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## What Other's Are Saying?

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"My big goal is to get a great IELTS score so I can reach my dream to study abroad. I want to be a civil engineer and hopefully I can be great at it. I think you've helped me a lot by building my grammar and my ability in IELTS subjects. Hopefully your efforts will make me a better person with my ability in English."

Bodhinanda Chandra, St. Ursula, BSD (Scored 6.5 on IELTS)

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"My goals are to pass the IELTS above 6.5 and can survive when I'm in Singapore. You helped me to know the keypoint of doing IELTS during the test, and helped me to fix my problem in writing."

Vincenta Olga, St. Laurensia, BSD (Scored 6.5)

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"My goal is to get 7 overall in IELTS test and you helped me a lot. I learned much in your class. Before I take the class, I didn't know about IELTS, and after I took the class I feel there is an improvement in me. Even maybe I cant reach my goal, but overall you are a good teacher. Thanks for being my teacher😊"

Putri Rizky Christiany, UPH

Putri took IELTS, scored average 6.5 and is now studying in Birmingham, UK

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## **Thank You!**

This is an opportunity where I would like to personally thank you for putting your trust in me, and for taking a step, and important step towards reaching your IELTS dream score, and getting accepted in University. You made the correct choice. Well done.

You are now my client, and I value clients as friends, and I will want to see you face to face at least on Skype over the coming days, weeks, and months. I want to build a solid professional relationship with you and make sure you reach your goals. When you reach your goals, it gives me a satisfaction that keeps me motivated to create better and better value for you and my other clients.

This book will help you overcome your fears of the IELTS writing tasks, and give you familiarity with the topics in the Interview, and strategies to deal with even the hardest questions.

Remember to be patient and go through all the exercises and by the end, you will have gained at least 1 band score in IELTS.

Enjoy the journey ahead,  
Your teacher,

**Brendan Brosnan, CELT**

## **So, What Is IELTS, and What Does It Matter To You?**

### **1. Q&A**

#### **What Is IELTS?**

International English Language Testing System

What is the exam structure?

Writing Section:

In the writing test, you will be asked to perform 2 tasks, Task 1 and Task 2. These 2 tasks are very different, and Task 1 accounts for 1/3 of the marks, while Task 2 accounts for 2/3 of the marks.

Spend 40 minutes on Task 2 (Essay)

Spend 20 minutes on Task 1 (Report)

IELTS Speaking:

The IELTS Speaking Section is an interview and it consists of 3 parts, including introduction, individual long turn, and discussion.

### **Listening**

The listening module comprises four sections. Each section begins with a short introduction telling the candidates about the situation and the speakers. Then they have some time to look through the questions. The first three sections have a break in the middle allowing candidates to look at the remaining questions. Each section is heard only once.

### **Reading**

In the academic module the reading test comprises three sections, with 3 texts normally followed by 13 or 14 questions for a total of 40 questions overall. The General test also has 3 sections. However the texts are shorter, so there can be up to 5 texts to read.

## Conversion table

This table can be used for the Listening/Reading tests to convert raw scores to band scores. This chart is a guide only, because sometimes the scores adjust slightly depending on how difficult the exam is.

Band Score	9.0	8.5	8.0	7.5	7.0	6.5	6.0	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	0.0
Raw score	40 – 41	37 – 39	35 – 36	33 – 34	28 – 32	26 – 27	23 – 25	21 – 22	18 – 20	15 – 17	12 – 14	10 – 11	8 – 9	6 – 7	4 – 5	2 – 3	1	0

## Duration

The total test duration is around **2 hours and 45 minutes** for Listening, Reading and Writing modules.

- **Listening: 40 minutes**, 30 minutes for which a recording is played centrally and additional 10 minutes for transferring answers onto the answer sheet.
- **Reading: 60 minutes.**
- **Writing: 60 minutes.**
- **Speaking: 11–14 minutes.**

Important: No additional time is given for transfer of answers in Reading and Writing modules)

The first three modules - Listening, Reading and Writing (always in that order) - are completed in one day, and in fact are taken with no break in between. The Speaking Module may be taken, at the discretion of the test centre, in the period seven days before or after the other Modules.

The tests are designed to cover the full range of ability from non-user to expert user.

## What's expected of you to get a good score?

### Band scale

IELTS is scored on a nine-band scale, with each band corresponding to a specified competence in English. Overall Band Scores are reported to the nearest half band.

The following rounding convention applies: if the average across the four skills ends in .25, it is rounded up to the next half band, and if it ends in .75, it is rounded up to the next whole band.

The top 5 bands are described as follows:

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 9 Expert User    | Has full operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.   |
| 8 Very Good User | Has full operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.   |
| 7 Good User      | Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriateness and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning. |
| 6 Competent User | Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.                |
| 5 Modest user    | Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.                               |

When will you take your IELTS exam?

Go to [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org) to find your local test center.

Activity: Do It Now! – Can You Answer these Questions?

Can you tell me something about yourself?  
Where do you live? Is that far from here? How did you get here today?  
Can you tell me your favorite thing about your city?  
What don't you like about your city?  
Do you have a big immediate family? What about your extended family?  
How often do you meet your relatives?  
Which relatives do you like to spend time with the most? Why?  
What's your favorite holiday in the year?  
When was your last holiday? What did you do?  
When will be your next holiday? What are your plans?  
What is happening in your life this year?  
Why did you choose to come to this course?  
What was it that influenced you the most to come here?  
What's your goal or target for this course?  
Can you tell me about a few Indonesian foods? What makes Indonesian food distinctive?  
What is your favorite food? How often do you eat it? Where do you go out to have this dish?  
Why do you think food is such a fun topic of conversation among all people?  
Give me some reasons.  
What's your opinion on traveling? Is it a good thing to do? What are the benefits?  
Have you traveled much in your life?  
Tell me a story from your travels?  
Does Indonesia have many "hidden treasures"?  
What one place, which is unfamiliar, would you recommend foreigners to visit in Indonesia? Why?  
Can you share with me what your biggest life lesson so far has been? Please tell me the story of how you learned it.  
Can you share with me the story of when you had your best birthday party?  
Please include who was there, where it was held, and other details.  
Can you tell me a story from your school about something funny which a teacher of yours did in class?  
What was the biggest mistake you ever made in your life? What lesson did you learn from it?  
Do you believe failure is a bad thing or a good thing? Explain  
Which do you think is more important IQ or EQ, emotional intelligence? Why?  
Can you describe in detail a movie you saw recently? The storyline, the characters, and the theme...  
Can you tell me about the best teacher you ever had? Describe the teacher, and then give reasons why he/she was the best?  
What was the best book that you ever read? Describe the book and why it was so good.  
If you could choose any career, by waving a magic wand, what would you like to become?



What do you think are your biggest strengths?

What do you think are your biggest weaknesses?

What are you passionate about?

Do you think that people always find the perfect job in life? How can a person know if the job is right for them or not?

Some people think that schools put too much focus on academic subjects? Do you agree? What other things are important for students to learn?

Climate change is affecting countries all around the world. What are the effects in your country? What could happen in the coming years?

The Internet is in almost every home nowadays. What do you think are the biggest benefits of Internet?

## **What Are The Core Disciplines You Need To Learn?**

Listening: Learn strategy, Practice Listening Tests, Build Vocabulary and Grammar

Reading: Learn Strategy, Practice Reading Tests, Build Vocabulary and Grammar

Writing: Learn Essay Templates, Essay Structure, Planning, Vocabulary and Grammar, Practice Writing Tests

Speaking: Native Speaking Techniques, Speaking Structure, Grammar and Vocabulary

## IELTS General Knowledge Base

In IELTS, it is good for you as a student to be familiar with current affairs, general history, trends in the world, and about some of the big frequently discussed topics. Among the most popular topics discussed are basic science, discoveries, technology, communication the internet, health, crime, families, education, teaching and learning methods, the economy, employment, globalization, consumerism, travel, culture, government policy, pollution, climate change, sporting events, the future, the difference between past and present.

### 1. Technology (phones, TV, messenger, email, home appliances etc)

Technology means any man made advanced device to help people do things faster, better, more conveniently. Technology has developed quickly, especially over the past 100 years. Before 100 years ago, there were no TVs, no mobile phones, no computers, no internet, and no widespread electricity. Nowadays people are surrounded by technology.

There's a relationship between technology advancement and jobs! Due to the increase in use of robots, many human jobs have been replaced. Now in car factories, computer factories, bottling plants etc, robots do most of the work.

What do you think are the dangers of technology?

What do you feel are the great opportunities it creates?

How has technology influenced your life? Made your life better/worse?

What would your life be like without technology?

### 2. Internet

The internet has only been around for about 20 years. In these 20 years it has revolutionized the planet. People are more quickly connected than ever before. The internet has provided a platform for instant messaging, email, and video calling communication. It has also revolutionized the availability of information. It has truly introduced the world into the information age. There are websites on every known topic, on every subject of history, and on all news from all around the world. Importantly, most of the content is free.

The internet is one of the signs of the times. Along with the boom in technology, the internet has been another sign that we now live in the information age or knowledge worker age. The modern world is vastly different from the world about 100 to 150 years ago, which was still the industrial age.

How has the internet been an important part of your life?

What would your life be like if you didn't have the internet? What would be missing?

How would it be better?!

What are the advantages of the internet for school work? Give an example of how it helped you in the past?

How can it help families?

### **3. Health**

Health is a universally important topic. Most people know health is maintained by good diet and regular exercise. Some people think health education in schools may help to improve people's health habits. Some schools already have health classes and PE to deliver sufficient focus on this important part of life.

Most people know about the problem of eating fast food. Fast food contains bad oils, and contains very few nutrients. It is clear that more and more young people choose to have fast food than healthy food nowadays. There are statistics in the world that show the rising rate of diabetes and obesity. In fact these lifestyle related diseases have reached record levels. Countries most affected are western countries, but even Asian nations have experienced record levels as well.

The lifestyle nowadays is one with less activity, less physical labor, and most jobs involve sitting down at a desk most of the day. This sedentary lifestyle has contributed to the health epidemic.

Processed foods are another problem. They lack the quality of nutrients that organic foods have. Most supermarkets are full of processed foods, processed breads, canned food, and other lower quality foods.

There is also the issue of influential advertising. Many advertising campaigns make their foods look like great fun, delicious treats, and almost irresistible. Such ads by fast food chains and candy companies are misleading. These are in addition to the amount of false advertising done by cigarette, and alcohol companies.

Questions on Health:

Have you got any stories about anyone you know who got badly sick due to poor lifestyle habits?

### **4. Consumerism**

Consumerism is basically the phenomenon in which people spend money on material possessions not really because they need them, but because they want to show off their wealth and status. It has been stimulated by materialism, and philosophies regarding being seen and seeking approval from others.

Consumerism can be understood if you realize that it all began about 200 years ago when the world was becoming industrialized, and more modern. It really exploded when advertising and the media became mainstream. In addition, capitalism contributed to the growth of consumerism. Capitalism, especially in the United States was based on the idea

that if everybody consumed a lot, and spend a lot, that everybody would become prosperous.

## **5. Crime and Punishment**

The topic of crime comes up sometimes on the IELTS. The main areas of discussion are about how to fairly treat criminals, how criminals should be punished, and the issue of capital punishment. Some believe criminals should be given intensive rehabilitation programs because one of the main reasons why people become criminals is lack of love and instruction in childhood. Prisons then have an opportunity to fill this gap in character. Professionals can be employed including counselors, psychotherapists, educators to create a desire inside the criminals to be better people.

The right to life is a big issue when considering capital punishment (the death penalty). Some believe capital punishment is murder just as the criminal may have murdered. Some believe it is important to do it in order to scare would be criminals away from committing such sins in the future.

Q&A:

What are your views on Crime and punishment?

Why would some believe criminals should not receive rehabilitation? (hint cost, danger, unproven)

What stories can you share from the past that show examples of rehab success, or capital punishment success or the opposite?

## **6. Family**

The topic of family comes up occasionally on IELTS. The main issues include raising children, how attitudes are affected by parenting, the importance of family, and the issue of nature v nurture.

Some people think the way children are raised and the experiences they have when growing up shape character, while others believe it is the genes and DNA that determine character. This is a common argument, and is an old one. What's your view? Can you prove your view with stories/examples from the past or real statistics, or case studies?

Some provide examples, for instance where a sister was involved in a big accident in her teens, and after the accident, she changed her life attitude completely, and changed from a very selfish person to a much more grateful, loving, sharing person. This would be a good way to prove that DNA was not the cause of character change.

There's also the question of the effects of having one or both parents working. The examiners want to see if you can understand the issue and the potential effects, and the already evident effects of not having the parents at home. What happens to the child? It has been shown to leave the child without a devoted teacher, and the gap between parent and child gets weakened. Do you have any theories on this? Any proof?

## **7. Education:**

This is a big topic on the IELTS. There is a need to understand the link between education, the need to have a lot of skills, and knowledge and the current knowledge economy. Because of the move from the industrial to the information age, education has become more important than ever. Nowadays, also with the competition for jobs, often employers are forced to choose the candidates with masters, and PHDs. They have an advantage.

There's also an argument that education is not the only contributor to success. Experience and the ability to get results in the real world is also essential in order to get better jobs. Sometimes a less educated person can get a better job than a person with a PHD because the PHD candidate has no track record of getting results in the field.

The topic of how to learn is also important. Teaching methods are discussed. How have you learned best in your life? How have your friends learned best? Can you tell some stories about the teaching methods that have influenced you the most, especially the ones that helped you learn the best?

You may also be asked to talk about public versus private education and the state of education in your country. What is the condition in your country? Should all citizens receive the same education? Prove your answer to be true

## **8. The Economy and Employment**

In this topic, you need to know that the world has gone through changes in the economy over the last few centuries. The 3 main economic eras were the agricultural age, the industrial age and now the information age. The change from one era to the next is a huge one. The industrial economy was based on a system of factory jobs and manufacturing, energy production, and it consisted of almost all the power being controlled by a very small number of capitalists and almost everybody else was a manual laborer or factory worker.

The information age came into being over the past 50 years. It came about because the nature of work changed from being labor based to being knowledge based. Now with the internet and global communication, people transact business across continents, and the main resources are information and knowledge. Now the people who run the economy are millions of knowledge workers. The economy depends on their productivity. The old traditional capitalist is a dying breed.

This change affects employment. On one hand it leads to losses in manual labor jobs, as new more efficient processes are developed, and robots complete many tasks in factories. On the other hand the knowledge worker age has led to the creation of many new job categories, including internet marketing, IT, computer science, programming, and energy engineering.

What other new job categories are available to students now as modern careers?  
What do you think are the most valuable skills in this modern era?

## **9. Globalization**

Globalization is about the trend towards a more unified world culture and it describes the condition of a connected and shared world experience. It has been caused by the spread of the internet, the expansion of multi-national companies, international personal and business travel, the growth of international air travel, and the extended reach of the world media on tv and internet.

There are arguments about whether globalization threatens local cultures, as more and more young people follow world trends instead of the ways of their parents. Do you have proof that this is not the case in your country? Tell us your story.

## **10. Travel, Tourism & Culture**

The argument is that travel broadens the mind. Have you ever traveled and experienced such a learning experience that changed the way you think?

Some argue that tourism negatively affects local cultures, and damages local sites. Others think tourism is desperately needed by locals who make a modern living from the income it generates.

On the topic of culture, can you name and describe a few cultural events that occur in your country each year? What customs are common in your country?

## **11. World Problems & Who's responsible?**

These problems that IELTS sometimes includes are climate change, pollution, global warming, waste disposal, poverty, medical epidemics, natural disasters, etc. On one hand, there is a belief that government is responsible for these problems and they should solve these problems. On the other hand, it can be argued that individuals are responsible, and should do more to find solutions. In reality, you need to realize that a balance is needed. Both government and individuals need to work together to find suitable solutions to solve the world's problems.

Think about the causes of these world problems. Brainstorm all the causes, whether they are caused by government's lack of preparation, or by individuals' lifestyle habits.

Always be realistic and truthful with your arguments to the best of your ability.

## The 10 Strategies To Master Listening

### 1. Active Question Focus

Before listening, read the questions carefully, and underline keywords. Write notes, ask yourself: who is going to speak?, what's the topic?

### 2. Predict Answers

Predict the answers in the gaps and spaces. You can do this by reading the headings, the uncompleted sentences, asking yourself what's the topic and what could possibly be in this gap? As you become more able to predict answers, you will find yourself ready and able to pick up the answer when you hear it. This is the work of a superior test taker.

### 3. Infer

This will be an essential skill for you to develop especially for the last 2 sections of the listening test. You need to be ready for indirect answers, and sentences which are alternative ways of giving the information you predicted. You will rely on your high English fluency to recognize the different ways of communicating and the multiple synonyms of each word in the question. You need to be prepared for this because it will certainly be advanced and fast speaking in Listening Section 4.

### 4. Watch Instructions (answer size limit)

In the IELTS Listening test, you will be given instructions for each question. Such instructions include maximum words, and numbers allowed in the answer sheet. Be watchful of this. You will be penalized if you write too many words. For example, if the question says "Write no more than 3 words and or a number", then you can write 1 word, or 2 words, or 3 words, or 1 word and a number, or 2 words and a number, or 3 words and a number, or just a number. If you write 4 words, you are wrong. If you write 2 numbers, you are wrong.

### 5. Multiple Choice

In multiple choice questions, the instructions almost always just want you to write the letter referring to the correct choice. Just transfer, A, B, C... as appropriate and do not transfer the full sentence to the answer sheet.

### 6. Capital Letters

In the IELTS exam, you only write capital letters when it is grammatically correct. You must NOT write all your answers with capital letters. You must only write the first letter of a NAME, BRAND, PLACE NAME, or other proper noun.

### 7. Only transfer the data that is missing to answer sheet

In the listening booklet, you will see gaps that require completion. Be careful to only transfer the missing data that you find for the gap, and not any other surrounding words. For example, if you see \_\_\_\_\_ pm, it's clear that the gap will contain a time. It may be 6.30. Therefore, you need to transfer "6.30" into the answer sheet. You do not transfer the "pm". However if the gap was \_\_\_\_\_, and the speaker said 6.30pm, then you would have to transfer the full "6.30pm".



8. Units/Dimensions are important.

In your answering, get as much clarity as possible about the data. Is it kg, miles, minutes, seconds, meters, etc? You will need to add the relevant unit if that is in the gap. Also you can use abbreviations for common units such as kilograms (kg), grams (g), metres (m)

9. Use The Correct Date Format

In IELTS, the examiners prefer date in the following format: day Month year, for example 17<sup>th</sup> March 2012. They do not accept 17/3/2012!

Sometimes, you will only need to write the month. It depends on the question.

10. When doing the listening test, don't transfer any data during the CD playing time. Instead you need to just focus on the questions and get all the answers. At the end of the listening CD, you will be given 10 minutes to transfer your answers.

## ***Listening Practice Resources***

### **FREE Online Listening Practice Resources**

- 1. Pearson Longman iTest**
  - 2. BBC 6 minute English**
  - 3. Parapal:** [www.parapal-online.co.uk/](http://www.parapal-online.co.uk/)
  - 4. Exam English:** [www.examenglish.com](http://www.examenglish.com)
  - 5. Canada Visa Website**
- 2 Free Practice Tests

### **Paid Resources:**

25 Hour Cambridge IELTS Listening Practice: <http://www.ielts-preparation.org/ielts-academic-preparation/online-courses>

IELTS Past Papers by Cambridge: Check out Amazon.com

## ***How To Succeed in IELTS Reading Comprehension?***

Reading Comprehension in the IELTS is going to test your ability to internalize, and comprehend passages of text on various topics and subject matter. You may have to read science based subject matter, or social or humanities. What you will find common is that you will have to figure out a few things as you read. Here are the things you will need to figure out:

1. What's The Topic: You need to ask yourself right from the word go, what is this about? You need to then start asking yourself...
2. What's The Scope: What about this is the author interested in? Dig deeper, and try to find out what angle the author is referring to.
3. What's The Purpose: Why is the author writing this? What does he want to accomplish? Does he want to explain a new concept? Propose a policy change? Argue against an opposing viewpoint? Make a case for someone or something?
4. Where's the evidence? As you read it's important to keep in mind where everything is located in the passage. Try to identify in your mind the paragraph map (introduction is where he proposes x, paragraph 2 is where he gives his first main piece of support...etc)
5. What's the author's feeling? How does the author feel? Does he have any bias? What kinds of words does he use? Are his words positive or negative?
6. What's the Core Point? Is there one point which is essential to the passage? Is there a chunk of logic that constitutes the heart of the passage? Try to fully grasp the core point of the passage, as this will probably be the heart of most of the questions too.
7. What are the Takeaways? Do you have a deep understanding of the passage to be able to apply the same logic and ideas to other similar situations? Can you understand it such that you can make inferences and make conclusions based on the passage content? Such ability will give you an edge in inference questions.

The secret is to read the whole passage carefully, yet with speed. It's not necessarily speed of completion of the passage. It is more important to speedily comprehend, and answer the above questions in your head as you progress through the passage.

When you have finished reading the passage you can then move onto the questions. Read the questions carefully, **understanding exactly** what the question asks. Sometimes the answer choice gives an answer that is true and in accord with the passage, but doesn't answer the question!

Note1: Take notes of particularly important parts of the text. For example, when it gives a list of 3 to 5 points, you should take notes to summarize such points because this is likely to be examined in the questions, and it's good to be ready.

Note2: There is no substitute for disciplined consistent reading and answering practice questions. You will benefit greatly by sticking to a strict regime of daily practice of

IELTS questions in reading comprehension. This will make you so familiar with the questions that you will have a deep knowledge of what's required of you on test day.

### **Reading Strategy 1: Deep Understanding**

Step 1: Skim the Passage Paragraph By Paragraph

Step 2: On Each Paragraph, write the FUNCTION of that paragraph (just a word or two, for example, benefits, problems, or description). Basically, you need to find out the reason why the author wrote the paragraph.

Step 3: Ask yourself the questions written above so you understand the general idea of the passage.

Step 4: Go through the questions 1 by 1, and refer back to the text when necessary.

### **Reading Strategy 2: Rapid Fire Reading**

Step 1: Read the first and last lines of each paragraph. Ask yourself the active reading questions.

Step 2: Move quickly onto the questions and do them 1 by 1.

### **Reading Strategy 3: Invest In Questions**

Step 1: Go Directly To Questions

Step 2: Look at all Questions and then predict answers followed by referring back to passage

Step 3: Focus on keywords and locate relevant text in passage

### Reading Strategy: Yes, No, Not Given Questions

These are some of the hardest questions on the IELTS Reading Test. Consider for a moment having a statement in front of you and also having the passage in question. The statement is either going to be a yes, a no, or a not given. What does this mean?

Firstly, let's analyze what a yes statement is: A statement that gets a "Yes" will have some or all of the following features:

- It is an exact replica of a detail in the passage
- It is a paraphrase (same meaning but different words used) of a detail in the passage
- Same topic, and same specific detail

Secondly, let's consider what a "No" statement is: A "No" statement is characterized by the following:

- It is the exact opposite of a detail in the passage.
- It is on the same topic but it goes against the passage detail
- It is a clash with a specific detail from the passage.
- It can be symbolized by the following diagram: →←

Examples include: E.g. 1. Statement says the color of X was red. Passage says the color of X was blue, E.g. 2. Statement says the ants did use odor signals. Passage says they did not use odor signals

Finally, Let's consider a "Not Given" Statement. A Not Given statement is characterized by the following:

- It can be something about the same topic in the passage but a specific detail in the statement is not in the passage.
- It often seems to be in agreement with the passage but the actual detail is not in the passage.

### Reading Strategy: True, False, Not Given Questions

These are very similar in nature to Yes, No, Not Given Questions. The main difference is that the True/False/Not Given questions are focused more on the author's opinion and feelings about the topics. You need to have a good overall understanding of the author's views and inclinations in order to excel in these questions. What will help you to get these questions right is an ability to read around the particular details and find out whether there's a match, a clash or whether there is actually no match at all.

- True: These statements match the author's opinion.
- False: These statements clash with the author's opinion (It can be symbolized by the following diagram: →←)

- Not Given: These statements don't match with the opinions in the passage. They don't match but they also do not go against the author's opinion.

## ***Reading Practice Resources***

The following are a list of sources for great reading passages, articles, and reports that you must read if you wish to reach a score of more than 6.5 or 7.

Directions:

1. You need to search for the following in Google, and read one article/passage per day
2. Practice Active reading by making a summary of 1 passage each day

Read news websites, magazine websites, and documentary websites for free.

Recommendations: Psychology Today, Science, Newsweek, Time, Reader's Digest.

Paid Practice:

25 Hour Cambridge IELTS Reading Course: <http://www.ielts-preparation.org/ielts-academic-preparation/online-courses>

IELTS Past Papers by Cambridge: Check out Amazon.com

## Back to Basics: Learn Grammar by Speaking It

### ***Learn The Past Simple Tense!***

- ✓ Used for a FINISHED event, action, thing
- ✓ Used to tell stories
- ✓ Used to support your ideas with facts, experience, stories, memories, lessons learned from past
- ✓ Used for Part 2 of Speaking Interview
- ✓ Used for Task 1 of Writing Test

#### The Structure

I  
You  
He  
She        +        VERB - ed  
It  
We  
They

**Never!!:** I was go, I was went, They were see.... XXXXXXXX

## ***Learn The Present Perfect Tense!***

Present perfect tense is used to express an action that has occurred from a time in the past until the present time, or to express a life experience.

Here's the structure:

I            have    +    past participle pp (eg. Been, seen, eaten)  
You

He  
She        has     +     pp  
It

We    have    +    pp  
They

To show the link between the past and now, you use

1. **since** a specific point in time ( I have been in Indonesia **since October 2010**)
2. **for** a time quantity (I have been in Indonesia **for 7 months**)

Further examples include:

Since last July, since last week, since last year, since 1995, since Monday, since Christmas, since the 22<sup>nd</sup>

Or

For a year, for a few months, for 2 weeks, for 5 years, for 10 days, for a few minutes

The second major use of present perfect is when recounting an experience, such as in the following examples:

- I have been to Ireland, England, USA, Korea, The Philippines, and Indonesia.
- I have never eaten frog meat!
- I have eaten spaghetti a few times.
- I have read quite a few Harry Potter books already.
- I have already been there
- I have not been to Hong Kong yet

NOTE: When you state your experience using present perfect, you can then move on smartly to use past simple to give details of your experience. Remember you use past simple to expand on your experience. You **ONLY** use present perfect to state your overall experience, and then use past simple to tell your story (narrate).



For example:

Have you been abroad?

*Yes I have. I have been to Australia. I went there last year during my summer vacation. I went there with my family, and we stayed in a nice beach house in Cairns. That was my first time abroad and it was a great experience.*

Notice the use of present perfect in the first 2 sentences, to answer the question asked and then note the use of past simple for all the further details of that past, finished story.

Further uses of Present perfect:

**Use It in the ESSAY** to make statements about the progress of an issue:

- ✚ There has been great progress in education over the last few years.
- ✚ Medical technology has improved dramatically in the last few decades.
- ✚ Communication technology has become more advanced and widespread over the last few years especially since the growth of social networking sites online.

In each of the above 3 examples it shows the issues have their origins in the past but continue to the present. It shows that the issue is still progressing presently.

It is also possible to use this exact structure and application in the speaking interview in part 3 when making a good supported answer.

## **Practice With Your Partner Past Simple and Present perfect**

Where did you go for your last holiday?  
What did you do there? How was the weather?  
How many countries have you been to?  
What was your favorite holiday ever?

Can you tell me about one of the best experiences you have ever had in your life?  
Why was it so important to you?

Did you have a best friend when you were a child?  
Who was it? What kinds of things did you do together?  
What kind of things did you enjoy doing as a child?  
Where did you live as a child?  
Who inspired you as you were growing up?

Have you been abroad?  
How many countries have you been to?  
Can you tell me about all your travels?

How many books have you read?  
Have you ever read an autobiography?  
Can you tell me about a book you read recently?

What did you study in school?  
What was your favorite subject? Why?  
Who was your favorite teacher? Why?  
Where did you go to elementary school?

Can you tell the story of a spiritual experience in your life?  
When did it happen? Where? How did it make you feel? Etc...

Have you ever been in a dangerous situation? What happened? How did you react?

Have you ever experienced turbulence on a plane? When and can you describe the scene?

When was the last time you saw a movie? Can you tell me about it?

When was the last time you ate pizza?

When was the last time you watched the news on TV? What was the news at that time?

Can you tell me about a time when you felt really happy and excited? Why?  
Can you tell me about a time when you felt bad? Why did you feel bad?

How did you get here today? Was there much traffic? How much time did it take?  
Where did you eat lunch yesterday? What did you have?

When was the last time you went to the mall? Was it fun?  
Have you ever been to a water park? Which one?  
Have you ever been on a safari? What was your favorite animal?

Who has inspired you in your life so far? In what ways?  
What people have you learned the most from in your life? What big life lessons have you learned?

What was the number 1 lesson you have learned so far in life?

“The best things in life are free” – Have you experienced this in your life?

## ***Learn The Present Simple!***

The present simple tense can be used at all times to express actions which are habitual, or routine. These actions and routines are things.

A common structure is the use of time words such as those listed as follows:

Usually  
Often  
Sometimes  
Always  
Occasionally  
Never

Used in the structure like this:

I            usually, etc    +    verb  
You

He  
She            usually, etc    +    verb(s)  
It

We    usually, etc    +    verb  
They

Questions such as “What do you usually do with your friends at the weekend?”, “How often do you see your family members?”

## **Practice Present Simple With Your Partner!**

### **Present Simple (Habits, Routines)**

What are your hobbies?

Do you like to read? How often do you read? What kinds of things do you read? Do you prefer books, magazines, and/or newspapers?

How often do you work out? Where do you usually work out?

How often do you speak English in your daily routine?

Do you always enroll in private educational courses?

What kinds of music do you like? How often do you listen to music?

What do you think of classical music? Do you think it's true that classical music is good for growing babies during pregnancy?

Do you like to go to concerts?

What's your favorite food? What kinds of food do you usually cook at home?

What do you consider to be the healthiest food on earth?

What do you think of fast food?

Do you like to travel? Where is your favorite place in Indonesia?

Why do so many people like to travel? What about travel makes it so appealing?

Are there any dangerous places in your country?

Are you interested in world travel? Why or why not?

Do you think that too much traveling can be bad?

I think it is love that makes the world go around. What do you think?

Can you tell me about your best friend? What is he/she like?

Why are best friends important?

What do you like to do with your friends at the weekend?

Do you like TV? Why? How much TV do you watch each week?

Can TV have a negative impact on a person's behavior? How?

How important is education nowadays?

**(Now make up your own questions!)**

## ***Learn The Present Continuous!***

Used for telling interviewer about your current status, your studies, your preparations at this moment, the current affairs of Indonesia. Remember this is all about NOW! For example

“I am currently studying English and preparing to go abroad”

“I am studying in X University and I’m working on my final year project. It is going well so far, and I am hoping to finish it next month.”

Used in Writing to present the current world situation when starting your essay, to show current world condition:

“Nowadays, the world *is experiencing* unparalleled climate change. The ice *is melting* rapidly, tsunamis *are becoming* more frequent, and earthquakes *are destroying* more and more cities.”

Any time you want to express something in the present moment, now, nowadays, currently, etc, you need to use:

### Structure

I am  
You are  
He is  
She is                      VERB - ing  
It is  
We are  
They are

Present continuous is also used in a future tense function sometimes:

For example:

I am going to University in Australia next year.

I am meeting my friend tomorrow night at seven pm.

## **Practice With Your Partner Present Continuous**

### **Present Continuous (happening NOW)**

What are we doing right now?

What is the teacher doing right now?

What is happening outside this class at the moment?

Currently, what is happening in Indonesia in the news?

What are you preparing for in your life at the moment?

How is global warming affecting Indonesia right now?

Why is education becoming more and more important nowadays?

Why are so many Indonesian students going abroad to study nowadays?

What are you doing in your job/school right now? Are you enjoying it?

Is the internet becoming a threat or an opportunity in your opinion?

Is the world becoming safer or more dangerous to live in?

In these latter days, are we experiencing more extreme weather than past times?

**(Now make up your own questions!)**

## ***Learn The Passive Voice!***

Passive voice is used when there is no known subject and it can be used for past events, present, and future actions where the subject or “doer” is unknown.

1. Past usage: “A policy was introduced a few years ago but it didn’t make any major difference to citizen’s behavior”
2. Present usage: “A job centre is being built in the city centre to help people overcome the current job scarcity resulting from the economic crisis”
3. Future usage: “A hotel will be built in place of the existing Hard Rock café in the future development of Bali’s Kuta Beach area.

This is the construction:

Something/Object was + pp

Plural → were + pp

Something/Object is being + pp

Plural → are being + pp

Something/Object will be + pp

This has applications in the speaking interview when you want to talk about future actions that government will take, and it will be useful for any time you wish to remain objective and balanced by not mentioning who or what will be the cause of some event.

It can also be used in the writing tasks to avoid mentioning a subject when making a general statement, etc.

## ***Learn The Future Tenses!***

Will

I

You

He

She

It

We

They

will + VERB / to be going to + VERB

Also

There will be ....

Also

I will be involved in..., etc

In fact, will is not really going to be used much in your IELTS exam. You will do better to use more native ways of expressing future intentions such as:

- I hope to be able to start my university studies in Australia next year.
- My aim is to be accepted into university in Singapore after high school
- I intend to go to America for my university education.
- The government is aiming to invest up to 10 million dollars into the transportation network here in Indonesia in the coming years.
- My plan is to get a 7 on my IELTS and then move to the UK.
- I am hoping that I can get a 7 on my IELTS, and then I will be able to go to the UK to study.



## **Practice With Your Partner Future Questions and Answers**

### **Future Tense (will, hope to, intend to, to be going to etc.)**

What will you do after class today?

Where will you go after this?

Will you have dinner with your family tonight?

What are your plans for next weekend? Will you go to the mall?

What do you intend to do for your next holiday?

What are you aiming to accomplish in the coming years in your life? Do you have any goals?

Will there ever be a subway in Indonesia?!

Will you travel abroad in the future? Where will you go?

Will you ever get married?

Are you going to work all your life or will you retire at some stage?

Where do you see yourself in 5 years? What will you be doing 5 years from now in your opinion?

**(Now make up your own questions!)**

## ***Learn Modal Verbs!***

I

You

He

She

might, could, may, can, should, + VERB

It

We

They

These modal verbs are used to modify the verb in the sentence. They are used to add reality and probability to the meaning of the sentence. In general:

Might means 50 – 75% probability

Could means 50% or less probability because could is used with or

Can just expresses ability, and does not give likelihood

Should expresses importance of doing the verb, or suggestion

Take a look at the following examples:

- I think the government should increase investment in the education system here in the coming years.
- In my opinion, television shows shouldn't be allowed to use any swear words.
- The economy might improve over the next few years especially if the government improves education.
- In order to improve the speaking ability of Indonesian students, schools could employ more native teachers, or else schools could have all English curriculums.

## **Practice Modal Verbs with Your Partner**

### **Modal Verbs (can, must, should, could, might...etc)**

Can you drive a car or a motorbike?

Are you able to cook well?

What do you think will happen in your country in the next ten years in; the education system, the health system, the government?

Will it be possible to fly to the moon on holiday in 50 years?

What do you think science might come up with in the coming years?

What should politicians around the world do to make sure of long term world peace?

What should students do in order to get a high exam score?

**(Now make up your own questions!)**

## **The 3 Step System To Score Your Highest on Writing Task 1**

### **Task 1**

In task 1, you will be asked to describe data from a chart, a graph, a table, a pie chart, or other data set. Your task is to transfer the visual data into written words and form a report summary of the data.

You must DO as follows:

1. Compare the largest and the smallest figures
2. Compare the sections of the data that are similar
3. Compare the equally increasing trends
4. Compare the big differences
5. Use past tense to report the data and the change in the data over time

You must NOT:

1. Give opinion
2. Give explanations
3. Provide reasons
4. Use your own reasoning
5. Be subjective

The main point in task 1 is to be objective, use reporting style writing and tone, and simply transfer the visual data into a nice and concisely written description of the data.

### ***The 3 Step System – Task 1***

Step 1: Define The Task

- a. Paraphrase Question, Put it into your own words
- b. Find synonyms for the main features

Step 2: Plan Paragraphs

- a. Introduction using your synonyms and paraphrase
- b. Choose the main feature for P1
- c. Group trends for P2
- d. Group other trends for P3
- e. Conclusion on overall main trend

Step 3: Write

## How To Describe Trends in IELTS?

Firstly, you need to have 2 points in time in order to describe a trend. You usually use the past simple tense for Task 1 because you are describing what happened between 2 points in time in the past.

Note the present perfect is not usually accurate in this case, because the present perfect describes a condition or action that begun in the past and continues to this day. This is used more often in your essays and speaking.

There are two ways to express the changes or trends you see in Task 1 graphs, charts, tables, etc.

Option 1:

Subject	Past Tense Verb	Adverb
The price The population The number of students	Down: decreased, fell, declined, went down, dropped...  Up: increased, rose, grew, went up,  No change: remained, stayed,  Special dramatic verbs: plummeted, plunged, soared, skyrocketed (no adverb needed)	Speed: quickly, slowly, gradually, rapidly  Quantity: slightly, somewhat, significantly, substantially, dramatically  Steady, constant, stable

Option 2:

There was	a	Adjective	noun	In noun
There was	a	gradual, slow, rapid, slight, significant, substantial, dramatic	decrease, fall, decline, drop, increase, rise	in prices, in the number of x, in the rate..

**Activity: Do It Now! – Describe the Trends in Your Country from 2000 to 2010 in the following list of records/figures:**

Write each trend in 2 ways:

1. The divorce rate:

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The average age at marriage:

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The birth rate

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The exchange rate of local currency (v \$):

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The literacy rate

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

6. The population:

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

7. pollution in you capital:

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

8. The price of computers

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

9. The cost of living

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

10. The life expectancy:

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 2: Describe what has happened in the following figures in the last 5 years**

1. The number of people using Blackberry phones

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The number of Indonesian students going abroad to study:

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The price of car fuel:

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The amount of violence in Indonesia:

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

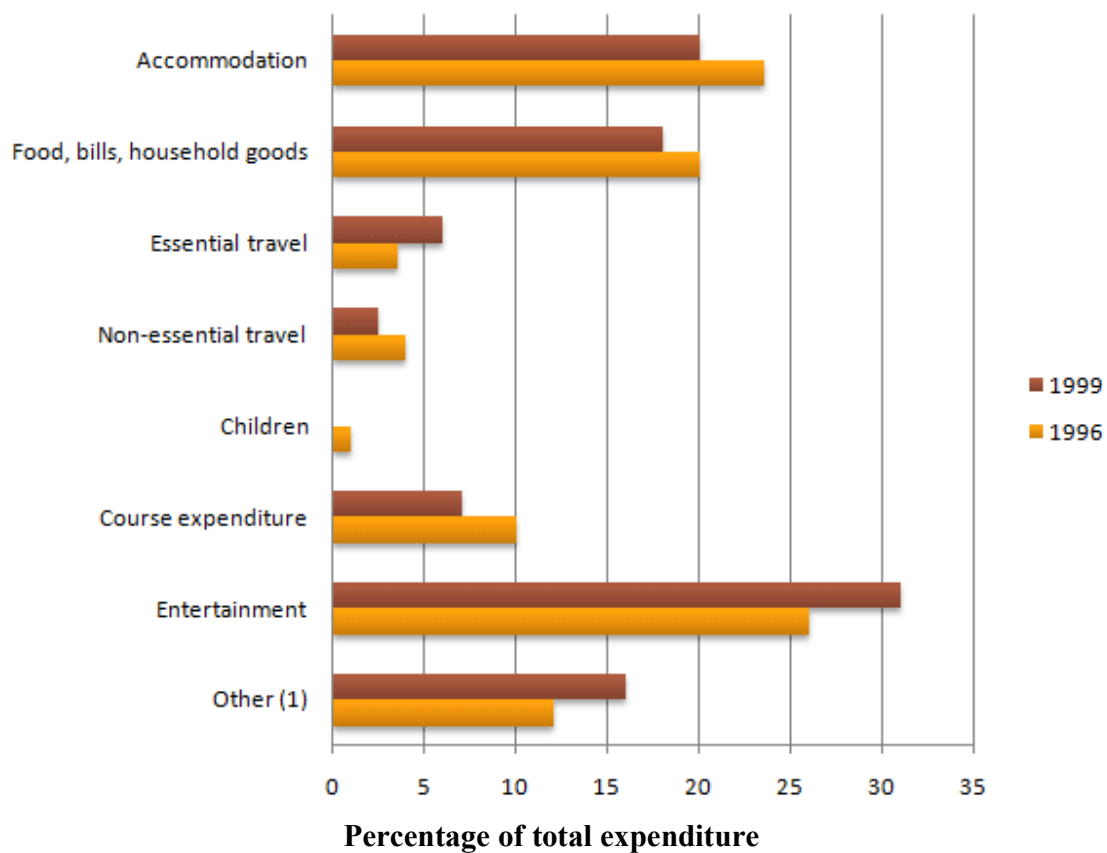
Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_

## How To Plan Vocabulary For IELTS Writing Task 1

First consider the following question:

The chart shows student expenditure over a three-year period in the United Kingdom. Write a report for a university lecture describing the information shown below. You should write at least 150 words.

**Student expenditure (aged under 26 in higher education) United Kingdom\***



(1) includes non-essential consumer items and credit repayments

\* Source: Student Income and Expenditure Survey. Department for Education and Employment.

1: Write Down all the variables, subjects, nouns

In this question: expenditure, percentage of total expenditure, 3 year period, student expenditure, entertainment, etc



2: Brainstorm synonyms:

expenditure, spending, to spend, expenses, percentage, amount, quantity, 3 year period, from 1996 to 1999, students, university students.

3: Brainstorm Descriptive Verbs:

Students spent, expenditure reached, expenditure was, the biggest category of expenditure was entertainment, entertainment was responsible for the majority of spending, students spent the least on children, there was an increase in spending on entertainment in 1999, accommodation accounted for 20% of total student expenditure, the level of spending on X changed significantly from 1996 to 1999

Notice that the verbs are all in the past simple tense! Note also the use of unique descriptive verbs: **to be responsible for, to account for**. These can and should be used in almost every Task 1 question.

Other essential verbs you need to memorize are: **to experience, to contribute to, to be popular**

Activity: Now, can you write out 10 sentences, where you use the above vocabulary and use the vocabulary to describe the data in the chart.

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## ***Practice Preparing Vocabulary To Describe Multiple Types of Data***

1. A graph of consumption of energy, 2000 to 2010: Write the different ways to describe an increase

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A decrease:

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2. A pie chart of favorite hobbies among teens:

Describe the biggest:

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2 hobbies had equal percentages...

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3. Use of electricity by age group

Describe the possibilities for elderly people over 60, teens, people in their twenties, and the highest, and lowest users:

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4. Purchases of iPods over 2005 to 2010 by age group

Describe the trends for biggest consumers and fewest consumers:

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5. Crime rate (percentage of citizens who have committed crime) according to country in a pie chart:

Brazil: highest 10 %, Switzerland 1%

Describe the highest and lowest and compare them

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6. Time spent on studying by students according to school (school A, B, C, D)

A 1 hour/day, B 3 hours/day, C 2 hours/day, D 1 hour per day

Describe the biggest, lowest and compare A, B

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7. Investment in a particular country X by countries France, Germany, USA, Australia, and Singapore

Describe the biggest investor, smallest investor,

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8. Literacy Rate across the continents

Europe: 99%, USA 97%, Africa 79%, Australia: 95%

Describe the highest, lowest and the comparisons

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9. Number of people studying a range of subjects in a particular grade  
Chemistry 50, Business Studies 65, Math 80, Social Science 40, Geography 55, and  
Physics 50

Describe the biggest, lowest, average, and the similar numbers

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10. A graph showing the sales in a toy shop over the year 2010:

Describe the trends:

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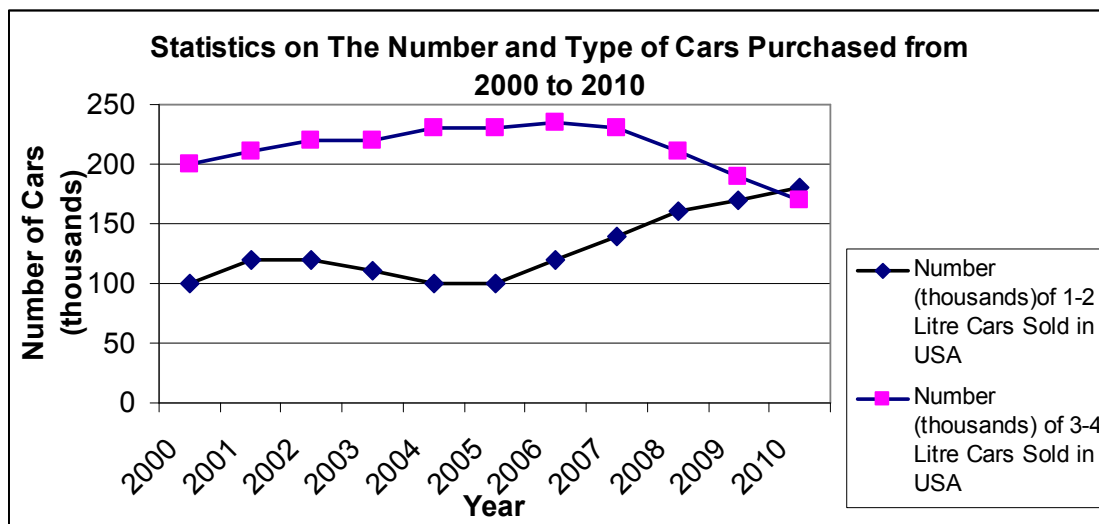
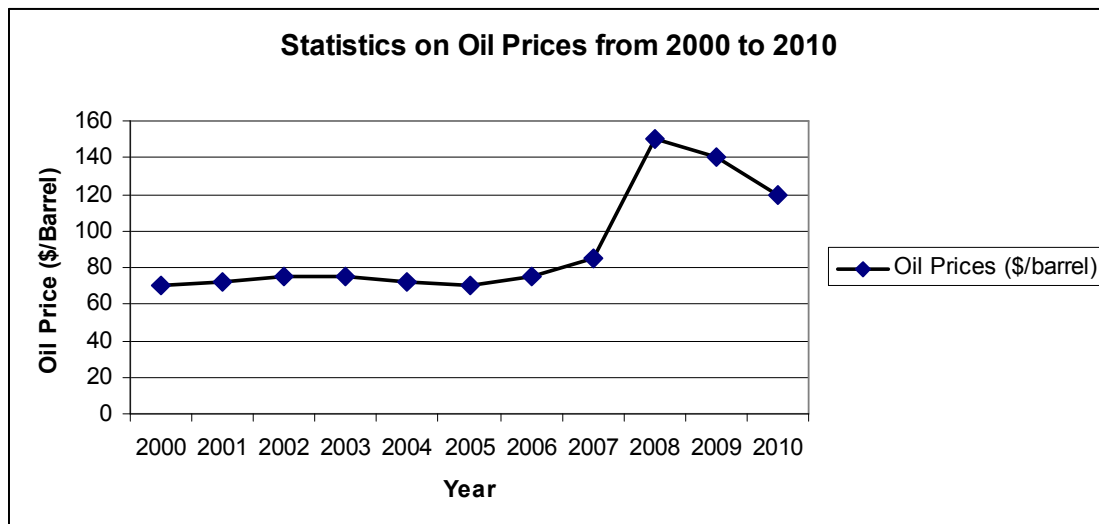
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## Let's Analyze A Sample Question and Answer

Sample 1: The charts below show the price of oil and the numbers and types of cars bought in the USA from 2000 to 2010.



1. Synonyms of variables (cost of oil, oil prices, car preferences, big cars versus small cars, 10 year period)
2. Brainstorm Descriptive Verbs: purchased, spent, oil prices experienced dramatic change, the numbers dropped, oil priced fluctuated

Write:

There are 2 graphs and they both represent figures from the 10 year period of 2000 to 2010. One of the graphs shows the change in oil prices in dollars per barrel over the 10 years, while the other gives data on the numbers and types of cars produced over this time period.

The period of greatest change occurred from 2007 to 2009. From 2007 to 2008, the oil price went up dramatically from about 80 to 150 dollars per barrel. This was almost a doubling in oil price over 1 year. There were also changes in the types of cars sold in this time. The number of 3-4 litre cars sold dropped from roughly 225 thousand to about 180 thousand from 2007 to 2009. This corresponded with an increase in the numbers of 1-2 liter cars sold; 30 thousand extra sold over these two years.

There was a period of low fluctuation in oil prices from 2000 to 2006. In this time period the price of oil stayed between 60 to 80 dollars per barrel. Likewise the numbers of 1-2 litre cars maintained a relatively steady sale rate of about 100 thousand vehicles sold per year up until 2006. The numbers of 3-4 litre vehicles sold seemed to rise slowly from 200 thousand to 240 thousand over this time same 6 year time period.

From 2008 to 2010 the price of oil decreased steadily. In 2010 it reached a price of 120 dollars per barrel. This is almost double what it was in 2005. The number of sales of 1-2 liter cars overtook the number of sales of 3-4 litre cars just before 2010.

In conclusion, oil prices experienced an increase, and smaller 1-2 litre cars became more popular than bigger 3-4 litre cars.

Sample 2: The table below shows the breakdown of people's free time according to activity from 2000 to 2010.

**People's Free Day Time Breakdown**

		Year					
Activity	Internet	2%	5%	7%	10%	11%	15%
	Family Time	15%	13%	12%	10%	8%	7%
	Friends	12%	10%	10%	8%	7%	6%
	TV	30%	34%	33%	34%	37%	34%
	Study	25%	25%	23%	22%	20%	20%
	On Phone	11%	13%	15%	16%	17%	18%

Answering Process:

1. Synonyms of Variables:

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2. Brainstorm Descriptive Verbs

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The table shows a set of data gathered regarding people's habits over the 10 year period from 2000 to 2010. The data consists of the percentage of people's time spent on the internet, with family, and friends, and time spent watching tv, studying and on the phone.

In 2000 the 3 biggest activities in terms of time spent were watching tv, studying and spending time with family. These were significantly higher than time spent on the internet and time spent on the phone.

By 2002, there were a number of shifts in time expenditure. People started to spend more time on the internet. This activity saw a 2 % increase in time spent. Time spent watching tv and on the phone also rose slightly by 4% and 2 % respectively. In this same 2 year period time spent with family went down slightly from 15 to 13%. Likewise, time spent with friends dropped by 2% from 12 to 10% of free time.

Over the next 8 years there were a few common trends. Internet use took up more and more of people's time, and it eventually reached 15% of people's free time. Similarly,

time spent on the phone continued to increase steadily. It reached 18% by 2010. Phone use seemed to increase by 1% every 2 years from 2004 to 2010.

The downward trends were time spent with family, and friends and time spent studying. Both time spent with family and time spent with friends plummeted to figures of 7 and 6% of free time in 2010. These figures are about half the time spent back in 2000.

Overall, the main trends were an increase in time spent using internet, phones and TV, while less and less time was spent with family, friends, and study.

### **Less Common Task 1 Questions**

The less common question type on IELTS is the process flow diagram, or the diagram of a machine or other working mechanism. In this type of Task 1, your job is to describe the overall process, and all the steps in the process or function of each piece of the diagram.

In this, you have options about use of tense:

Option 1: (passive voice), for example, “The material is sent to the vessel for mixing, and it is then moved on to the bottling unit so that the fluid can be bottled.”

Option 2: (present simple), for example, “The material goes to the vessel and gets mixed, and it then moves to the bottling unit to be bottled”

Notice the great potential in English to vary your language use. You need to become comfortable with the tenses and structures to show your fluency.



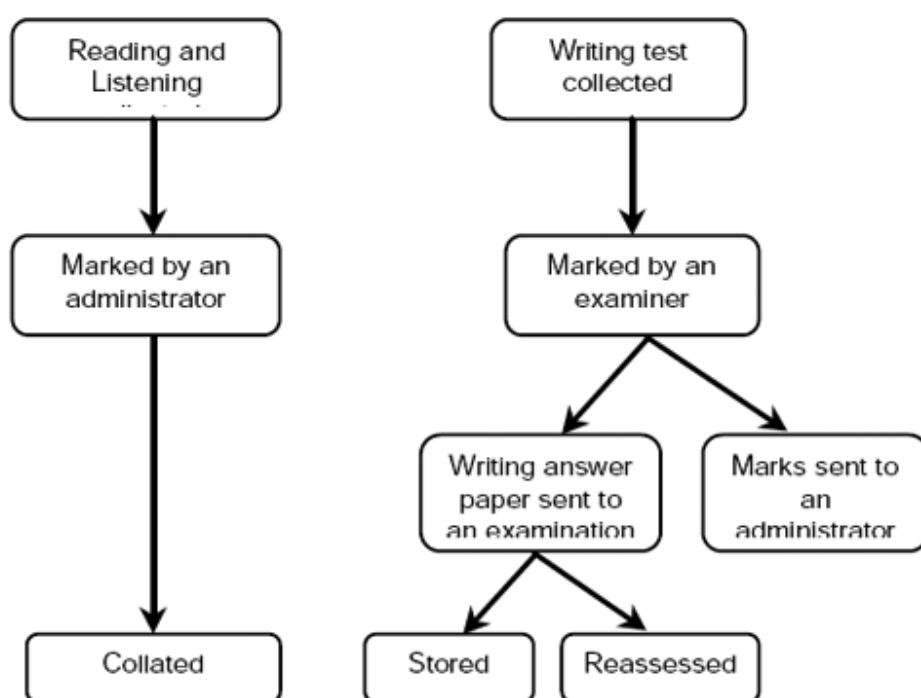
### Activity: Do It Now! – Summarize the following process diagram.

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The flow chart below shows how national examination papers are marked in Someland.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information below.

You should write at least 150 words.



Activity: Let's Do This Together using passive voice:

Plan Vocabulary

1. Synonyms of Variables:

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2. Brainstorm Descriptive Verbs

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## The 5 Step System For Writing IELTS Essays Like A Native

The IELTS Essay is worth 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the marks and it constitutes the major task of the writing test and this will be the big factor that determines your final writing score. It is extremely important and you need to learn a number of things to excel in the writing task 2.

Key Skills:

1. Deep and Critical Understanding of Topic
2. Ability to use Logic and Reasoning throughout your essay
3. Ability to brainstorm ideas, and be creative
4. Ability to use the appropriate grammar
5. Ability to use objective and mostly academic writing style

One key point is that you need to have some basic knowledge of the most common IELTS topics.

Activity: Do It Now! – Discuss with your partner what is your understanding of the following common IELTS topics? Also add stories from your life relevant to the topics.

Globalization

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Internet

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Media and Advertising

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Crime and Punishment

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Child Up-Bringing and Parenting

---

---

Nature V Nurture (DNA v Ability to learn and experience)

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---

Consumerism

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Climate Change

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Attitude to Life

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## Government Responsibilities

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## Individual Responsibilities

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## ***The 5 Step IELTS Essay Writing Formula***

### Step 1: Define Task

- a. Paraphrase the question sentence by sentence. Put it all in your own words
- b. Make Diagrams, arrows, and visuals
- c. Identify Essay Type
- d. Break Down To Core Point(s)

Step 2: Brainstorm. Figure out the factors, assumptions, missing information, pros, cons, advantages, disadvantages, problems, solutions, examples, support, and all necessary info related to the core points. Also brainstorm vocabulary, and synonyms to boost your score.

Step 3: Make Passage Map. Select the Main and strongest points for the passage map. This will take the following form:

Introduction

P1

P2

P3...

Conclusion

Note: Never mix different categories of points in the same paragraph. Only one main point per paragraph.

### Step 4: Write it

Step 5: Proofread it. Make necessary changes to vocabulary, spellings and other smaller fixable mistakes.

## ***Writing The Essay Paragraph by Paragraph***

### **The Introduction:**

There's a basic template to follow when writing the introduction. It is as follows:

First 1-2 sentences

Present the background. You should write something to introduce the core point by mentioning recent trends in the world, stating the current condition of the world relating to the core point, how people feel about this issue today.

Next:

Show both sides of the essay. Here you need to mention that there are 2 sides, some people believe A, some people believe B,

Or

There are advantages to A, but there are also disadvantages

Finally

In the final part of the Introduction, you need to make a thesis statement. Here you will state what you will do in the essay. For example: "This essay will concern itself with the issue X and whether or not A is better than B."

Or

"In this essay I will attempt to show that A is better than B"

Therefore, the introduction is all about introducing, making the idea clear, showing your understanding of the CORE point, and showing good structure and planning.

Note: If you don't plan, you will not find the core point, and if you don't find the core point, you will fail to make a good introduction. (Why? because the introduction is all about the core point) And if you fail to figure out the core point, your essay will get worse and worse after the introduction.

*Remember: All successes are preceded by adequate planning. All failures are preceded by a lack of adequate planning!*

Write about how to be creative and figure out good introduction sentences (relate the core to the common topics, they are all related)

+ grammar and structures for essay

### **How To Write A Good Introduction?**

Your introduction for the IELTS Task 2 essay is very important. You need to understand a broad range of topics that are Common IELTS Topics, and you need to know the relationships between these topics.

For example, if the topic is globalization, you need to know that globalization has a close relationship with the rise of the internet, the information age, and the rise in technology and hence global business, and global knowledge sharing.

Therefore, you might write your introduction sentence as follows:

“As the internet, and technology around the world has evolved and become more widespread, and the sharing of business ideas and information has become ever-present, the phenomenon of globalization has become inevitable.”

This gives good background to the essay, and shows your understanding of globalization. That’s vital for getting good marks.

Example 2: What if the essay is to give your views on climate change?

In this case, you need to know that climate change is happening today, and has been going on for quite a few years in the media especially, and there has been a few reports by scientists too.

You need to know that climate change is related to pollution which is caused by individuals, and also by industries. You need to know that governments have responsibility in this matter too.

There are a few basic areas of focus here:

1. What are the causes?
2. Who’s responsible for the causes?
3. What are the effects?

In this case you may begin the essay by giving an overview of climate change...a global view as follows:

“In the recent past climate change has become a common feature of news reporting, movies, gossip, and government action. It is now believed to be one of the biggest causes for concern for people alive today.”

### **Further Thoughts and Examples Of Introductions**

1. Make an introduction that gets attention and gives an overview of the essay content.

Write only about the core issue of the question. Make a statement at the start to show your understanding of the issue. Here are 2 tactics for your first sentence:

a) Write about the present moment. Use Present Continuous Tense:

“Nowadays/Currently... x is verb(ing)... A common verb to use is “The world is becoming more and more high tech.”

b) Write about how something has developed over a number of years. Use Present perfect Tense: “Over the past 50 years, technology has advanced at a faster rate than ever before.”

2. Write about the 2 or more sides of the issue. It could be mentioning that there are both advantages, and disadvantages, or that some people agree and some disagree, or that there is a difference in opinion on a topic. Here are some examples:

“Some people think that criminals should receive substantial rehabilitation in prison, while others think criminals should be forced to suffer for what they have done.”

“Despite, the strong arguments from supporters of increased health care investment, others claim that the money should be spent on the economy and other areas”

“There are both positives and negatives associated with giving mobile phones to young people.”

3. Write a solid thesis statement at the end of your introduction. This is where you tell the examiner what you will do in the essay. Sometimes it’s ok to add your opinion here. Here are some examples of thesis statements for IELTS essays

“This essay will argue that prisoners should receive rehabilitation treatment despite the opponents who believe prisoners should suffer.”

“In my opinion, children should never be given mobile phones, and this essay will highlight and support this position.”

“This essay will discuss both the advantages and the disadvantages of living in a high tech world.”

Simplicity is important. If your introduction has the above three elements, it gets the attention of the reader, shows the reader that you are focused on the right topic and lets the reader know what you will do in the essay.

## **Grammar Used In Introductions:**

**Present continuous:** Its correct to use the present continuous in the introduction to present the current world situation. For example: “The world is becoming more and more polluted due to industry and the endless burning of fossil fuels”

**Present Perfect:** This is when you relate an action or situation that had its origins a time in the past but that has effects even up to the present day. For example: There has been no

stop or decline in the amounts of pollution emitted by industrial plants in recent years. Or Climate change has become a major talking point in the media over the past few years. There have been an increasing number of extreme weather reports on the news for a few years now.

It's good to use present simple to show what both sides of the argument believe. For example: Some people believe that X is true, but others believe that Y is the better option.

For the thesis statement of the introduction you can use future tense to state the function and purpose of the essay, and what you will do: For example: This essay will focus on whether X should be implemented or whether Y may be the better option.

## The Body of Your Essay

The body of your essay should contain all the big points and they should :

- a. Be relevant to the core point
- b. Contain great deep support of each point
- c. Be logical
- d. Be coherent and cohesive (clear, developed, step by step, connected paragraphs)

Your body should contain keywords at the beginning of each paragraph only. In the first paragraph, use

*Firstly*

In the second paragraph, use:

*Another point is, or secondly, or the second point is, or In addition*

In the middle of body paragraphs, **don't** use a lot of keywords that create contrast such as however, but, on the other hand, etc, because each of your paragraphs should only have one point and should not contain 2 or 3 conflicting points.

## The 7 Most Common Mistakes Students Make When Writing Body Paragraphs

This is the challenge for most students. Most students make the following mistakes:

1. Writing about abstract ideas
2. Repetition of the same or related idea in each body paragraph
3. Not giving proof
4. Not considering the conditional tense as a form of persuasion
5. Using Hypothetical cases as support
6. Writing the whole body of the essay as one big story
7. Using the verb "will" too much



#### Mistake 1: Writing About Abstract Ideas

This is the most common problem in IELTS essays. Students tend to write about very vague concepts such as; “Global warming is very bad and many people are afraid of climate change nowadays...It will get worse and then there will be more natural disasters”

This is abstract. To improve, students need to give real proof of global warming and proof of future natural disasters. This is best done using real evidence from past events and disasters.

#### Mistake 2: Repetition

Repetition is a major sin on IELTS essays. Many students make the big mistake of writing about the same point in each of their body paragraphs. Unfortunately, this means that all the body paragraphs combine to just make one point of support for your essay. To succeed and get a high score, you need to write 2-4 unique points, one in each body paragraph.

#### Mistake 3: Not Giving Proof

Again, 80% of students make general claims, and statements and then fail to prove the point. This is looked at with disappointment by IELTS examiners

#### Mistake 4: Forgetting to Use The Conditional Tenses

The conditional tenses are very useful on IELTS essays, as they show contrast and can be used to demonstrate the condition if the evidence did not exist. Use the zero conditional for certain cause and effect. Use the first conditional to describe a possible outcome, and use the second conditional to highlight a “what if” hindsight observation

#### Mistake 5: Using Hypothetical Cases as evidence

This is when students consider an imaginary case of a person, and do so using past tense, as if it really happened. Some say; “There was a boy who..., he did X... Despite students good intentions, such an example is not considered proof, and it is also not considered good writing nor logical as support.

#### Mistake 6: Writing The Whole Body of Essay As 1 Long Story

Some students simply write a big story about some event or friend at school for the whole essay as a means of supporting their argument. This has been seen on numerous badly prepared students’ papers. It is simply the wrong approach towards an academic writing task.

#### Mistake 7: Using the Verb Will Too Much

Some Students use the verb will too much. They forget the function of the word and don’t use other more appropriate structures using the verb “can” or “may”. You need to

remember that on IELTS essays, you need to be cautious, and use caution vocabulary. You cannot make assumptions. The verb *will* means certainty, it denotes that something will happen, and at almost 100% certainty. A more realistic approach would be to use the verbs *can*, *may*, *could* and *might* to show that you know an outcome is not certain, but that it is possible.

## **Essential Body Paragraph Approach:**

Very good body paragraphs will have some or all of the following elements:

1. General Topic Sentence
2. Proof
3. Logic and Reasoning using Conditional Tense

### **1. Topic Sentence**

Depending on the essay type, your topic sentence will be one of your strongest points of support for your position. It can be quite general, or abstract. It can be a consideration of a trend that supports your position.

It's important to use keywords to introduce the topic sentences. You can use *Firstly*, *Secondly*, *Another Point* is...

### **2. Proof**

Proof is the number 1 area of students essays that leads to failure. 80 % of students fail to provide enough evidence to prove their topic sentence. The majority of students continue on with more abstract sentences after the topic sentence, and never prove anything.

You need to give solid proof in order to persuade your reader, and importantly, your examiner, so that he/she gives you a good score.

Here are the areas you can select proof from:

- ✓ Movies (you can report a lesson from a movie you have seen)
- ✓ News (you can highlight a news report that supports your position)
- ✓ Your life experience (you can recount events from your life that support the topic sentence)
- ✓ Your school life (tell stories in past simple tense from your school experience that are relevant support)
- ✓ History (You can tell stories from history to prove a point)
- ✓ Trends (you can use evidence from the changes from past to present to persuade)
- ✓ World Phenomena (general knowledge can sometimes be used to share how people live and what's routine behavior nowadays, use present simple tense for this)
- ✓ Books (write about a book you read that helps make your point)
- ✓ Documentaries (Use the fact power of documentaries to boost your support)

- ✓ Human Behavior/Psychology Experiments/Statistics (If you can remember these facts, they are strong evidence in any essay if relevant)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE 1:** Almost all evidence you use will take the form of reports or stories, and will need the PAST SIMPLE TENSE. Don't Mess Up The Tense!

**IMPORTANT NOTICE 2:** You **MUST** make a **LINK** between the proof and the actual essay question core point. This means your evidence must be **RELEVANT**. If you use great facts which are not relevant, you will not be rewarded.

### 3. Logic & Reasoning Using Conditional Tense

In your essays, it's important to be logical, and cautious. Don't make assumptions. Don't use "will" when "can" is a much safer option. This example is a simple yet major flaw in logic.

Use conditionals to emphasize contrasts. "What if" phrases do a great job of showing alternative outcomes.

Use phrases such as: ...tend to...can...most...many... instead of do...will...all...every... Notice that the latter words are extremes, in that they mean certainty and 100% of noun. In reality, almost nothing is certain, and almost never does every thing or person comply.

Be very careful with your language in academic essays. The essay needs to reflect reality, the real world, logic, and probability. The examiner will be quite critical of your logic. If it doesn't make sense that means lower marks.

## The Conclusion

Writing your conclusion is very important. It is recommended you use the following guidelines.

1. Summarize your essay
  2. Recognize both sides again (either two opposing sides, or the advantages and disadvantages)
  3. Make a future statement (the main idea that the essay has produced, the most logical way to sum up the issue)
- 
1. Summarize your essay. In this you can use the common keywords "In conclusion.." and need to write about what the essay has done. For example; "In conclusion this essay has presented the main advantages of electric cars and the main disadvantages of electric car's introduction to the world market."
  2. Recognize Both Sides: "There are clearly factors for the introduction who are interested in the electric car's great environmental advantages, yet there are also

opponents who argue against because of the fear of losing oil industry jobs and business.”

3. Make a Future Statement: “The only way forward is to look far into the future to see what will be most sustainable and people may need to accept hybrid cars or both electric and regular gasoline run cars until the big oil companies finally agree to support all electric cars”

Next you need to remember that the essay question determines the body paragraph structure that you will use...

## **IELTS Essay Writing: The 3 Main Types of Essays You Can Get In the Official Exam**

### **Essay Type 1: The Argument Essay**

In the argument essays, you will get a proposal/opinion on some topic, and you will be asked to share how much you agree with it, or to give your opinion, or views on it. The important thing to note is that you will certainly be given a particular opinion, and then you will need to analyze the argument made by the writer.

Here's the approach:

1. Write an Introduction: give some background statement(s) and commentary relevant to the opinion, and a thesis statement.
2. Write your first body paragraph on the side you agree with the least, and show the reasoning and reason(s) behind the argument.
3. Write the second body paragraph to argue in favor of the side you mostly agree with.
4. optional extra paragraph to argue for your side
5. Conclusion: You should summarize your points, and make a balancing statement to show full understanding and opinion

How Can You Tell If A Question Is An Argument Essay?

- Question contains 1 strong opinion.
- Question makes a proposal and asks you to give opinion
- Question asks "to what extent do you agree or disagree? what are your views?, What's your opinion?"
- The question has one task question, such as one of those mentioned in bullet 2.

Examples of Argument Essays:

Example 1: Popular events like the football World Cup and other international sporting occasions are essential in easing international tensions and releasing patriotic emotion in a safe way. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Planning: This is an argument (agree/disagree) essay. Agree: it creates solidarity through togetherness, eg the World Cup. But Disagree as there have been acts of violence in these events in the past

Structure: 2 body paragraphs, 1 showing how you agree or disagree with the opinion, and the second showing how there are some doubts. Finish with a conclusion to show the extent of your agreement.

Example 2: Some people argue that the government should give every unemployed person a mobile phone and should make sure they have access to the Internet. They believe this is the best way of using public money to reduce the problem of unemployment. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Planning: Argument Essay: In these essays you will need to brainstorm how much you can write about either side of this issue. It is a common approach to write the first body paragraph on what you agree with the least, and then finish strong on the side you agree with most. For example: If you agree with the opinion given, then you can use your first body paragraph to call into question something wrong with the proposal (the possibility of people abusing the system) and then write your second body paragraph on why this proposal seems right. Conclude with both your concerns and belief that this will work.

Example 3: In many countries tourism is a major part of the economy, but it also causes environmental damage and ruins the places it exploits. It is argued that tourists should pay an additional tax to compensate for this damage. Do you agree?

Planning: This essay is an argument essay. You need to devote a body paragraph to the side you support the least, and then a body paragraph to the side you mostly support. For example, you could firstly write about the case for not paying an additional tax, and give evidence that tourism already adds abundantly to the economy, and proof that it doesn't cause damage, then add a body paragraph to show that in total, the damage does require a tax. Conclude with your best balanced understanding of the proposal.

### Activity: Do One Of These Essays Now!

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



## Essay Type 2: The Discussion Essay

In discussion essay question prompts, you will see 2 opinions, 2 options, 2 alternatives, and you will be asked to discuss both or you will get a situation and will be asked to discuss the advantages and disadvantages. You may also be asked to give your opinion, or views on it. The important thing to note is that you will certainly be asked to write about 2 items.

Here's the approach:

1. Write an Introduction: give some background statement(s) and commentary on both sides and a thesis statement.
2. Write your first body paragraph on the side 1/advantages.
3. Write the second body paragraph to discuss side 2/or disadvantages
4. Conclusion: You should summarize your points, and make a balancing statement to show full understanding and opinion

Note: Make sure you choose your very best point for each side in the body paragraphs and back it up with logic and proof

How Can You Tell If A Question Is An Argument Essay?

- Question contains 2 views.
- Question makes 2 proposals and asks you to discuss which is best
- Question asks you to discuss, or to give your views or asks you to give the advantages and disadvantages.
- The question has one task question, such as one of those mentioned in bullet 2.

Examples of Discussion Essays:

Example 1: Some people believe that competitive sports have a positive effect on children's education, while others believe there is no place for such sports in schools. Discuss both points of view and give your own opinion.

Planning: Identify Question type: It's a discussion style question. It requires a balanced approach. 1 paragraph to discuss positives of competitive sports, 1 for negatives, then conclude with your opinion

Example 2: Unemployment is one of the most serious problems facing developed nations today. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of reducing the working week to thirty five hours?

Planning: Discussion Question: Balanced approach with equal emphasis on advantages, and disadvantages. Paragraph 1 Advantages may include better social life, higher productivity due to higher energy levels, better morale, plus it could create more shifts and hence more jobs. Disadvantages may include

higher salaries and overtime bills for companies, which could lead to profitability problems. Conclude with a summary and balanced opinion

Example 3: In many countries, children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong, while others consider it as valuable work experience important for learning and taking responsibilities. Discuss.

Planning: Firstly, this is a discussion question. You need to look at each view, and then give your best understanding and balanced view at the end. One body paragraph should be written on the negatives of children working, and the other body paragraph on the positives of this practice.





### Essay Type 3: The Problem/Opinion Essay

In the question prompt, you will get a topic, which is usually a current issue, or trend or fact and you will be asked to answer questions on the issue. The important thing to note is that you will certainly be expected to give your opinion, and your understanding of the issue.

Here's the approach:

1. Write an Introduction: give some background statement(s) and commentary relevant to the issue, and a thesis statement.
2. Write your first body paragraph the causes/other specific
3. Write second body paragraph on additional point asked
4. optional extra paragraph
5. Conclusion: You should summarize your points, and make a balancing statement to show full understanding and opinion

How Can You Tell If A Question Is A Problem/Opinion Essay?

- Question contains a fact/trend/current situation.
- Question asks for causes, and asks you to give the effects
- Question asks you to define and solve the problem
- The prompt has multiple questions, parts

Here are some examples:

Example 1:

In many countries people working in sport and entertainment earn much more money than professionals like doctors, nurses and teachers. Why do you think this happens in some societies and do you consider it is good or bad?

Planning: Problem/Opinion Question: You need to figure out the cause and then follow the instructions and give your opinions. Your opinions matter here!

P1: sport and why sport stars get paid so much

P2: entertainment and why they get paid so much

Conclusion: How good/bad you consider it to be

Example 2:

Newspapers and books are outdated. Why do some people believe this? What is your opinion?

Planning: It's a problem/opinion question. You need to focus on what you think are the causes first and then give your opinions on the issue. You can write one body paragraph on why newspapers are believed to be outdated and one on why books have become outdated. Finish with your opinions in the conclusion.

Example 3:

News editors decide what to broadcast on television and what to print in newspapers. What factors do you think influence these decisions? Do we become used to bad news? Would it be better if more good news was reported? Discuss.

Planning: This is a 3 question task. Not a regular type question, but it is similar to a Problem/Opinion task. Basically the first part is to give your opinion on the cause, and then to give opinions on the other 2 questions. The best approach is to give one body paragraph each to each of the 3 questions.

### Special Case Essay Questions

There are some *task 2* questions that do not follow the normal pattern. You may see multiple opinions, or you may see multiple questions of the 3 types above mixed together. This can be confusing. In order to succeed you need to find out the exact questions being asked and see if the questions are related to the opinion given or to a fact given. The best solution for such questions is to give one body paragraph to each question in the prompt.

### Essay Type for Worst Case Scenario (Really Hard Question!)

Full Agreement Or Disagreement With One Side (What are your views?, How important is X? To what extent do you agree/disagree?, What's your opinion?)

Argument and Discussion Questions Are the most common essay questions, and the following structure can be used if you cannot do the previously mentioned essay types.

In this essay type, you will take 1 side to an extent over another side. This means you will agree more with one side than another side but you will not totally disagree with the other side, in fact you will recognize the other sides truth.

In this case you will use the following formula for the body paragraphs.

B1: Your main point in agreement/disagreement with argument

B2: Your second main point in agreement/disagreement with argument

B3: Counter-argument to show the other side's points their particular value and to show that these points are insufficient

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## ***Let's Analyze A Sample Task 2 Question and Answer***

### Writing Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic.

*The information age is truly upon us. The internet is at the core of this age. The internet has opened up outstanding opportunities, but unfortunately it has opened up potential dangers too.*

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the internet for people using it today.

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

Write at least 250 words.

Note that this is just sample planning. You should do your planning faster than this

1. Define Task:

a. Minimize Question:

Internet, opportunities, dangers

b. Make Diagrams

Internet → Opportunities (positives)

Internet → Dangers (negatives)

c. Identify Essay Type: It's a discussion question because we are presented with a case and asked to give both advantages and disadvantages. We need to devote equal consideration to both sides.

d. Break down to the CORE points

The information age is here. What are the advantages of the internet to people in this age?  
What are the negatives?

2. Brainstorm Ideas

#### advantages

online business (economics)

communication tools

education and research

#### disadvantages

pornography and addiction

social threats (priorities)

### 3. Paragraph Map

Introduction (information age background, 2 sides adv and disadv, thesis)

Body Paragraph 1: advantage 1 economic

Body Paragraph 3: disadvantage 1: addiction

Conclusion (summarize, body good and bad, future statement)

Write:

Nowadays people all around the world have access to unlimited information in seconds by using the internet. The information age has led to a new era in human civilization. Such a time of change has advantages and benefits as well as some disadvantages and negatives. This essay will outline the advantages and disadvantages of the internet for people using it today.

The first main advantage of the internet is its benefit for economies, and business around the world. It has literally created a new economic era called the knowledge worker economy. The access to information, the increasing education of people, the access to research online and the ability to sell products worldwide, and connect globally have all led to a dramatic increase in business and economic growth. In addition, people are now setting up online shops, and selling directly online. The options are growing and it's giving opportunity to more and more people to become successful.

On the other hand, the internet has led to the growing addiction to pornography. There are a lot of people on the internet involved in illicit operations with children and sex. Sites are being built to satisfy a percentage of the population who are becoming addicted to such material. Also, addiction is not limited to pornography and pedophilia. Internet users can also become addicted to online games, online messaging chat rooms and this can result in imbalanced lifestyles.

In summary, the internet has resulted in great advantages in business and in communications as well as major threats such as addiction and potential social threats. Some people have great faith in the future of the internet while others are worried about the problems it has caused. In conclusion, the internet has proven its positive potential for the world and if people can control their use of the internet then I believe it will grow and grow as one of the greatest phenomenon of all time.

Your Turn! Identify and Plan The Following Questions:

A:

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic.

*In the modern world, there are more changes each day than ever in the past. People need to be flexible to survive. Some believe that schools today should be focused on developing open minds, while others think it's still more important to learn facts.*

What is your view?

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

Write at least 250 words.

Your planning rough work here please:

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B:

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic.

*Success is only possible by learning all the knowledge that is available. Knowledge is more important than taking action in achieving success.*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above statement?

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

Write at least 250 words.

Your planning rough work here please:

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C:

## Writing Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic.

*No matter what is achieved by anybody today in science, engineering, medicine etc, it was only made possible by the great achievements of previous generations. People today are indebted to the people of past generations who made all the progress and modern living possible.*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above statement?

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

Your planning rough work here please:

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## Sample IELTS Essay Questions and Level 8 Answers

**Sample Essay Q 1:** Popular events like the football World Cup and other international sporting occasions are essential in easing international tensions and releasing patriotic emotion in a safe way. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

### Essay Type: Argument Essay

#### Planning:

Popular Events → ease international tension/release patriotic emotion in a safe way

Yes:

Point: Events lead to tolerance because of close interaction

Proof: Live Aid event brought together millions from all countries in united effort

Yes:

Point: Popular events can unify nations

Proof: South Africa World Cup 1995 captured the world's attention to end apartheid in SA.

Yes: (Counterargument)

Point: Opponents argue that events bring opportunity for violence

Proof: A few examples through history of violence at events

Counter: Nowadays – more security, More good than bad

Over the past few hundred years organized events such as The Football World Cup, The Rugby World Cup, The Olympics and music events have brought together nations in competition as well as in good will. Some believe such organized and popular events are good for international relations yet others believe they are not at all important in easing international relations and they do not provide a sufficient avenue to release patriotic emotion. This essay will argue that popular events are in fact essential for easing international relations and that these events do provide a useful avenue for releasing patriotic emotion.

Firstly, the world would be quite an unfriendly place if there were no popular events, and nations would rarely have opportunities to interact. Consider first the example of an event that happened in the 80s called Live Aid. This event was held after the efforts of Sir Bob Geldof in an attempt to raise funds for the starving and poor people in Africa. All the best musicians and people from around the world, came together to attend this huge concert. People were united in their goal to help the poor. There can be no doubt that this popular event helped with international relations at that time.

On the other hand, there are some who view popular events as opportunities for violence. There have been examples of this in the past. One former Olympic Games from the 70s in Munich was affected by terrorism. Although there have been cases of violence at popular events, most of the critics have overlooked and discounted the good effects of these events. Overall, much more good than bad has resulted from popular events. Consider the Football World Cup. This event every 4 years brings people from all around the world together, and people meet citizens from many other countries. This has almost always been a positive and celebrated event.

In summary, popular events are essential in allowing nations to interact and work together for good causes, to unify nations, and to allow people to see and understand other cultures and other peoples. Some will remain cynical, and only focus on the negatives, yet the vast majority continues to see the great benefit of popular events. In conclusion, with continued controls, and organization, popular events will be an important element of world unity in the future.

**Sample Essay Q 2:** Some people believe that competitive sports have a positive effect on children's education; while others believe there is no place for such sports in schools. Discuss both points of view and give your own opinion.

**Essay Type: Discussion Essay**

**Planning:**

Positive: increase fitness → improve concentration, and mood

Positive: competition → learn important team work skills, soft skills

Negative: over competition → takes focus from academic work

Negative: intense competition → increased likelihood of injuries → affects school performance

In this growing age of information, and technological advancement, opportunities for exercise and physical exertion are becoming scarce. There is an argument that students in this knowledge based society should only focus on academic subjects in school, but others believe that now is a more important time than ever to have physical education and sports in school curriculums. There are more reasons in favor of having competitive sports than not having them.

The first point opponents to competitive sports in school make is that when there is over competition in sports, the students will lose ground on their studies. There have been cases of students who lost all interest in their studies because they were so focused on winning sports competitions. Consider the case of my rugby team mate when I was in high school. He went to a special rugby intensive high school. He used to train every day after school for rugby. I on the other hand, used to go home to study after school. His commitment to competitive sport affected his final grades. It is certainly possible that extreme focus on sports can have a negative impact on school grades.

However, a very powerful benefit of having competitive sports in schools is that they help boost fitness among hard working students. It has been proven scientifically that exercise, especially high intensity exercise can help produce endorphins in the blood stream and improve mood and concentration. Such a benefit is almost essential to hard working students. Time away from studying can be the perfect renewal activity for their brain and body. Such renewal of energy and mood can stimulate students to higher motivation. If students had no outlet to exert their physical energy, they would probably lose motivation for their academic studies. There is a high likelihood that most students would simply go online and play games to take time out from their studies. Wouldn't it be better to exercise the body and get healthy instead?

In summary, even though there are potential risks including losing focus on academic work, and getting injured, there are also the powerful benefits of getting healthy, improving mood, and learning soft skills. Competitive sports, in

my opinion are worth the minimal risks involved because of the great payback over time. In conclusion, students need to take a balanced approach to school life and playing competitive sports can be a great experience if students have the right attitude.

**Sample Essay Q 3:** The idea of having a single career is becoming an old fashioned one. The new fashion will be to have several careers or ways of earning money and further education will be something that continues throughout life. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

### **Essay Type: Argument Essay**

#### **Planning:**

Agree: Old Versus New Economic Era → Now Knowledge Based

Agree: Global Environment → Requires transfers, travel, change

Disagree: Some Jobs will remain single career, eg teachers, bankers, trades people

Disagree: Government jobs tend to be secure long terms jobs

In the current age, statistics read as follows: “A person with a degree after the year 2000 will change jobs 10 times before the age of 40”. Even with statistics like this one, some believe that there are still long term single careers. Most people believe that job changes are almost inevitable in this modern age. This essay will explore whether or not it is possible to maintain a single career throughout life, and whether or not it is possible to avoid continuous education.

On one hand, there are some jobs that have had a reputation for being long term in nature, for example teachers. Consider the following contrast. One of my teachers in primary school told us that she had been in the same school for more than 20 years. My sister by contrast had to move around from school to school about 3 or 4 times in her first few years of being a teacher. Teaching is still a profession where if a teacher gets a permanent job, he/she can remain long term.

However, there has been a shift from industrial age to information age over the past 50 years. In the old economy, the system was based on manufacturing, and factory workers. Some factory workers could keep the same job for a whole career. Nowadays work has evolved to mostly knowledge work. The nature of such work is transitory, and employees move from project to project and often need to move from job to job as projects end. It's also more competitive now and employees must prove their value to their employers. My friend who is a chemical engineer for example had to change job about 4 times since 2005.

In summary, even though there are still a few job titles that remain secure long term bets, these very jobs can often involve transfers and continuous training.



Most jobs nowadays are knowledge based and hence the workers require continuous education in order to stay competitive.

**Sample Essay Q 4:** News editors decide what to broadcast on television and what to print in newspapers. What factors do you think influence these decisions? Do we become used to bad news? Would it be better if more good news was reported? Discuss.

**Essay Type: Opinion/Problem**

**Planning:**

Reason: Need to Sell Advertising – Need to Get People's Attention – Negative News captures attention better than positive news

People become used to bad news – and addicted to it (it is designed to keep us hooked)

It would be better for the public – makes people more positive, optimistic  
Would be better for public, but bad for news channels and advertising revenues!

Ever since the dawn of man, news spread around of events, changes in the environment, and of course dangers to aware of. Since radio, and television have been invented, news took on an even bigger role. It is now a mainstay in almost every country's tv schedule. Some constantly question why news is often negative, and ask themselves if it would be better to present good news more often. This essay will discuss this issue and the deeper underlying causes.

Firstly, the news is based on a business model. The model of the business involves getting many viewers of the news, and then placing advertising in the news breaks. The savvy business brains behind the big news conglomerates have understood for years that fear, and negative news keeps viewers addicted and attracted. Psychologists have found in research that in the distant past, humans needed fear mechanisms to protect themselves from natural dangers. Nowadays however these dangers do not exist anymore, and so the human being craves something to keep excited. Humans are in a constant state of anxiety and the addiction to fake fear which the news presents is what keeps them watching the news.

Secondly, the view of news makers is simple. The majority of the news content should be negative because that's what sells. Of course the news producers add some positive news as well but usually in a much smaller proportion to the negative news. The news people are very smart and savvy about their business. They know that 100 percent negative will not keep viewers, but that the right proportion keeps viewers in the perfect state of fear and addiction.

In summary, the news networks want profits, bad news attracts viewers, who in turn see the advertising, and it would be better to show more positive news. Even though it would be better, it will probably never happen unless the news station is a non-profit organization. People will continue to watch news due to underlying psychological fear mechanisms and won't even know it.

**Sample Essay Q 5:** Music is one of the most important art forms. What is its significance in the world today? Do you believe that more modern forms of music have superseded the more traditional forms of music?

### **Essay Type: Opinion/Problem**

#### **Planning:**

Structure of Essay:

Traditional Forms: Classical, native music

Modern forms: pop, dance, techno

Music is important as an art form: its pure creation of something new. It has an ability to touch the human soul, even more so than paintings

Music has been around for millennia. It has a mystical effect, and in almost every culture and country, music has an important role to play. It is certainly true that over time music has evolved, and changed form, and some now question whether the more modern forms of music have superseded the more traditional forms. This essay will explore this interesting question.

Firstly, it is important to address the significance of music in the modern age. This can be summed up in a small word coined by Apple: iPod. This device which plays mp3s, which are digital versions of songs, and audio was the product that skyrocketed Apple into business stardom in the last decade. Apple's development on iTunes, a site to buy and download songs and music was a massive success as well. Such trends show the huge appetite that people nowadays have for music. In addition, one of the biggest websites in the world, youtube is filled with artists number 1 hits, another testament to people's hunger for music nowadays.

It can be argued that classical music and more traditional music have made a comeback. Consider the boom in classical music sales in the baby and pregnancy market. The market has been educated about the value of playing classical music during pregnancy to develop the growing baby's brain. In addition, in Indonesia for example and many Asian students learn a classical instrument, and perform in plays and orchestras from a young age. It must be noted however that such instances of popularity are not seen in every country.

In summary, there is little doubt that music nowadays is as important in people's lives as ever before. Although classical music has made a comeback, it has not reached the mainstream popularity of newer styles such as hip-hop, R&B and

pop. In conclusion, the music industry's creativity is more active than ever before and it's likely to produce more popular new music in the coming years.

## Advanced Grammar and Vocabulary For IELTS Writing and Speaking

### ***Logic & Reasoning***

Logic and how the native English person thinks is an important aspect of succeeding in the IELTS test for all students. Particularly important for international students is the development of a new way of thinking, and an understanding of logic and reasoning, and how to recognize it in the reading you do and how to produce it in the writing and speaking you produce.

There are a number of things to learn. Here are a few of the big concepts you would do well to master:

1. Cause and Effect
2. Past – Present – Future (Action & Consequence)
3. Reverse Order Cause & Effect
4. Conditionals/Hypothetical Situations

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### **1. Cause and Effect**

Cause and Effect is a vital concept in language and in the English thinking brain. It is important no matter what the language is, but it is essential to use it often in your speaking and writing to avoid assumptions, broad generalizations and broad sweeping statements strewn with flawed logic. In addition it is essential that you can understand it when you read it in Reading Comprehension passages.

Let's look at some examples:

Example 1:

“If I drop my marker, it will fall.”

Can this statement be improved? Is it without flaws? It looks as though there are some possibilities. What if someone catches it? I may not fall to the ground. It may be rescued!

Essentially the statement is correct because there will be a fall of some sort, and either it will fall to the ground or else it will be caught before it lands.

Example 2:

“When people smoke a lot of cigarettes, they develop lung cancer and other diseases.”

What about this example? This looks like an overgeneralization. Remember to think REAL! In reality, it would be better to state the “probability” of developing such cancers and diseases.

Instead, it would be better to state: .... “such people are more likely to develop cancers and diseases”

Or say ..... “.....they will probably suffer more diseases and cancers in their futures”

Example 3:

“If companies promote mobile phone use among children, these companies will be responsible indirectly for children’s decreasing attention in school and poorer academic results.”

The cause here is manifold. Firstly the promotion of the phones to kids is the main cause. There are many assumptions here. The assumption is that more children will use phones. Secondly this will result in more time spent using phones and less time studying. It will result in less attention in class. It is assumed children will be active with their phones all day. It is assumed such activity with phones will result in lower school grades.

This statement is full of assumptions and it needs to be clarified. If you write something, you need to be aware of your ideas, your main points, and your method of explaining yourself.

For you, it would be better to write something like this:

Some people predict that if phone companies promote the use of cell phones among children that it could lead to inordinate amounts of time spent on the phones by children. In turn this may lead to lower scores in exams and in academic pursuits. This is based on the assumption that children have a short attention span, and phones provide a means to escape important activities such as study and homework.

Example 4:

The internet has caused a lot of people to become addicted to instant messaging and to lose touch with person to person (face to face) communication.

This is an outstanding example of where students fall down because of a lack of analysis. Ask yourself what is causing the addiction? ***The internet or the person?*** At first glance you might suggest it’s the internet. No way! How could a dead, piece of technology ever have the power to control a person? No way! It’s 100% the person’s responsibility.

The person has a choice, and no matter what anyone says, the internet has never told anyone “You have to stay here now, and you are not allowed to go and see your friend!” That’s all happening inside of people’s minds.

In essay writing, or anywhere you see this, you need to be aware of the fact that there is overriding logic that you need to understand.

Let’s change it: “Since the arrival and spread of the internet, people have become dependant on the net for messaging, email, and some have become addicted. Such addiction, which has led to reduced social interaction, is due to people’s lack of control over themselves.”

Can you think of examples of cause and effect that you can use in your essay writing for IELTS?

Your Turn!

Example: If children learn to read at a young age, they will \_\_\_\_\_ better scores in school.

## 2. Past – Present – Future (Action & Consequence)

There is a strong connection between past, present and future in English communication. It’s going to be an advantage for you if you can master the inclusion of past events leading to present events, leading to future events. Again it involves cause and effect but in this kind of construction, we are more concerned with the sequence of events. Here are some phrases that you will use frequently to describe events in order:

a. This **led** to the/a ...noun....of .....noun.. (this is a phrase to show the effect of something(cause) in the past, how one thing caused another to happen)

Example: Bill Gates designed one of the first commercial computer operating systems. He was not only a great software developer, but a genius businessman and he approached IBM to have his software sold with all IBM computers. This led to the installation of his software on every IBM computer sold ever since then.

Your Turn!

Example: A major tsunami struck Banda Aceh in 2004 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. When X happens, it **leads** to the/a ....noun....of....noun.. (this is a phrase that is used to show the effect (certain) of a routine cause in present simple tense)

Example: Modern technology is an integral part of people’s lives nowadays. When people get too dependant on technology for communication it leads to people spending less time with their friends face to face.

This example can be improved. What flaw in logic can you see? (leads to...is it always true?)

Example: When governments invest in their education systems over the long term, it leads to higher skilled citizens and this in turn leads to foreign investment of companies who want to set up business in the country. Foreign businesses want to set up in the country because they are attracted by the high skilled workforce.

Your turn:

Example: When young people smoke too many cigarettes \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. When X happens, it **can lead** to .....the/a....noun...of...noun... (this is very similar to prase 2 but in this case, it communicates a possibility. It shows that you understand that the effect is not certain.)

Example: For high school students it's important to have a work – play balance. One worry is that too much time spent using cell phones can lead to less time spent studying.

Your turn:

Example: When children get phones at a young age \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

d. If Y does/do X, it **will lead** to .....noun....  
also likewise (could lead to, may lead to, might lead to, will probably lead to, will surely lead to, will certainly lead to...)

If global warming continues, it will probably lead to even more extreme weather around the world.

If the government signs the new medical bill, it will lead to better health care for the poorer classes around Jakarta. An event like this would be groundbreaking.

Your turn:

Example: If the government invests more in health facilities \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

e. X happened. This **caused** .....noun.... (This is an alternative way to link cause to effect by using the verb “to cause”)

Example:

Over the last 10 years there has been an increase in the numbers of teenagers who have tried drugs. This has caused a certain percentage of such teenagers to become addicted. In turn this is causing consternation among police officials who want to stop the drug traffic.

Example:

Nowadays, people are studying harder than ever to ensure high grades and academic achievement. This increase in study focus is causing some students to forget about why they are studying. This may lead to missed job opportunities, and overlooked options.

Your turn:

Example: When I was a young boy, I worked frequently with my father who was a manager\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

f. This **results/resulted in** ....noun.... (To result in is a verb to link cause and effect)

Example:

Schools nowadays are using more computer technology in classrooms than 5 years ago. This is resulting in students who are more comfortable and fluent with computers than students from past decades. However, the one effect that schools are not taking into account is the effect of computer use on student's social development, and ability to communicate with each other in person.

Your turn:

Example: There has been a dramatic increase in the number of cigarette advertisements in Indonesia over the past 10 years\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

g. ...cause...**will result in**....effect...

Example:

Many Indonesian students are choosing to study abroad because of the vast experience that it will give them. It's possible that this will result in lower attendance at Indonesian universities in the near future.

Your turn:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



### 3. Reverse Order Cause and Effect:

a. ....effect....**this resulted from**....cause... (In this case the effect comes first in the writing/speaking, and you then use “resulted from” to show the cause of the previous effect/situation)

Example (reverse order)

The Indonesian government is going to join a Free Trade Agreement in 2012 with other South East Asian countries and China. This resulted from the successful completion of talks held with all the participating nations over the last few years.

Your turn:

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b. ....effect....results from.....cause...

Example

A lot of people lose interest in their chosen field after they graduate from university. This results from a lack of real passion in their career.

Your turn:

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c. ...effect...this is caused by....cause...

Example

Average people who work hard consistently achieve greater success and breakthroughs than highly talented people who are lazy. This is caused by the power of the compound effect. When people work consistently step by step over a long term, their work builds and they build momentum.

Your turn:

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### 4. Conditionals/Hypothetical Situations

Conditionals are of 3 types.

- (1) ZERO conditional: If A happens, B will happen (If, present simple, future, will + verb)
- (2) FIRST conditional: If X had A, X would do B (If, past simple, would + verb)
- (3) SECOND conditional: If X had done A, X would have done B (If, past perfect, would + present perfect)

To be quite frank, these are massive value in your speaking and essays in order to build persuasion and logic all at the same time. Probably the most useful method is to use conditionals to question what if the cause never happened, that is to consider and imagine the situation without the cause/issue.

a ....consider situation without X/negative use of conditionals

Example:

The British government started to invest heavily in the national health system about 10 years ago. It instituted a health welfare program for the poor. Over the last 10 years the average lifespan of the country's citizens has risen steadily. If the government **had not invested** in the welfare program 10 years ago, the lifespan **would never have risen** and a lot of lives **would have been lost** prematurely.

This example uses the second conditional, and this is smart because the second conditional only looks back and questions "what if?" The action taken 10 years ago cannot be changed but the SECOND conditional is used to further strengthen the evidence by showing contrast and the opposite of the result which would have happened.

Your Turn:

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Example:

If people do not invest in a pension plan during their working life they will not have enough savings to sustain them in their retirement. It is possible for these people that they will not be able to retire if they do not have a pension plan.

Your Turn:

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Example:

A lot has been achieved in science by great people like Einstein and Pauling in the past. Without the efforts of great scientists and breakthrough thinkers, there would never have been such a huge growth in technology which happened in the last 100 years.

Your Turn:

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Example:

If people don't change their modern communication habits, they will surely become more and more dependant on technology and less and less involved in social interaction with real people.

Your Turn:

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b. Positive conditionals

Example:

If the government had greater revenue from income tax, it would be able to invest more into public health.

Your Turn:

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Example:

If children had to do a course on creativity in school, they would learn a valuable life skill that may be more helpful to them in their life than geography for example.

Your Turn:

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### **Practice Speaking The Conditional Tense!**

1. If you could choose to go anywhere where would you go? Why?
2. What did the government do to help after the tsunami in Banda Aceh in 2004? What if they had done nothing?
3. What could individuals have done to help the people in Japan after the tsunami in 2011?
4. What happened in the financial crisis of 2008/2009? If people had known about the financial crisis a few years before the crash what would they probably have done?
5. Education: It is said that The USA have great Universities. What if Asia had equally good universities?
6. Would you say that poverty could be eliminated if governments took more money from the rich and gave more money to the poor?
7. Would you agree that there wouldn't have been any financial crisis if people had more discipline?
8. If you could choose one characteristic that you believe would help your child most in life what would that be?
9. What was your favorite pastime when you were in junior high school? What had been your favorite pastime before that?
10. Would you like to live abroad? Where had you lived before you lived where you live now?
11. What had been the most exciting mode of entertainment before the internet was invented? Why do you believe this? What might others choose? Why?
12. What have been the big lifestyle changes that technology growth has created over the last 10 years?
13. Would you prefer reading peacefully at home or going to the cinema with friends? Why?
14. What have been the major changes in weather that you have experienced over the past few years?
15. What would have happened if the Titanic had not sunk?
16. Would there have been so many sci fi movies like The Hulk, and Wolverine made if Marvel comics had not been created?
17. If you had not decided to take this course what would you have done instead with your time?
18. Have you ever been to the hospital with a serious illness? What would have happened if you hadn't reached the hospital on time?
19. Would the world be a better place if everybody drove electric cars? Why?
20. Have you always been a diligent student? What would you not have accomplished if you had been lazy?

## Caution Language In IELTS Writing/Speaking

### Stating Facts

It's normal to use the present simple tense to declare the existence of things or phenomena in the world. (Including using the verb "to be: is, are)

Eg. People use cars every day,

You can also use past simple tense to declare facts from the past: People used horse and carts more than cars in the early 1900s in most countries.

### Being Cautious With *Can* and *May*

Use the construction "can" because it means possibility. This can be used whenever you wish to show that something might be a result in the future. The common choice is to use "will" but remember that will means certainty. If you use "will", you had better prove it. If you can prove that the thing will certainly happen, then it is acceptable. If you cannot prove it then avoid using "will".

Also use may at times for variety and when it seems natural to use. It's especially useful along with cause/effect link verbs such as lead to, result in, cause and is used just before these verbs. Why? Because the "may" helper verb shows that the effect is only a potential effect and is not certain. This is being cautious.

### You Need To Protect Yourself From The Critical Eye Of The Examiner

Always protect yourself by using caution vocabulary, and using probability language when appropriate. You can use a bunch of phrases to illustrate possibility such as:

"It is possible that..."

"Such conditions may affect..."

"It is likely that..."

"It is highly unlikely that..."

In addition to probability language, you need to be very careful with using extremes such as all, every, nobody, nothing, everything, or simply avoiding using a quantity word. If you use the above extremes which mean 100% or 0%, then you are taking a big risk. Are you sure that all, or every person did such a thing? Probably not!

Use the following adapted for your case to improve:

"There are many who believe... V "Everybody believes..."

"Some of the ....

"Many X..."

"Most of X..."

By the way, when you use no quantity word, such as when you say; “people have a big addiction to watching TV”, this is a mistake. It actually silently means ALL people. To avoid such mistakes, make sure to use words such as The majority of people/most people/a large percentage of people/lots of people etc. to all some reality to the sentence.

## **Caution and Reality Focus In All Things**

You need to behave in your writing as if you are being judged for truth, and logic, and reality. Think carefully about your points and examples. Do they make sense? Is it realistic? Are the statements logical? Is it even possible? Would this actually happen? Has such a result already happened? Once you’ve analyzed your writing well, then you can use the verb tenses to match reality and logic. Be careful to keep the tenses in good order too.

## **Verb Tense Considerations**

Think whether your sentence is describing some finished, isolated event in the past (past simple)

Is it highlighting a condition/effect that began some time in the past and continues to this day? (present perfect)

## IELTS Speaking: The 3 Parts of The Interview and What You Need To Do

The best approach to the IELTS interview for speaking is to study what is expected in each of the three phases of the interview because each phase has a different language focus.

### ***Part 1: The Introduction.***

The introduction involves questions about your family, or study/work, and a number of other topics such as leisure time, your country's culture, language, or even about nature or animals or birds. The topics can be surprising at times, but you are required only to show your language ability, not your deep knowledge.

The main language focus here is on the present simple, and the verb "to be"

You are going to be asked about habitual, regular things you do with your family (habit), in school (routine), and what people in your country do in ceremonies (routine).

In addition:

What do you do in your free time? (habit)  
How often do you travel? (habit)

You need to become a master of tense for the IELTS speaking test to show your fluency. You need to be aware of all the adverbs of time, such as usually, sometimes, x times per week/month/day/year, always, rarely, regularly etc.

A common question is: "How often do you see your family members?"

To this you can expand your answer by talking about both your immediate family, and your extended family and relatives.

You could say: "I still *live* at home with my parents so I *see* them every day. However my brother now *works* in a different city, so I only *see* him about once per month. I *have* relatives *who live* in Yogyakarta. My parents and I *visit* them twice a year, and sometimes they *come* here to Jakarta to *see* us on their holidays."

Q. How many times are verbs used in the answer above?

A. In the above sample answer, you will see verbs used 9 times. That's 9 times that the present simple was used in a short answer. If you used a different tense, you would get a bad score.

## ***Part 2: Individual Long Turn***

In the second part of the IELTS speaking interview, the examiner gives you a piece of paper with a task on it. It almost always asks you to remember something from your experience and describe it, and explain what you learned and why it was important.

In the section, you need to be masterful with the past tense, and you will need to use past tense for all this task.

For instance; “Describe a year in your life that was important for you. Explain when it was, why it was important, and what you learned?”

You need to focus on describing the background of the year first;  
Sample:

“There have been a number of important years in my life, but I think the most important one so far was when I was 15 years old. This was an important year for me for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it was the year when my family moved out of Jakarta to Tangerang. That was interesting. Secondly, it was the year when I started to learn English in a language school, and I improved a lot. I started to watch English movies in the cinema more frequently, and my quality of life improved a lot that year.

In school that year I moved into high school, and this was a big change for me. School became more difficult and challenging. Nevertheless, I started a few new subjects and focused on science subjects and I eventually settled into my new workload. I made friends and I learned an important lesson. I learned that life has challenges but if you work hard you can overcome them.”

In Part 2, you will need to become a good reporter, and a good story teller!

Action Point: Keep a memory/story journal, and write down memories from your life about all kinds of things. Write about your childhood, write about all the things you learned especially in challenging times in your life. This will help you greatly in the IELTS test.

## ***Part 3 of IELTS Speaking***

Part 3 is going to be the big challenge. It consists of a list of advanced questions related to the topic of your Part 2 talk. You need to be able to do the following:

1. Give overview statements (Broad general statements)
2. Give background information from the past
3. Provide a link between past events and now



4. Use cause and effect logic in predicting future trends
5. Use present perfect, past perfect, conditional tenses and modals and future tenses
6. Express your knowledge
7. Support yourself with logic, conditionals, knowledge, past experiences.
8. Be objective

The discussion is going to be the acid test of your native ability and hence your ultimate speaking score out of 9.

The discussion contains rather unusual questions that you may not have been asked before, and they may seem quite academic. This is so to test your spontaneity, and sharpness and native ability to respond with English language. Remember the examiner doesn't expect you to be an expert on any of the topics, the examiner just wants to hear your English.

Let's take a look at a few examples:

Q. What do you predict will happen in the Indonesian education system in the next 10 years?

A. "That's quite a difficult question. I can't say I'm an expert on this issue but I do have a feeling there will be some changes. Up to now, Indonesia has been improving its education system very slowly. The public schools here lack advanced facilities. I think in the next 10 years, schools will bring in more computers and technology to keep up with world trends.

I also believe the Indonesian government may invest in building new schools and may provide rural areas with better education and might invite teachers to teach outside the cities. This will give all Indonesians a chance to receive a fair education."

Q: "Do you think online shopping will become more popular in the coming years?"

A. "Well nowadays we all live in the information age. Over the last few years the internet has become a part of everybody's lives and most people nowadays use the internet to search information, use social networking sites, and even do business. Online shopping is another of these activities that can be done on the internet.

I think online shopping could become more popular for a number of reasons. These reasons are; the business of people's lives, the cost effectiveness, and the globalization of world services.

Firstly, I think that people will become busier and busier in the years to come, and many might choose to do their shopping at work or at home instead of going out just to get shopping. People will go out to enjoy family time, and go on relaxing breaks and will spend less time doing shopping and household chores in the future in my opinion.

The other point I mentioned is the cost factor. I believe that buying online may become cost effective in the years to come, and it will actually cost less overall to order online.

People will save transportation costs and importantly their valuable time which they don't have to use searching and driving around to find their desired item. Instead they can simply search Google, do some online research and buy online.

These are probably the two biggest factors that I think will lead to more online shopping in the near future.”

## **The Overview Approach: The 6 Step System For Overcoming Any Speaking Question**

### **The Overview Approach**

#### ***1. a. State your knowledge or b. Make an initial reaction comment***

##### **a. State Your Knowledge**

You can state your knowledge about a question when it seems difficult or if it's a subject that you have no idea about. Such a comment might look like this:

“I have never really thought about that before.”

“I don't really know anything about X”

“I'm not an expert on X”

“That's a subject that I am actually very interested in.”

“From my studies, I have learned a thing or two about that.”

##### **b. Make an initial reaction comment**

Such an initial reaction comment shows you have natural ability to respond to conversation. For example:

“Wow, that's interesting!”

“Let me see”

“Let me think for a moment”

“That's a really good question”

“That's a very hard question!”

#### ***2. Consider your memories/stories***

Because the IELTS questions are quite unusual, you will not have in-depth knowledge or experience of the topics. You need to be able to talk anyway! In this case, you need to find and remember any small relevant or related fact, memory on the topic. Here are some of the forms of information you should use:

“I heard somewhere that....

“I read in a magazine a few years ago that....

“My friend told me once that....

“Over the past few years there has been an interesting trend in the malls!

“I have seen ....

“Last year, when I was in X, I saw/heard about/discovered.....

### **3. Make an Overview Statement**

When dealing with most questions, there are many points to make, and even if you have only one point to make it is good to make an overview statement in order to give structure and a title to your talk. This statement should cover a few main points. It should paraphrase the issue in the question and state how many points will be discussed.

For example:

Q: Do you think people will travel more or less in the future?

A: That’s an interesting statement. I think there will be more travel in the future. **I believe there are 2 main reasons for this.**

The overview statement is the one in red. It is important to vary the way you use the overview statement. Examples:

There are 3 main factors involved in this issue.

Let me share with you my 3 biggest reasons for going abroad.

I’d like to talk about the 2 primary reasons for X.

Overall, there are 2 positives and 1 negative that I’d like to discuss.

### **4. List the Points**

This is quite straightforward. You simply state something like this:

“These are X, Y, Z

“The first main point is ...the second point is...

### **5. Expand point by point**

In this stage of your talk, you go into some detail about each of your distinct points.

“The number one reason is....This is essential because...

“The second point is...

## **6. Make A Closing Statement**

To close, you can simply summarize, or restate your main point.

Example: In summation, I think the above reasons are strong support for the belief that children need discipline from their parents to avoid developing criminal tendencies later in life.

Full example:

Q - In your opinion are there both positive and negative influences of tourism on a local economy?

A – “That’s a tough question. I never really thought much about that before. Overall I believe there are 2 big positives and 1 main negative. The 2 positives are increased revenue, and improved facilities for the local economy. The big negative is the potential for vandalism by bad mannered tourists.

Firstly, the big positive is increased revenue for the local economy. This occurs through spending by tourists, and by the building of souvenir shops, transport businesses, and tour businesses.

Secondly, in order to keep the tourists coming back, the government spends money on maintaining the local town in good condition, and all visitors and inhabitants benefit from this, and business can even be improved through this effort.

The main negative is the potential vandalism caused by rowdy tourists who are more interested in alcohol, and partying than enjoying the local beauty.

Overall, I think the advantages outweigh the negatives.

## **Increase Your IELTS Speaking And Writing Scores By Telling Stories, and Giving Proof**

Point – Proof Concept: This is one of the fastest and easiest ways to increase your IELTS score. It is a habit that few IELTS candidates have, and if you can learn it (which you can), you will be ahead of the pack!

Consider the following IELTS topics that you need to be able to deal with in your communication. Also consider the angles that come with each one.

1. Technology (+addiction, past v present, future possibilities, benefits, problems, relationships with other issues)

Your task: Write a story showing how technology now is much more advanced than your parent's time:

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Write a story showing how technology can be addictive. Use a past tense real story of someone you know who got addicted, and the effects:

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Your task: Write a story of how technology has been beneficial:

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Write a story showing how technology has affected employment in the world:

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## 2. Internet

Your task: Write a story showing how the internet has been a benefit

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Write a story explaining why the internet has affected communication in a negative way:

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Your task: Why will the internet make business life more competitive?

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Write an example of someone you know who got addicted to online games and the effect it had on his/her grades in school

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3. Parenting (raising good children, both parents working, nature v nurture)

Your task: Write a report about a book, article, movie etc you've seen that showed that parenting affects children's development.

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Write a story showing the challenges of parenting nowadays

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Your task: Write a story about how children are raised nowadays compared to how they were raised in the past (50 years ago)

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4. Education (investment?, importance in this economy, competition, etc)

Write a short history of the economic ages ie. Agricultural, industrial, and up to the current knowledge economy, showing how this has affected the importance of education

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Your task:

Explain by telling a story of how education helped your friend/family member to get a good job, and without education, your friend/family member would not have been able to get the job

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Tell a story that proves that an investment in education pays off (that someone you know invested big and then got a great job)

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Your task: Write a story of how competition in education has increased over the past 10 years.

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Report on another country that has a reputation for high education investment, and show how that has helped them to become economically competitive:

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#### 5. Consumerism

Your task: Write a story to show how you have exhibited consumerism in the past, and whether or not you have changed

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Write a story telling how consumerism is being taught to people through the media (give examples from the past of movies, advertising, etc that have had an influence)

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Your task: give an example of how consumerism is damaging (a story about someone who became materialistic and the consequences)

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## 6. Globalization

Write a story showing how globalization has been influenced by the availability of airplanes and world travel

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Your task: What could be the positive effects of globalization? (tell a story of how opening up to new cultures has had a positive impact in your past experience)

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Write a past tense experience of a negative effect of globalization

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## 7. Travel

Your task: Write a story of how travel opened your mind

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Write a story showing the biggest lesson you learned from travelling:

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Your task: Why would you recommend others to travel abroad? (Proof by giving an example of the positive things you experienced one by one)

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What can be the negatives of travel? Give proof of a negative thing you, or your friend or family member experienced? Or something that was reported on news/magazine

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## 8. Health

Your task: Write how you benefited from health education in your school

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Write a story about some of the negative outcomes from over-consumption of fast food

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Your task: Share a report you saw on the news/in a magazine about the effects of not exercising.

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Should the government invest more in health education and medical facilities? Prove it with examples from the past successes from around the world

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## 9. Communication

Your task: Write a story showing how technology has made communication faster and easier

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Write a story showing the problems of using instant messenger

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Your task: Write a story of how online communication tools helped you in an emergency

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#### 10. Government responsibilities

Write a report of how some government took responsibility for pollution in their country

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Your task: Write about the failure of some government to take responsibility for the education level in that country

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Write a story showing how government are not responsible for recycling.

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Your task: Show how government action in the past helped improve citizens health

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Write a story showing how government actions and laws have led to increased smoking among citizens

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### 11. Character Traits

Your task: Write a story showing how good child rearing helped you become more socially adept

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Write a story showing how bad child rearing caused someone you know to get addicted to harmful substances

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**Activity: Do It Now! – Practice The 6 Step Speaking Approach**

1. Nowadays, people start using mobile phones at a younger age. What are the negatives of this trend?
2. Some people think instant messenger is just as good as face to face conversation. Do you agree? Why?
3. First year in university should be focused on learning a broad range of subjects, and not focused on learning just one small area of knowledge. Do you agree or disagree?
4. Some people believe that national celebrations and festivals are very important to preserve. What's your opinion?
5. Competition in school among students is good for everybody and increases scores. What's your view?
6. Individuals are responsible for the increase in global warming around the world. It is not the government's responsibility. Do you agree or disagree?
7. It is the government's responsibility to create jobs for the citizens that the government serves. To what extent do you agree or disagree?
8. Watching TV can be a positive influence on children's lives. What's your opinion?
9. Criminals in jail deserve love and care. They should be looked after by professionals and taught moral principles while in jail. Do you agree?
10. There's no such thing as failure. When people fail, it is always just a learning opportunity. Do you agree with this?
11. How can teachers make classes more fun for students while maintaining high levels of learning?
12. What are some of the main reasons for the climate change we see today?
13. What are some of the actions that government can take to help the poor in your country?
14. What are the potential negative effects of watching too much TV for kids?
15. What are the benefits for families who live in the countryside?
16. What are the problems faced by high school graduates as they try to choose a career?
17. How does the media and advertising affect people's habits in your country?
18. Can governments do anything to help the victims of natural disasters such as hurricanes and tsunamis?
19. What are the advantages of giving children a home education instead of a school education?
20. What are the advantages of living in a high tech world?
21. Is addiction to technology a real problem today? Explain
22. How does travel abroad broaden the mind?
23. Can you predict what the government might do in the future to protect the environment from pollution?
24. What can you see happening 10 years from now in the Indonesian education system?
25. What kinds of changes will we see in people's lives in the coming years?
26. Why is education important in people's success in life nowadays?
27. Why is recreation important for family happiness?
28. Can you tell me about an important recreation area in your country?
29. What are the differences between old people and young people in your country nowadays in terms of values, beliefs, and principles?
30. Do you ever work in teams in school? What are the benefits and drawbacks of this?





## Academic Writing

In academic writing, try to follow the following guidelines:

1. Avoid using I, me, my, you, your, we, our, us for general points, and in creating solid persuasive body paragraphs.
2. Only use I, me, we, when you are sharing a story or a piece of proof from your own life to act as proof for a point you made academically.
3. Use “there is/there are”, it, and varied subjects in your sentences.

## Activity: Do It Now! – Make The Following Academic!

Personal Style	Impersonal/Academic Style
People are happy with...	Most people are satisfied with...
A lot of people think	There are cases in which...
Many people in the city	Many urban citizens...
It's a good plan	
They moved the materials last week	
There's a good way to do that	
Other people are helping with the work	
It can be gotten	
Anything is possible	
I can think of a lot of good points	
The evidence is right here	
That's not allowed by law	
It's not certain	
We can't keep doing this	
We always use up too much from the earth	
That doesn't matter to us	
It means...	
I checked the facts	
Many bad things happened recently	
We need more safety in our country	
We need to stop all the health problems soon	
So many people are unhappy about ...	
The one big reason for this is...	
All young people watch too much tv	
Every politician is a crook	
We all know that...	
As you know...	
Maybe...	
The more I think about it...	
The problem is made up of 3 parts	
My part in this is...	
We as people like to give...	
Many people are waiting for	
That's a very important thing	

I don't know where they got that from	
People are looking for	
Most people cannot answer well	
We cant find enough facts and figures	
We should ask people questions	
The place where I live...	
What people think is wrong	

## Appendix I – Games To Improve IELTS English Skills

Game 1: Tell Stories: True or False Game

Game 2: Life Memory Game: Whoever tells the most stories from a particular year wins

Example Year: 12 years old

Brainstorm events:

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Task 3: video report, and report on it in the past tense.

Task 4: Read a short passage, and report on it in past tense

Example passage:

If you think about creative people – current, past – and you go back to Michelangelo, and Leonardo Da Vinci, and up through Einstein, the Picassos... People today, even athletes, artists, actors – anybody who has been successfully creative... One thing they all have in common is they have a passion about what they do. They all followed their passion, which has become somewhat of a cliché, but just because they're clichés doesn't mean there's not deep truth to it.

And everyone probably has a passion. Sometimes it's hard to get to.

Society doesn't encourage us to get to our unique passions. It's easier to stay in this herd. But creative people do. And again, we're not saying that in order to be creative, that you have to go out and write award-winning screenplays, or novels, or do great paintings they're going to hang in the great museums of the world. What is it that makes you happy, and what is it you have a passion about.

And, as we also have said, if you by chance do go out and start writing books, or movies, or doing paintings, that's all possible. Because everyone that we have studied, whether they ever articulated it or not, used some form of the creative process that we are talking about.

Game 5: History Game: Name multiple random world events from history, and then ask what happened in that event that you remember

World War II:

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World Cup 2010:

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War of Independence in Indonesia:

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Game 6: Where you've been? List every single place you've been to in Indonesia and outside Indonesia

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Game 7: Most Amazing News Reports: Can you remember the most amazing news reports you ever saw?

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Game 8: How have you been creative in your life so far?

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Game 9: List 10 movies you have seen in your life.

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Game 10: Predict the future game:  
Who can come up with the wildest possible future?

Social Norms

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Economy

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Health Education

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Technology

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Careers

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Crime

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Improve Present Perfect:

Game 11: Trend Master!

Trends in Technology, Information Technology, Home Entertainment, Cinemas, shopping, the changes caused by the internet, accessing information, communication, work trends, lifestyles, travel trends (think of globalization), developing countries, growing economies, energy use, pollution, education, crime, international relations, etc.

Trends:

Last 10 years trends

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Last 20 years trends

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Last 50 year trends

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Next, after you have written down the trend and present perfect tense, try now to think of the past tense action/event that caused the trend to occur:

Causes:

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Game 12: Cause/Effect Master

Practice Expressing Possibility (Using can or may instead of will)

What are the possible effects of the following actions?

1. These days students spend a lot of time playing computer games and surfing the internet.

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Over-consumption of fast foods

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Game 13: Chain Spelling: This can help you in a group to improve your spelling and thinking speed

Chain Sentence: Each person in a group adds a new word to maintain good grammatically correct sentences. Great to learn from small grammar mistakes

Game 14: Chain Story: Each person adds a new sentence to the growing story in the past tense

Game 15: All Verb Tense Adventure Game: In this game you try to help a fictional character to achieve a goal. This is best accomplished in a group. It's a proven way to master verb tense, so vital to IELTS success.

Game 16: Stop The Bus. A good game to play in a group to stimulate idea generation and speed of thought



## Appendix II: Further Speaking Practice Qs

A	B
<p><b><u>Theme: Work</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Part 2</u></b> Describe a job that you would like to do in the future, and explain why you would like this job.</p> <p>You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why you are attracted to this job</li> <li>• How much training would be necessary</li> <li>• What kind of personal qualities you would need</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Part 3</u></b></p> <p>Let's talk more about work...</p> <p>Do you think people's attitudes towards work have changed over the last 50 years?</p> <p>Do you think personal qualities are important for different jobs?</p> <p>How do you think developments in computer technology will impact jobs in the future?</p> <p>Now that more and more people are gaining university qualifications, how relevant do think they will be in 20 years' time?</p> <p>What other forms of training will become popular?</p> <p>What could employers use to motivate workers instead of high salaries?</p>	<p><b><u>Theme: Giving and Receiving</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Part 2</u></b> Describe a present you bought that gave someone a lot of pleasure.</p> <p>You need to say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the present was</li> <li>• Who it was for</li> <li>• Why you chose it</li> <li>• Why the person who received it was so pleased</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Part 3</u></b></p> <p>Let's talk a little more about gifts...</p> <p>What makes a good present?</p> <p>What is the importance of giving gifts to others?</p> <p>Do people prefer sending emails or greetings cards? Which is better?</p> <p>How has the practice of posting cards to others changed recently in your country?</p> <p>How is this culture important to the older generations?</p> <p>Do you agree that gift giving has become too commercialized these days? In what way?</p>

C	D
<p><b><u>Theme: Travel</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Part 2</u></b> Describe a tourist trip you have been on that you particularly enjoyed.</p> <p>You should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where you went</li> <li>• Why you took the trip</li> <li>• What you remember most about it</li> <li>• Why you enjoyed it</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Part 3</u></b></p> <p>Let's talk more about holidays and tourism...</p> <p>What are the advantages of taking a holiday every year?</p> <p>What are the most popular holiday destinations in your country? (Why?)</p> <p>How has tourism changed in your country over the last 30 years?</p> <p>Do you think tourism brings mainly positive or negative influences to the local area? (Why?)</p> <p>How do you think tourism will change in the future?</p>	<p><b><u>Theme: Reading</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Part 2</u></b> Describe a children's story that you know well.</p> <p>You can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you first read it</li> <li>• What you liked about it</li> <li>• Why you think it became popular</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Part 3</u></b></p> <p>We're going to talk a little more about reading habits...</p> <p>Why is reading so important?</p> <p>At what age should parents start reading to their children? Why?</p> <p>How have reading habits changed over the last 20 years?</p> <p>How can we encourage children to read more?</p> <p>Do you think the government should provide free public libraries?</p>

E	F
<p><b><u>Theme: Communication</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Part 2</u></b> Talk about some exciting news that you've received, either by phone or email.</p> <p>Please say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What it was</li> <li>• Who told you</li> <li>• Why it was so exciting</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Part 3</u></b> Let's talk about communication...</p> <p>Do you think the younger and older generations use different communication methods?</p> <p>What do you think are the advantages of current communication methods?</p> <p>How do you think communication will change in the future?</p> <p>In what situations do you think communication is very important?</p> <p>Do you think it is more important between parents and their children or between a husband and a wife?</p> <p>What qualities do individuals need to help them communicate well?</p>	<p><b><u>Theme: Cities</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Part 2</u></b> Describe a city that you would like to visit in the future.</p> <p>You should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the city is</li> <li>• How you would travel there</li> <li>• What you would do there</li> <li>• Why you want to go there</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Part 3</u></b> Let's talk about the population and cities...</p> <p>Where do most of the people in your country live? (Why?)</p> <p>What are the negative and positive effects on people living in crowded cities?</p> <p>What are the urgent needs of people in cities?</p> <p>Should people have the right to ask to change things they find uncomfortable in cities?</p> <p>How do you think the city conditions in your country will change over the next 50 years?</p>

G	H
<p><b><u>Theme: Old versus Young People</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Part 2</u></b> Talk about a person that you once helped.</p> <p>Please say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who that person was</li> <li>• What they needed help with</li> <li>• Why you helped them</li> <li>• How you felt about it</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Part 3</u></b></p> <p>I want to talk about the differences between people of different ages...</p> <p>What is the difference between taking care of young children and taking care of elderly people?</p> <p>Tell me about the values which old people have.</p> <p>How are they different from the values of young people?</p> <p>Do you think that people in carer jobs should be paid more? Why?</p> <p>Who would you prefer to help, a child or an elderly person?</p>	<p><b><u>Theme: Places To Live</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Part 2</u></b> Describe a place you have lived that you particularly liked.</p> <p>You could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you lived there</li> <li>• Who you lived with</li> <li>• What was most memorable about this place</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Part 3</u></b> Let's talk more about people and where they live</p> <p>Are there any differences between people from cities and people from the countryside?</p> <p>Do you like your neighbours? Why? How should neighbours help each other?</p> <p>Do you agree that there are more advantages to living in a city? (Why?)</p> <p>How do you think city conditions today compare to those 50 years ago?</p> <p>What changes do you think countries need to make to improve living conditions for their citizens?</p>

Note: A to H were kindly provided by [www.myielteacher.com](http://www.myielteacher.com)

## ***High Difficulty Critical Thinking Questions***

How have the social changes in society affected people in your country over the past 10 years?

What have been the main shifts in work habits in the banking industry since the world economic crisis of 2009?

How has people's use of home PCs changed family lifestyles over the last 20 years?

Some people think the world will end in 2012. Do you agree or disagree with this view?

What kinds of changes can universities make in the coming years to improve student's preparation for working life?

Some think that universities focus too much on theory and not enough on practical work.

Do you agree or disagree?

Politicians are responsible for the major environmental problems of the present time. Do you agree or disagree?

Has the increase in factory building impacted upon the world economy recently?

Some now think that knowledge is the new capital. What is your view on this?

There is a view in the business world that marketing is the number one element in any business success. Do you agree with this view?

The use of technology is increasing around the world. In what ways has this increase helped people?

In what ways has the increase in technology use created problems?

The working person nowadays often has to change jobs frequently, and there's no longer any such thing as a secure job for life. Do you agree with this?

What in your view are the benefits of having a master's degree or PHD?

Some people believe all crimes should have fixed punishments. What is your view?

In what ways can schools invest in good will programs for their students?

Why are governments becoming more and more concerned with energy conservation and energy supply? How can they ensure that enough energy will be available for future generations?

Why do many people think that all students should take a year out to travel the world?

Why do most elderly people seem to be wiser? How can young people gain wisdom in their youth?

What would be the effect of having a united world education organization?

## **Conclusion: It's All About Practice And Becoming Like A Native Speaker**

Congratulations on completing this book. The book you have just completed was the combined effort of over 16 months of hard work, experimentation, and optimization with real IELTS takers and it involved finding out what practices, and exercises, and skills were needed to succeed on IELTS. If you have done every exercise in this book, that means you are ready for your IELTS exam, and if you havnt done so, you should complete every exercise and work with your friend to master the important verb tenses for IELTS covere in this book.

If you have done your best you should now be ready for any IELTS essay, any IELTS Task 1 in writing, and you should be able to answer any IELTS interview question with confidence.

I would like to thank you for using this book, and also my students at Kaplan who made this book possible. Their efforts and desire to pass the IELTS and willingness to try my learning techniques was the origin of this work.

The final point I need to make is you need to become as much like a native speaker as you can, so get out there and practice with a professional native teacher!

I wish you all the best in your IELTS exam!

Regards

Brendan Brosnan, CELT