.

Developing your ideas well

A grade six requires responding to all parts of the question. A grade seven and above requires that you extend and support your ideas. This can be done by supporting your main ideas with explanations, details, and examples. For more on this see the section on writing the body of the essay.

Use an appropriate structure

To get a high score it is essential that you structure your ideas well. This is because the examiner will be able to see the quality of your ideas if they are structured well.

Common errors with cohesion and coherence

Avoid basic sequencing words

Try to avoid sample sequencing words such as: *firstly* *secondly*, as they are very basic sequences. Instead use something like: *the main reason....another factor*

Firstly, The main benefit is that students can get access to resources online with their computers anytime they want. This is of benefit for those who are not able to attend class at a certain time. Secondly, As well as this, students can choose where to study, and this is clearly a benefit to students who need to look after other members of their family.

Avoid unnecessary sentence elements

In the examples below unnecessary phrases are underlined. It is better to leave these out because they don't add anything to the sentence, and they break the flow of the sentence. In other words, they lower coherence, while offering no communicative benefit.

There are, to tell the truth, tutors and doctors in every city even in the countryside.

In my opinion, however, doctors are still important.

Incorrect use of conjunctions

Words like: *however*, *consequently*, *in addition*, can be used to start sentences. When you use a conjunction, it is to join two parts of a sentence and you should only have a single sentence. Words that cannot be used to start sentences and should only be used in the middle of sentences are called conjunctions. You can remember them as FANBOYS:

For: He is betting with his health, for he has been smoking far too long.

And: They bet and they drink.

Nor: They do not bet nor do they drink.

But: They bet, but they don't drink.

Or: Every day they bet or they drink.

Yet: They bet, yet they don't drink.

So: He bet well last night, so he drank a beer to celebrate.

Not using an appropriate structure for the question type

In response to the question below, a student wrote: *I discussed both views and ended up getting bans 6. Really disappointed.*

My reply: that's because you were not asked to discuss both views. You were asked to discuss which one is better!

More houses are needed in many countries to cope with increasing populations.

Would it be better to build houses in existing towns and cities or to develop new towns in rural areas?

Avoid irrelevant sentences

Every supporting sentence in a paragraph must relate to the main idea stated in the topic sentence. A sentence that does not support the main idea does not belong in the paragraph, thus such a sentence should be omitted. When a sentence does not belong in a paragraph, it is called an irrelevant sentence. The underlined sentence below is an example of this because it is not about where people come from, like the rest of the paragraph:

The staff in the company come from many different parts of the world. Some are from European countries, such as France, Spain, and Italy. Others are from Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia and Israel. Still, other students were born in Asian countries, including Japan and Korea. Japanese food is delicious. The largest number of employees are from Latin American countries like Mexico, Venezuela and Peru. The company is an interesting mix of people from many different countries.

Improving cohesion and coherence

Make a plan before you start writing

If you have a solid plan before you start writing you will make sure that you are on topic and that you have an appropriate structure for your essay. It is essential that you respond to the question that is asked.

Use sequencing words and connecting phrases

Sequencing words and connecting phrases add cohesion to your writing by showing the relationship between ideas and by sending signals to the reader about your writing. To improve this, refer to the section on Useful Linking Words and Phrases.

Avoid errors with word choices

If you make lots of errors with word choices this makes it more difficult for the examiner to read your writing which lowers coherence. Therefore, these errors with word choices lower your score for vocabulary as well as for cohesion and coherence. The negative effect is double!

Avoid unnecessarily complicated structures and grammar

The more difficult it is for the examiner to follow your writing the lower your score for cohesion and coherence. Just use simple straightforward main points and explain them as clearly and logically as possible. In terms of sentence structure avoid sentences with lots of clauses. I would say a maximum of three clauses. This is because sentences with lots of clauses are hard to read and also if you make any errors with vocabulary or grammar the reader will become totally confused.

Learn how to develop your ideas in paragraphs

When assessing your score for cohesion and coherence the examiner is looking at your ability to structure the whole essay and also your ability to structure individual paragraphs. Paragraphs should focus on one main idea and then that idea should be logically developed in the paragraph through explanation, adding details, and using examples that illustrate the main point.

Common errors with vocabulary

"S" endings of words

Almost every essay I read has this mistake. The writer puts an "S" where it's not needed or else forgets to put one where it is needed. Examples below:

Student ~~are~~ always studying hard. ["s" is needed for students]

Students ~~goes~~ home tired every day. [The verb should be go]

Technologies ~~are~~ developing rapidly. [Technology is uncountable in this context so it should be technology *is* developing rapidly]

Other errors with word endings and form

Other common errors are errors with word endings such as "ed" for past tense, and errors with word forms such as when a verb is incorrectly written as a noun. A couple of examples:

Last year my uncle work in America. [worked]

We need to management the environment better. [manage]

Repeating words excessively

You should always rephrase words that are given in the task because it shows your ability to rephrase words and that you have a broad vocabulary. In addition to this, try to avoid repeating the same word in the body of your essay. You can achieve this by using different words or by using different forms of the same word.

Example of rephrase: *country = nation*

Example of change in form: *young people need to be prepared for their careers = preparation of young people for their careers is necessary*

Noun trains [where you have a whole lot of nouns together; like cars on the train].

This error occurs when two or more nouns are together, it would be more natural to write "application of pesticides" than "pesticides application" you can Google both of these [using speech marks] and see that "application of pesticides" is much more common and the results fit your context better. If you are ever unsure whether one phrase is better than another, whether two words go together, or about the word order of a sentence you can use this method of googling the phrases. Some other examples:

starvation alleviation = alleviation of starvation

food production revolution = revolutionising food production

Obvious memorised language that is inappropriately applied

Below are examples of obvious memorised phrases that are incorrectly applied.

One of the most controversial issues relates to whether students should live at home or on campus.

My response: Really! I wasn't aware. I thought was things like abortion and euthanasia and wars! Better to say "A highly debated issue"

Whether children should start learning a foreign language at primary school instead of high school has sparked off an intensive debate.

My response: Really! I wasn't aware. I have heard nothing about this. Better to say "... is an important issue in the field of education"

Colloquial expressions

Some phrases are used when speaking, but not when writing. Some examples:

actually, I would also like to mention, I reckon

Clichés

A cliché is an overused expression. These can be considered as "ugly" English. Examples:

In this day and age...

At the end of the day...

Just like every coin has two sides...

Improving vocabulary

This is such a huge area that it is beyond the scope of this book. However, some general guidelines follow. You can also see some words and phrases for common topics in the section titled: Vocabulary for Common Topics.

Rephrase the task

The first thing you should do when you start the writing exam is read the question and underline key words. This is to help you clearly understand the question and also to help you generate some alternative words to replace the given words. This shows the examiner your ability to rephrase and also that you have a broad vocabulary.

Use high-level words where possible

Where possible try to avoid basic words and use high-level words to show the examiner your talent with language. Do not forget that it is a language test!

Common errors with grammar

Articles

Almost every essay I read has errors with articles. The articles are: a, an, the

To reduce these errors, you should read about the rules, do some quizzes, and also practice your writing and get feedback on these. More is explained about this in the next section on improving grammar.

Avoid writing short simple sentences

In order to score six and above you need to show the examiner you have the ability to write complex sentences. These are sentences that have a dependent and independent clause. If you just write short simple sentences like the one below your score is limited to 5.

The advantages of this policy are obvious. It is beneficial for communities and societies in general.

My comment: It would be better to write this as one sentence: "The advantages of this policy for communities and societies are obvious. "

He or she

If you write in plural you don't need to use the awkward expression "he or she. Write "if people like it... they"; instead of: "if a person likes it he or she..."

4.6. *Improving grammar*

Grammar is a huge area with many books dedicated to it. If you are taking an IELTS exam in the near future you may not have a lot of time to work on grammar. The best ways to improve your grammar score are to reduce the number of errors you make and also to write a variety of sentence types. Looking below at the grading criteria for a level 7 for grammar makes this clear.

Criteria for grammar

- uses a variety of complex structures
- produces frequent error-free sentences
- has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors

From the criteria above we can notice that there is nothing about using complicated tenses such as perfect tenses. Spending time on learning different tenses and how to use them does not usually pay off well in terms of the time investment. As well as this, they are difficult to master and apply in your writing. For this reason, I think that it's better to focus on reducing errors and learning to write different sentence structures, especially complex sentences. This section focuses on some ways to write complex sentence structures and then on explaining a few of the types of grammatical errors that commonly occur in essays.

Develop ways of writing complex sentences

Complex sentences are sentences that include an independent and dependent clause. Two excellent ways to form these are to use conditionals [phrases] and relative clauses [who, which, that, where].

Conditional sentences

A conditional sentence is a complex sentence structure used to talk about something that occurs only if something else happens. The condition may be something real or imagined, and the result could be a definite result, or just a possible result. Conditionals are a useful way of forming complex sentences, which can boost your grammar score. Another reason why I teach candidates to use them is because they can be easily noticed by an examiner, due to the word *if*. *If* sends a signal to the examiner that a conditional is being used.

There are two clauses to a conditional sentence:

One part is the **if** clause. This is the event that needs to occur. It is a dependent clause because it is not a complete sentence and is dependent on the other part of the sentence.

The second part is the **result** or main clause, or what happens when the event in the **if** clause occurs. The result clause is an independent clause because it can stand on its own as a sentence.

The dependent and independent clauses can be written in any order, as shown below:

If I have holidays, I go to Australia. [A comma as needed when the dependent clause comes first]

I go to Australia if I have holidays. [No comma]

Summary of conditions

Condition	Usage	Example
0	Facts and opinions	If I <u>have</u> holidays, I <u>go</u> to Australia present tense, present tense
1	Likely outcomes	If I <u>have</u> enough days off, I <u>will</u> go to Australia. Present tense future tense
2	Unlikely outcomes or imagined situations	If I <u>won the lottery</u> , I <u>would</u> go to Australia. Past tense would
3	Past situations that didn't occur	If I <u>had had</u> enough days off, I <u>would have</u> gone to Australia. Past Perfect Tense would have

Relative clauses

Another good way to increase your grammar score by using complex sentences is to add relative clauses to your sentences. Relative clauses use relative pronouns (that, which, who,) and are dependent clauses, which means that they cannot stand on their own as complete sentence.

Summary of relative pronouns

Relative pronoun	Use	Example
who	people	I like students <u>who</u> study hard.
which	things	I live in a flat, <u>which</u> is in a high-rise building.
where	places	I like shopping at places <u>where</u> there is lots of parking.
whose	possession	Do you know the boy <u>whose</u> mother is a nurse?
that	for a specific person or thing	I don't like the table that stands in the kitchen.

Reducing errors

The second way to increase your score for grammar is to reduce errors. To get to grade 7 and above you need to have frequent error-free sentences. If you do not have this you cannot get to 7 and above. If you want to get to 8 or 9 you need to decrease errors to a similar frequency as a native writer. In order to achieve this, you need to identify your areas of weakness and work on these by learning the rules, doing quizzes, and getting feedback on your writing.

Articles (a, an, the)

An article is a word that is used with a noun to indicate to the reader whether the noun is a particular and specific noun or an instance of a noun in general. There are two types of articles the indefinite (a/an), which refers to the general usage of a noun; and the definite article (the) which refers to a specific noun that will be identifiable by the reader.

An **indefinite** article indicates that its noun is not a specific one that can be identified by the reader. It may be something that the writer is mentioning for the first time, or the writer may be making a general statement about something. The indefinite articles are *a* and *an*. The word *a* is used before words that begin with a consonant sound (even if the word starts with a vowel, as in a unicorn). *An* is used before words that begin with a vowel sound (even if the word starts with a consonant, as in an hour).

Example: She had a house so large that an elephant would get lost.

A **definite** article is used with a noun that refers to something specific the reader should be aware of. It may be used to refer back to something that the writer has already mentioned, or it may be used with a noun that has only one possible instance [*The capital of China is Beijing*]. The definite article, *the*, can be used for both singular and plural nouns.

Example: *The best place to live is the capital.*

Summary of the usage of articles

	Indefinite (<i>a</i> or <i>an</i>)	Definite (<i>the</i>)
Singular	<u>a</u> cat (any cat) <u>an</u> orange (any orange)	<u>the</u> dirtiest cat <u>the red</u> orange
	[None used]	Definite (<i>the</i>)
Plural	Plurals, languages, sports, subjects, cities, countries... with a few exceptions!	<u>The</u> best cats) <u>the</u> sweetest oranges

Note the following:

1. First versus subsequent mention of a noun

A or an is used to introduce a noun when it is used for the first time in a piece of writing.

“Please give me a pen.”

The is used afterward each time you mention that same noun.

“Where is the pen?”

There was a cat in my room. When my dog came in, the cat ran away.

2. Zero articles:

Some common types of nouns that don't take an article are:

- a. Plurals usually have no articles: “please give me some apples,” “I like apples.,” unless they are definite “these are the best apples.
- b. Names of languages and nationalities: “I am Chinese.”
- c. Names of sports: “I like playing soccer.”
- d. Names of academic subjects: “I studied math for three years.”

3. Places usually have no article:

Do not use *the* before names of streets, countries, lakes, and mountains.

There are a few exceptions such as: the USA, the UK, the EU [note that these are all areas that are made up of different regions]; likewise with groups of lakes like the Great Lakes, and ranges of mountains like the Himalayas.

Prepositions

Prepositions are used to locate something in time and space, modify a noun; or tell when or where or under what conditions something happened. The following are guidelines for using prepositions correctly. This covers many common situations.

Prepositions of Time: at, in, on

Preposition	Usage	Example
At	at is for specific times	The exam is <u>at</u> 12:15 PM
In	in is for nonspecific times during a day/month/year.	The exam is <u>in</u> the morning
On	on for days and dates	The exam is <u>on</u> Monday. The exam is <u>on</u> Christmas Day.

Prepositions of Place: at, in, on

Preposition	Usage	Example
At	We use at for specific addresses.	I live <u>at</u> 50 Pong Lai Road.
In	We use in for the names of land-areas (towns, counties, states, countries, and continents).	I live <u>in</u> Taipei.
On	We use on for the names of streets, avenues, etc.	I live <u>on</u> Pong Lai Road.

Prepositions for describing our work:

<u>at</u> company's	I work <u>at</u> Comtrend
<u>in</u> departments	<u>in</u> the marketing department, as a technical writer.
<u>on</u> projects	I am working <u>on</u> a new manual

See more grammar tips here: <http://www.ieltsanswers.com/grammar-ielts.html>

4.7. *Vocabulary for common topics*

The following is intended as a brief outline of some useful vocabulary for common topics that occur on the exam.

Education

Rephrasing of some common topic words:

children = juveniles, youngsters

education= learning, instruction, acquiring knowledge

students = pupils

parents = caregivers, guardians, mothers and fathers

schools = educational institutions

society = community, citizens

teachers = educators

Some useful nouns:

Word	Meaning
the curriculum	the entire school program including course materials and testing of students. Everything that a school aims to teach students.
graduate	a person who has graduated from a school
illiteracy	the inability to read and write
literacy	the ability to read and write
nurture	to help grow or develop
pedagogy	the way of teaching including the instructional methods that is used
qualification	what someone gets when they graduate from school. For instance, a diploma is a qualification.
social skills	the ability to communicate and interact well with others
student centred education	a philosophy of education where the student is the central focus
tuition	the fees for studying a course

Some useful verbs:

Word	Meaning
graduate	to pass a course or level of study
concentrate	to focus attention towards a particular activity, subject or problem
revise	to review materials that have already been taught
enrol	to join a class
indoctrinate	to teach following a biased belief or point of view. For example, Hitler indoctrinated young Germans with a hatred for other races.
interpret	to understand in a particular way. For example, we need to interpret the meaning of the painting.
persevere	to not give up. To keep doing something for the success is achieved.
procrastinate	to delay or put off doing something

Some useful adjectives:

Word	Meaning
academic	relating to education especially universities.
co-educational	when male and female students are taught together in the same school.
single sex	when only need male or female students are taught in the same school.
hands-on	to learn by actually doing. We can get hands-on experience by actually doing things.
multi-disciplinary	involving several different subjects or areas of study.
pedagogical	relating to teaching methods and principles.
primary education	an elementary school or the first years of formal schooling.
secondary education	high school
segregated	separated. For example, the classes are <u>segregated</u> by gender.
tertiary education	university or vocation school
vocational	concerns teaches the skills necessary for a particular job. This concept is often applied to trade schools. So if you studying cooking or the penetration you are going to a vocational school.

Health

Rephrasing of some common topic words:

health= well-being, physical condition, fitness

healthy= fit, in good condition

unhealthy = unwell, poor medical condition

sick people = patients, people who are unwell

treatment = cure, healing

sickness= medical condition

Some useful nouns:

Word	Meaning
addiction	the condition of not being unable to stop doing something. Especially something harmful like drinking alcohol or playing video games.
allergy	a strong reaction to something. For instance, an <u>allergy</u> to a certain food.
anxiety	stress
diagnosis	an opinion of a patient's health condition or illness.
diet	1. everything that we eat. 2. a plan to eat carefully to reduce weight.
insomnia	inability or difficulty to get to sleep.
ingredients	the different foods that go into a recipe.
obesity	being extremely overweight.
nutrition	the health value of food.
physician	another word for doctor.
treatment	a way of curing an illness or medical condition.

Some useful verbs:

Word	Meaning
administer	to give a treatment to a patient.
counteract	to respond or act in opposition to something. For example, we need to <u>counteract</u> the effects of global warming.
eliminate	to get rid of something.
diagnose	to work-out what is wrong with a patient.
diet	to attempt to lose weight by eating more carefully.
prevent	to stop something happening.
stipulate	to require something. For example, the contract <u>stipulates</u> that you must pay your medical bill by the end the month.
trigger	to cause something to happen. For example, certain foods may <u>trigger</u> an allergy.

Some useful adjectives:

Word	Meaning
acute	very serious
chronic	long-lasting
hazardous	very dangerous
nutritious	used to describe food that is healthy. For example, fruit and vegetables are very <u>nutritious</u> .
vital	very important

Media.

Rephrasing of some common topic words:

influence = effect on

negative development = harmful trend

internet =cyberspace

media =paparazzi [negative]

popularity = fame, attractiveness

Some useful nouns:

Word	Meaning
a medium	medium is the singular form of media [plural].
censorship	when certain types of messages are blocked. For instance, the government often uses <u>censorship</u> for movies that are violent or have sexual content.
credibility	refers to whether something is reliable or from a reliable source.
exaggeration	when the truth is stretched or enlarged.
ideology	a way of thinking or belief system.
journalism	journalism is the way of reporting the news, by including newspapers, magazines, radio and television, the internet.
journalist	a person who has a career in journalism.
mass media	mass media refers collectively to all the forms of media we have such as television, radio, film, on-line services, magazines and newspapers.
propaganda	propaganda occurs the media favours certain kinds of stories or distorts messages to influence the opinions of behaviour of people.
social media	this usually refers to online tools for communication such as Facebook and Twitter.

Some useful verbs:

Word	Meaning
broadcast	to send messages. For instance, the TV broadcasts shows every night.
censor	to block or a strict information or content, especially when it includes violence or inappropriate content.
exploit	to take advantage of someone. For example, whenever a celebrity makes a mistake and public the media is always there to <u>exploit</u> the situation.
intrude	to invade or interfere with someone. For example, the media often <u>intrudes</u> on people's privacy.
publicise	to make public.

Some useful adjectives:

Word	Meaning
classical	following a well-established tradition
contemporary	Modern
cultural	relating to culture. For example, <u>cultural</u> awareness is being aware of someone's culture.
eclectic	not following any one system, such as traditional publishing or online publishing but selecting and using what are considered the best elements of all systems.
inspirational	motivating
monotonous	boring
passionate	intense or strong emotional feeling about something [positive]
vivid	clear

Technology

Rephrasing of some common topic words:

Recent = contemporary

Advances = developments

Improve = enhance, progress

Technology = scientific advancements

Some useful nouns:

Word	Meaning
computerisation	to control a process by using a computer.
digital divide	the gap between those with easy access to information technology, and those without it.
gadget	any small piece of equipment.
innovation	a new way of doing something, or a new application of a technology.
revolution	major change in the way of doing something.
technophobe	someone who has a fear of resistance to technology.
technophile	someone who embraces technology and uses it often.
telecommunications	technology used in the field of communications.

Some useful verbs:

Word	Meaning
develop	to make or create.
envisage	to conceive or imagine an idea.
impact	to have an influence.
revolutionise	to make dramatic changes.
surpass	to exceed or overtake. For example, technology is developing so fast that it will one day <u>surpass</u> our ability to use it.

Some useful adjectives:

Word	Meaning
computer literate	able to understand and communicate about computers.
obsolete	something that is no longer used. For example, typewriters are now <u>obsolete</u> .
out-dated	something that is no longer up-to-date.
state-of-the-art	the latest in most recently available.
user-friendly	easy to use.
virtual	almost, especially as in almost real. For example, when we play games using <u>virtual</u> reality they seemed like they are almost real.

Crime

Rephrasing of some common topic words:

Punishment = penalty

Crime = law-breaking, transgression, offense

Criminal = lawbreaker, offender

Laws = regulations, rules

Some useful nouns:

Word	Meaning
corporal punishment	to punish by physically harming the offender
capital punishment	to punish by killing the offender
community service	to spend time helping the community. For example, if a person does a minor crime they are often only punished by having to do <u>community service</u> .
consequences	the result or effect of something
deterrent	something that prevents an action
evidence	proof that the crime occurred
fine	money paid for a crime
imprisonment	to put someone in prison
legislation	laws that are made by the government
felony	a major crime
misdemeanour	a minor crime
motive	reason for doing something
prevention	stopping something from happening
victim	the person who suffers from a crime or negative event
violation	to break a rule

Some useful verbs:

Word	Meaning
commit	to do something seriously wrong. for example, to <u>commit</u> murder or suicide.
convict	to judge someone as having done a crime
execute	to kill someone
incarcerate	to put someone in prison
rehabilitate	to try to help a criminal become normal again

Some useful adjectives:

Word	Meaning
guilty	someone who has done something wrong
innocent	someone who has done nothing wrong
minor	not serious
major	serious

The environment

Rephrasing of some common topic words:

Environment = biosphere, ecosystem

Damage = devastation

Pollution= contamination

Problems = issues

Solutions= solving, ways to tackle

Some useful nouns:

Word	Meaning
biodegradable	something that is able to decay naturally and harmlessly.
biodiversity	refers to the number and variety of plant and animal species that exist in a particular environmental area or in the world generally.
climate	the weather conditions of a region
climate change	the concept that change is occurring to the earth's climate. [Many people believe this is based on the influence of people].
deforestation	the process by which the forests are cut down.
desertification	the process by which fertile land is turned into deserts
fossil fuels	a natural fuel such as coal, gas, or oil formed over long periods of time from the remains of living organisms.
energy conservation	saving energy
environment	the place where people animals and plants live, also known as the natural world.
extinction	the complete dying out of species
habitat	a place where animals and plants live
natural resources	resources derived from the environment. For example, wood and oil.
renewable energy	describes a form of energy that can be produced as quickly as it is used, such as solar energy.

Some useful verbs:

Word	Meaning
absorb	to take in something. For example, the cloth <u>absorbed</u> the rain.
conserve	to not waste something
deplete	to use up
diminish	to reduce something
discharge	to release something
contaminate	to make something become polluted
endanger	to put something or someone in the danger
impact	to influence
preserve	to keep something safe
retain	to keep something

Some useful adjectives:

Word	Meaning
alternative	a different way of doing something
critical	extremely important
disposable	something that can be thrown away
efficient	performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort
environmentally friendly	something that is good or not harmful to the environment
hazardous	something dangerous
renewable	able to be renewed or replenished
toxic	something poisonous

Useful linking words and phrases

Sequencing the first idea	Adding supporting ideas	Adding a contrasting idea	Making general statements
<p>The main reason is</p> <p>The most important consideration is...</p> <p>First of all,</p> <p>In the first place,</p>	<p>Another reason is...</p> <p>Furthermore,</p> <p>Moreover,</p> <p>In the same vein,</p>	<p>On the other hand,</p> <p>However,</p> <p>Nevertheless,</p> <p>Although,</p>	<p>As a general rule,</p> <p>Generally,</p> <p>In most cases,</p>
Giving examples	Giving an explanation	Clarifying an opinion	Drawing a conclusion
<p>For example,</p> <p>For instance,</p> <p>In particular,</p> <p>A clear example of this is...</p>	<p>The reason for this is...</p> <p>This is because...</p> <p>This is due to...</p>	<p>To be more precise...</p> <p>More specifically...</p> <p>By this I mean...</p> <p>In other words,</p>	<p>As a consequence,</p> <p>Therefore,</p> <p>As a result,</p>
Stating your opinion	Partially correct statements	Other people's opinions	Making a concession
<p>From my perspective,</p> <p>From my point of view,</p> <p>In my opinion</p>	<p>somewhat agree/disagree</p> <p>to a certain degree,</p> <p>to some extent,</p>	<p>From a political point of view,</p> <p>From the point of view of the economy,</p> <p>Some people believe...</p>	<p>It is sometimes argued that...</p> <p>Admittedly,</p> <p>However,</p>
To give advantages	To give disadvantages	To express cause	to express effect
<p>A major advantage of this is...</p> <p>Another important merit is...</p> <p>The final benefit is...</p>	<p>One major drawback is...</p> <p>Another disadvantage is...</p> <p>The final limitation is that...</p>	<p>Owing to...</p> <p>Due to the fact that...</p> <p>For the reason that...</p>	<p>Therefore,</p> <p>As a consequence,</p> <p>As a result...</p>

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