

THE

ACADEMIC

WRITING TASK 2

STUDY GUIDE



Everything You Need To Achieve **Band 7+** In The
ACADEMIC TASK 2 Writing Section Of The

IELTS



IELTS Excellence

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Credit to all IELTS examiners and tutors, past & present, who helped with the content of this book.

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Foreword

Congratulations on your decision to purchase this IELTS **Academic Writing Task 2 Study Guide**. This is a comprehensive eBook designed to give you everything you need to score band 7, 8 or 9 in task 2 of the academic writing section.

Task 2 is often regarded as the most scary and difficult part of the IELTS. Therefore it is really important that you really concentrate when reading through this study guide.

You may find some of the information a little overwhelming, but we have kept it as simple as possible. We promise you, if you put in the hard work and follow our advice, you will find the task 2 essay much more manageable.

A little bit about us...

We know how it feels to have all the worry and stress when taking exams and achieving our dreams. We have personally spent more than 11 years in higher education at prestigious universities and have been through the whole process of migrating overseas and thriving in another country.

Our time at different UK universities gave us access to world-leading academics, researchers and scholars. The knowledge we gained from these highly-educated people was priceless and we want to pass as much of this advice on to you to help you pass the IELTS and live your dream life.

In particular, part of the 11 years we spent at different universities required a real grasp on essay-writing, including analysing questions, creating essay plans, structuring paragraphs and giving the examiners exactly what they wanted (and much more). Task 2 of the writing section requires you to do all this to a good standard. With our previous experience and the help of real IELTS examiners/tutors which we have acquired, this book will help you score band 7+ in task 2.

What makes us different?

Just like many of you who plan to move abroad, study at distinguished universities, or advance your careers, we have been in the same situation as you and have felt

the same emotions which you will be feeling now. We understand the stress and recognise your worries; we have felt them ourselves. It's human nature.

Most of the IELTS tutors you find on the internet are simply teachers. Some of whom are very respectable, and we thank them for helping students prepare for the IELTS. However, most have never been through the process you are going through. They have not felt what it is like as somebody who **MUST** pass an English exam to reach their goal. They do not know how you **FEEL**. Having someone who really understands how you feel is exceptionally powerful and can give you extra motivation to succeed. That is where we can help.

The sole reason IELTS Excellence has been set up is to help **YOU**. You may already follow us on Instagram ([@ieltsexcellence](https://www.instagram.com/ieltsexcellence)) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/ieltsexcellence), and we can't thank you enough for your support - it means a lot to us.

Who do we work with?

We work with real native IELTS examiners, tutors and content providers, past and present, to give you exceptional quality and reliable advice. We strive to help you achieve band 7, 8 or 9 in the IELTS, so you can go on to pursue your goals. It's that simple - we want you to succeed.

Additionally, our resources allow you to learn at your own pace. You can use any of the information we provide 24/7, whenever you want. You will never feel pressured to 'keep up' with other students. We all learn at different speeds and we all need to revisit information from time to time. Many online courses cost \$1000s and require your attention at specific times, otherwise you miss out. We don't believe this is fair, so we prefer to give you information you can use when you want :-).

Anyway, enough about us...

This book is about **you** and **your dreams**. As you read through, there may be parts which are confusing. Don't worry, if you have any questions, you can reach out to us at any time via email.

Take your time working through the information, it can get a little 'heavy' at times. **You should read this eBook at least twice**, too. This way, you are able to make sense of paragraphs which you may not understand the first time.

So, find somewhere quiet without any distractions, get a good old cup of English tea, and let's get started.

All the best,

Sam, Sarah & the IELTS Excellence team

Introduction

There are too many students who do not prepare enough for the exam and fail to hit the mark needed to fulfil their overall aim. Maybe they want to move abroad, enhance their career or become a student at a prestigious university or college. Often, they waste thousands of dollars trying to pass the IELTS without any help or worse, they ask for help from people who aren't even native English speakers themselves! This only leads to them failing and never achieving their dream.

We welcome you here because you are one of the most committed students and have taken the step to invest in yourself by purchasing this book, which is written by native English speakers alongside real IELTS examiners. You will not be disappointed. However, it will still take lots of hard work and dedication from you to succeed, but this book contains everything you need to score at least band 7 in the writing section.

A little bit about the Writing Task 2 of the IELTS

The IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is taken by over 3 million students each year and recognised by over 10,000 organisations/institutions for purposes of migration, employment, education and professional registration.

It is one of the major hurdles faced by students wanting to improve their life and often this prevents people from reaching their goals and living their dream life. It is stressful for all students who sit it, both native and non-native speakers alike. It consists of 4 sections - writing, reading, speaking & listening. Arguably, the writing section is the most feared part, especially Task 2 of this section.

The majority of students aim to achieve a minimum band score of 7.0, as this is a common score requested by various organisations. However, the most common overall band score is between 5.5 and 6.5. Only a small percentage of students achieve a band 7.0 or higher. It is often the writing section which causes students to fail the test over and over again.

What happens if I do not get the required band score?

Obviously this depends on **your** personal required band score. Some people require band 6, others require band 7 etc. However, if you fail to achieve your band score, you will not be able to progress on to your goal (migration, undergraduate study, career etc).

This means you will either have to give up completely, or resit the IELTS. You can resit as many times as you wish, but this will cost you money each time. Many students end up spending \$1000s having to resit the test.

Why do students fail?

The majority of students who fail do not prepare adequately. They do not invest in good quality resources and just expect they will pass without any help. This is an expensive mistake as the IELTS exam can cost up to USD \$240 each time. Many students have to resit multiple times, which is why they spend thousands of dollars in many cases.

If you invest time and money into good quality resources, like sensible students do, the likelihood of you failing is much lower. This means it is actually cheaper in the long run, and you are able to stand out from the crowd and achieve your dream as soon as possible!

We are on your side, we want you to pass 1st time and we will do everything we can to help you. However, you will have to be dedicated and you must put a lot of hard work into preparing. Only you can do this!

Shall we get started?

Let's go...

Task 2 - Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to do in task 2?

Task 2 requires you to write an essay in relation to a specific question. There are different question types including discussing advantages & disadvantages, problems & solutions, two-part questions, discussing two arguments to an issue and agreeing or disagreeing with an opinion.

How many words should I write?

You need to write at least 250 words. There is no upper limit, but we recommend trying to write approximately 250-275 words.

How long should it take me in total?

No more than 40 minutes. Remember, you only get 60 minutes in total for the writing section. 20 minutes should be spent on task 1, leaving 40 minutes for task 2.

How does the academic and general task 2 differ?

In reality, they don't. Academic questions may be slightly more difficult than a general question, although this is not always the case. In our practice question & model answer books we include essays of various difficulties for you to practice.

How much is task 2 worth towards the writing section?

It is worth two thirds (about 67%) of the total mark. Task 1 is worth one third (33%) of the overall score.

Are there any specific topics that I should learn for task 2?

Yes, there are common topics that appear on the IELTS more frequently than others. We have listed 10 of them later in this book. Make sure you learn these and broaden your vocabulary accordingly.

How does the examiner score my answer?

As with task 1, the examiner uses 4 band descriptors to mark your essay. These are available publicly for you to browse.

The 4 band descriptors include 'Task achievement', 'Coherence & cohesion', 'Lexical resource' and 'Grammatical range and accuracy'. You can find the official band descriptors here: <https://ielts-excellence.com/writing-band-descriptors/>

Should I write a plan before my answer?

Absolutely. No excuses. Plans improve your score and writing speed significantly. As always, we cover our planning strategy later in this book.

Should I write in paragraphs?

This is essential. If you don't write in paragraphs, you will not score above a band 5. Paragraphing is one of the most important things to do in the essay. We recommend 4 separate paragraphs; an introduction paragraph, 2x main body paragraphs and a conclusion paragraph.

What do I do if the question asks for my opinion?

You must follow all instructions of the question. If you are asked for your opinion, you must give an opinion. It doesn't have to be your REAL opinion (the examiner won't realise it isn't yours), as long as there is one there. Sometimes the question will ask 'Do you agree or disagree' in which case you must say whether you agree or disagree. If a question doesn't ask for your opinion, don't give it.

Will using lots of clever words increase my score?

It depends. If you use complex words CORRECTLY and not all the time, then yes, you may get a slightly better score. However, if you use lots of complex words INCORRECTLY, you will get a poor score.

The best option is to only write what you know is correct. A simple essay written well will score better than a complex essay written poorly.

Do I have to write a conclusion?

It is highly recommended to write a conclusion in task 2. A conclusion is an overview of the information and should form paragraph 4 (last paragraph) of your essay. You will lose marks if you fail to do this.

Do I have to write the date and title of the question on my answer sheet?

No. The only thing you should write on the answer paper is your answer. The examiner will know what question you got asked.

Do I write using a pen or pencil?

It is up to you. You can use either, but the benefit of writing in pencil is the ability to rub out any mistakes and correct them, rather than crossing them out. This way the essay looks neater and reads better.

Is it worthwhile counting my words after I have finished?

If you have time, then yes. However, you should not 'make time' to count your words. It is very important that you write over 250 words in the task 2 essay, but the best way to ensure this is by practicing our 'Four-Two-Fifty' word count technique several times BEFORE the exam. This will teach you exactly how to ensure you write enough words, so you do not have to count them at the end.

What if I run out of paper in the exam?

Simply put your hand up and ask the invigilator for extra paper.

Do I have to leave a space between each line?

This is up to you. Different IELTS tutors will tell you different things. The benefit of leaving a blank line between your written lines is to allow easy corrections of words. However, we believe that your essay becomes less structured if you leave blank lines and more difficult to read. You have to remember to leave a blank line every time (this is more difficult than you think) and it becomes less obvious to the examiner when you start a new paragraph. You will likely need additional answer paper to finish your essay – which will waste crucial time and stop your thinking ‘flow’.

5 Reasons Students Underperform In Task 2

1. They focus on one part of the question and neglect the other parts.

Task 2 questions generally have two or more parts to them. You need to answer them equally to make sure you give the examiner what they want.

Here are some examples of what a question may ask you to do (they are covered in detail in the '**How To Analyse Any Task 2 Question**' section):

Problem & solution question:

Discuss some problems and solutions to an issue.

Advantages & disadvantages question:

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a certain scenario.

Discussion question:

Discuss both sides of an argument.

There are other types of task 2 question, but these are given here to make a point.

Students often only discuss one side of the argument (such as the advantages), but do not write about the other part of the question (such as the disadvantages). Therefore, they have not followed the task requirement and lose a significant amount of marks.

Make sure you answer ALL parts of the question EQUALLY. Again, look at the '**How To Analyse Any Task 2 Question**' section for a detailed breakdown of what you must do in each type of question.

2. They write about irrelevant information.

One of the most common mistakes we see students make is writing about completely irrelevant information. The **ONLY** details you should include in your answer should be directly related to the question.

For example, if the question asks you to write about '***the problems and some solutions of machines in the workplace***', don't start writing about machines in the **home**.

Equally, don't write about the problems and **benefits** (instead of solutions) of machines in the workplace. You must ensure your answer remains relevant to the question at all times. Many students don't and they end up scoring band 5 (or less) in task 2.

3. They use words just because they learnt them.

Some teachers will tell you not to learn lots of new words for the exam, and whilst we agree that you should not learn hundreds and hundreds of new words, you should definitely broaden your vocabulary by learning **some** key words.

However, just because you learn a word, doesn't mean you **HAVE** to include it in the essay.

Students often force new words into their task 2 answer, 'just because they remember the word', and the examiner is well trained to see this and will penalise you for it.

**Tip!**

Only use new words if they 'fit', you know what they mean and they are used in the right context.

Remember this phrase and you will write a better answer:

" IF IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT "

There are various synonym banks in each of our books which are designed for maximum effectiveness in the writing section, whilst keeping the number of words relatively low.

We don't want to bombard you with thousands of new words, it is better for you to naturally adapt your own vocabulary depending on your current level.

You can develop your vocabulary using the following steps:

- **Read articles (in English)**
- **Write down any unfamiliar words**
- **Use an online dictionary and thesaurus**

Websites such as <https://www.dictionary.com> and <https://www.thesaurus.com> will help you find out a word's meaning and any related synonyms.

- **Use Google to search:** 'How to use *[your word here]* in a sentence' and you will find examples of the word to use.

Additionally, <https://www.grammarly.com> is a really useful website for learning sentence structures.

4. They fail to write a plan

Plans are essential for success and, arguably, they are the most important aspect of your task 2 answer. We guarantee that if you wanted to achieve a low band score, the best way to do it would be to avoid planning your answer.

However, we assume you want to score at least band 7, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this, right? In that case, it is essential to write a task 2 essay plan in your essay.



Task 2 plans don't take long (a maximum of 5 minutes) once you know how to do them. Therefore, this gives you at least 35 minutes to write the actual essay (the total time given for Task 2 is 40 minutes).

Students who don't use plans usually fail to achieve their desired score and have to resit the IELTS over and over again. Make sure you don't fall into this trap; we have covered essay plans later in this book.

5. They don't practice writing essays

Here's a question for you: **How many words do you write per line on an official IELTS task 2 writing answer paper?**

I bet you don't know the answer, and who can blame you? How are you meant to know the answer?

Almost all IELTS students who fail did not practice writing answers to essay questions on real IELTS answer sheets. However, to give yourself the best chance of scoring band 7 or above in task 2, we strongly advise you practice writing on an actual answer page, over and over again.

You simply **MUST** practice! There are no shortcuts or excuses.

However, simply practicing is not the only answer. You must also practice **correctly**.

It is foolish to just simply write endlessly without any direction or aim. To help you practice effectively, we have devised a strategy to show you how many lines you should write in each paragraph of your answer to reach the MINIMUM required task 2 word count (250 words). It gives you information which is tailored to your personal writing style.



Tip!

Check out the 'IELTS Excellence four-two-fifty word count technique' section later in this book.

The 9 Golden Rules For Task 2 Success

As with any exam, there are good rules to follow and bad rules to follow. Good rules are one of the major keys to success, and if you don't stick to them you risk jeopardising your performance.

Here are 9 rules to follow to achieve a great result in task 2:

1. Have a good range of vocabulary & develop your grammar

Whatever stage of English you are currently at, there is always room for improvement when it comes to sitting the IELTS. If you are a native speaker, chances are that you are already relatively comfortable with writing. However, you should not be over-confident because, under the conditions and time-constraints of the exam, you will forget words, grammatical rules and spelling (amongst other things). Very few people actually score band 9 in the writing section, even if they are native speakers.

If you are not a native speaker, you will have to work very hard in learning new words and grammatical rules. Some ways to do this include reading English articles and writing down unusual words. Then learn the meaning of the words and understand when to use them.

You can also give yourself an advantage by learning some key words to use in your essay answer, along with synonyms. We have included synonym banks throughout our books which contain a small number of KEY words to use. We advise against reading huge lists of random words because simply memorising words will be frowned upon by the examiner (they are trained to identify this). You need to actually **understand** their meaning and when to use them.

Additionally, make sure you are grammatically competent. One of the main grammatical errors we see is a mismatch between nouns and verbs in sentences. Later in the book we will discuss the 9 essential task 2 noun-verb agreement rules

that help you score band 7+. Make sure you read this section several times because it is a little complicated.

2. Learn to analyse any question

If you don't understand how to effectively analyse a task 2 question, how can you expect to answer it properly?

Knowing what a question is showing and asking is one of the most important skills you can develop before sitting the IELTS.

Check out the '**How To Analyse Any Task 2 Question**' section, where we will uncover the best ways to analyse any task 2 essay question, giving you the confidence to do this in the real exam.

3. Learn a reliable band 7+ essay framework

A framework is a specific 'structure' that helps you achieve a particular goal. If your goal is to score band 7 or above in the task 2 essay, you will need to learn the correct structure for it.

You may have seen examples of our frameworks for Task 1, from the '[Academic Writing Task 1 Study Guide](#)', which shows you the exact frameworks to use for all types of task 1 question.

We have compiled a proven band 7+ framework for a task 2 essay, which is included later in this book. If used properly, it will help you achieve that elusive band 7, 8 or even 9!

4. Give the examiner what they want! Answer all parts of the question!

The examiner has to follow certain guidelines when marking your essay answer. These are called '**band descriptors**'.

In order to achieve a good band score, you must give the examiner EVERYTHING they want. In other words, you must successfully satisfy as many of the band descriptors as possible and this includes answering all parts of the question.

We will look in detail at what these parts are later in this book.

5. Plan your essay effectively

Did you know that a short plan will actually help you complete task 2 in a shorter time than writing without a plan? Well this is very true. But most importantly, it is a known fact that **students who spend a small amount of time writing a task 2 plan actually get a better band score than students who don't write a plan.**

You need to learn exactly how to write a good task 2 plan, because a poor plan will lead to a poor score.

Yes, you guessed right; we have included a proven 3-step plan in the '**How To Write An Effective Task 2 Plan**' section in this book.

6. Practice what you learn!

You can read as many books as possible, but without actually practicing the material you are learning about, you will struggle in the exam.

Throughout this book, there is essential information which you are encouraged to actually put into practice. It is up to you to really put in the hard work and PRACTICE.

It is totally up to you to decide how much practice you should do before the test but as a general rule you should do as much as possible, within reason.

Obviously you shouldn't spend 20 hours per day learning - this is just silly. But as an example, **many successful students spend between 2-4 hours revising each day.**

This is only a guide, not a personal recommendation, because everyone is different, and we don't know where you are with things currently. Some people will only need 1 hour per day. Others will need 5+ hours per day. It is up to you how long you spend.

If you REALLY want to stand out from the crowd and give yourself the BEST chance of hitting that band 7 score, you should strongly consider investing in our exclusive [Practice Question & Model Answer eBooks!](#)

7. Develop a positive mindset!

There is no doubt whatsoever that if you have a poor mindset you will fail the IELTS. Your mindset controls everything, even your future.

Have you ever heard of the '**law of attraction**'? This law states that if you believe you are going to achieve something, you will actually go on to achieve it in real life. On the contrary, if you believe you will fail, this will also be true. Therefore, developing a positive mindset is one of the best advantages you can give yourself!

There are many YouTube videos about this law and it would be sensible for you to check them out. Tony Robbins is one of the most influential people on this topic.



Tip!

Search 'Tony Robbins Mindset videos' on YouTube and you will have a great amount of motivational material available.

In the '**Academic Writing Task 1 Study Guide**', we cover the 4 fundamental mindset techniques to ensure IELTS success. You should complete these often to develop a positive mindset.

8. Understand the format of task 2 (time, word counts, question types)

It goes without saying that being fully aware of the task 2 format is crucial. The last thing you want is to open the exam paper and have a nasty surprise waiting for you, not knowing what to do.

For example, what if you get a question that you are unfamiliar with, or you're not sure how many words you are supposed to write.

Learn the format of a task 2 question (and the exam in general, for that matter)!

9. Use a study timetable

Our final golden rule for task 2 success is to **use a study timetable when preparing**.

Why?

Because there are so many different parts to successful preparation, it is impossible to know what you have studied and what you have got left within a certain timeframe. All successful students use a timetable for this reason.

Every IELTS student will differ on the length of time required to prepare for task 2, but we have developed a suggested study timetable which will help you understand what you need to cover.

10 Common Task 2 Essay Topics

There are lots of different topics which you may get asked about in the writing section, literally dozens of possibilities. For this reason, it would be foolish to try and learn every single possible topic and quite frankly, there are much better ways to spend your valuable preparation time.

However, we think it is important to learn some of the most common topics which regularly appear in the exam, because the chances are you will get one of these in at least one of the tasks. They appear on the exam time and time again.

What are the topics?

The 10 common task 2 topics you need to be aware of are:

- **Education**
- **Transport**
- **Technology**
- **Government Issues**
- **Culture**
- **Globalisation**
- **Family Issues**
- **Health**
- **Environment**
- **Crime & Law**

Each of these topics cover a broad range of information, and it is impossible to learn all the possibilities within each category.

For example, think of how many sub-topics could be included in a 'Government Issues' question.

Answer: Lots!

However, there are things you can do with this list of question topics to give yourself an advantage in the exam, which we will discuss below.



How you can use this list to your advantage in a task 2 essay question

One of the main ways this list can help you is that if you know the common topics, you are able to adapt your preparation according to the topics.

For example, you can improve your vocabulary by reading articles written in English (we strongly advise you use this method as part of your revision), you can find articles related to the 10 common topics.

Furthermore, by understanding the most common question topics, you are able to learn synonyms which may be useful to use in one of these questions (we recommend doing this too).

In the '**Health**' topic, for example, you could learn 2 or 3 synonyms for the word '**Doctor**'.

Let's discuss vocabulary & synonyms in more detail below:

Vocabulary

The vocabulary you use in your task 2 essay should **compliment the topic**. You should spend time before the exam learning at least some new words which could be used in the common question topics.

For example, in a **health question**, you may use words such as '**doctor**', '**medication**', '**prognosis**', '**illness**', '**infection**', '**recovery**', '**morbidity**', '**mortality**' and so on.

For an **education question**, words may include '**development**', '**intelligence**', '**judgement**', '**comprehension**', '**progression**', '**achieve**' etc.

For **technology**, you may use words such as '**prospect**', '**innovative**', '**modernistic**', '**contemporaneous**', '**invent**', '**progress**', '**advancement**'... you get the idea.

However, there are 2 rules:

1. Don't memorise words!

2. Don't learn too many words

Instead of memorising words, you should 'learn' words for each topic. There is a huge difference between **memorising** and **learning**:

- '**Memorising**' is just remembering a word and not understanding it.
- '**Learning**' is knowing the meaning of a word and understanding how to use it!

Also, you should not learn too many words. You are not trying to rewrite a dictionary. Just aim to learn a handful of words for each common topic and develop a deep understanding of how and when to use them.

If you can include 2 or 3 of these words in your answer, you will show the examiner that your '**Grammatical range and accuracy**' (one of the 4 band descriptors) is to a good level.

Synonyms

Synonyms are words with the same or similar meaning. They are used to create better flowing sentences and you should use them in all parts of the writing section. All successful band 7+ students use synonyms accurately because they put the time into learning them.

Lets look at an example:

If you get a question about **technology**, for example, you may use 1 or 2 of the words we mentioned above in your answer: '**prospect**', '**innovative**', '**modernistic**', '**contemporaneous**', '**invent**', '**progress**', '**advancement**'.

Let's take 'progress' for instance. You should not repeat this word over and over again in your answer. If you do, you will be penalised. Instead, you should learn some synonyms for this word.

Examples of synonyms for '**progress**' include:

- *Development / develop*
- *Evolution / evolve / evolving*
- *Advancement / advance / advancing*
- *Breakthrough*



Beware!

Always understand how to use synonyms in a sentence, because they will not all make sense. Using the wrong synonym in a sentence will lower your band score!

Let's look how to use these synonyms:

BASE SENTENCE:

'The economy of the UK is showing **progress**, due to the development of new technology.'

Examples of synonyms:

INCORRECT:

'The economy of the UK is showing **advancement**, due to the development of new technology.'

CORRECT:

'The economy of the UK is **advancing**, due to the development of new technology.'

INCORRECT:

'The economy of the UK is showing **breakthrough**, due to the development of new technology.'

CORRECT:

'The UK has signs of an economic **breakthrough**, due to the development of new technology.'

INCORRECT:

'The economy of the UK is showing **evolve**, due to the development of new technology.'

CORRECT:

'The economy of the UK is **evolving**, due to the development of new technology.'

Can you see how using synonyms can be more tricky than it sounds? Simply putting a synonym into a sentence doesn't necessarily mean it is grammatically

correct. The sentence form and word form must be correctly used for it to make sense.

Here are a couple of ways you can practice using synonyms accurately:

1. Once you learn a synonym, use Google to search for terms with the word in it.

For example:

Search [Google](#) for: ' **The use of "[Insert a synonym here]" in a sentence** '.

In the results, you will have a number of different examples of how to use this word in a sentence.

2. Use an online sentence correction tool

'[Grammarly](#)' is a great tool for people wanting to improve their grammar. You will have to sign up (it's free), but then you will be able to practice writing using your synonyms.

Grammarly will highlight an area of a sentence which doesn't make sense. It is not 100% accurate, but it is a very good resource.

Common Topics - Further Reading

It is always a good idea to read articles related to common topics. It gives you a feel for the type of grammar used and also allows you to identify common words, which you are then able to add to your vocabulary.

Here are some websites which you can use for each of the common topics mentioned above:

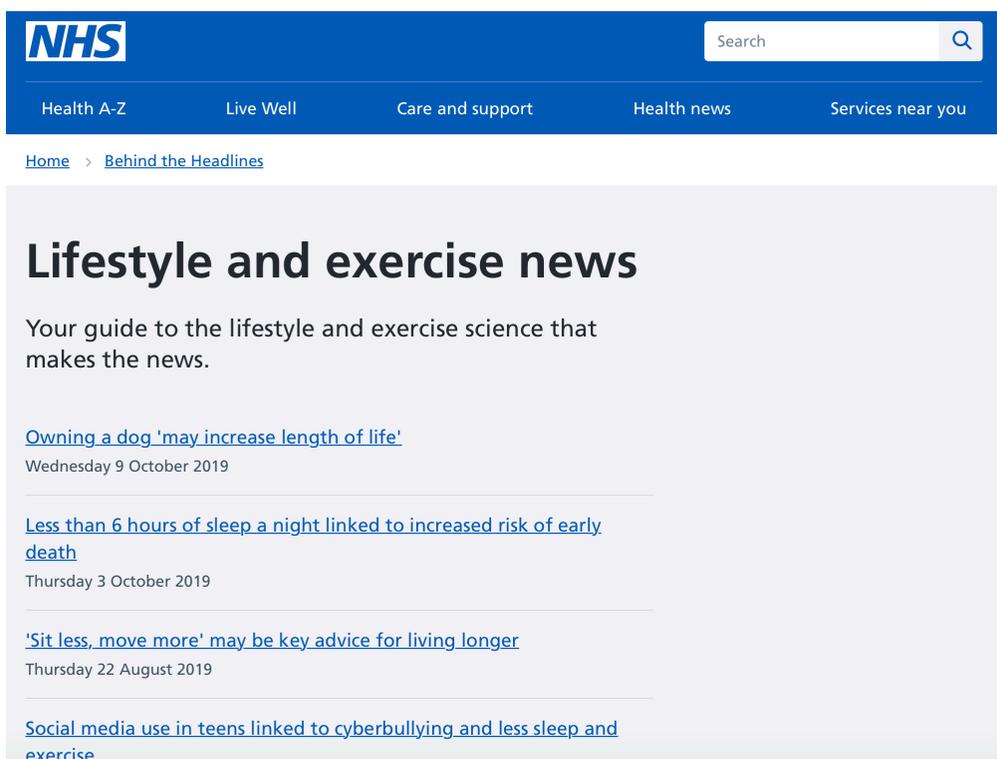
Health

'NHS website': <https://www.nhs.uk/news/>

This website is the official National Health Service (UK) page which contains a huge amount of health-related articles. It is updated regularly.

These articles are targeted at the general population, so the terminology is not overly scientific.

Here's a sample:



The screenshot shows the NHS website interface. At the top is a blue navigation bar with the NHS logo on the left and a search box on the right. Below the logo are five menu items: Health A-Z, Live Well, Care and support, Health news, and Services near you. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Behind the Headlines. The main content area is titled 'Lifestyle and exercise news' and includes a sub-header: 'Your guide to the lifestyle and exercise science that makes the news.' Below this are four article snippets, each with a blue link, a date, and a horizontal line separator:

- [Owning a dog 'may increase length of life'](#)
Wednesday 9 October 2019
- [Less than 6 hours of sleep a night linked to increased risk of early death](#)
Thursday 3 October 2019
- ['Sit less, move more' may be key advice for living longer](#)
Thursday 22 August 2019
- [Social media use in teens linked to cyberbullying and less sleep and exercise](#)

Education

'The conversation' online news: <https://theconversation.com/uk/education>

This is an independent news resource written alongside academics and researchers. There are different categories on this website and they are all kept up to date. The education section is particularly useful. You can also choose specific countries which you want to read about.

Podcasts are also available, which will give you an additional information boost.

Here's a snippet from the main page:

Home Edition: **United Kingdom** ▾ Donate Events

THE CONVERSATION
Academic rigour, journalistic flair

Search analysis, research, academics...

Arts + Culture Business + Economy Cities **Education** Environment + Energy Health + Medicine Politics + Society Science + Technology Brexit

Follow Topics Parenting Universities Schools Higher education Social media Exams Child mental health

shutterstock
Are working-class students and academics avoiding top universities?

Listen
Podcasts
Explore the world of podcasts from The Conversation

Research and Expert Database
Find experts with knowledge in:
e.g. Cyber security **Search**
Popular: food, water, transport, health, and energy.

Editors' Picks
University

Events
Dragon Hall Debates: Guts – University of East Anglia

Technology

'New scientist': <https://www.newscientist.com/subject/technology/>

New scientist is a free online magazine with up-to-date articles about technology and science. It covers many disciplines within this topics; a great way to expand your vocabulary.

Here's an example of what the main page:

THE DAILY NEWSLETTER

Sign up to our daily email newsletter

NewScientist

News **Technology** Space Physics Health Mind Environment More  Shop Tours Events Jobs



TECHNOLOGY

US Army has built a device to keep your hands warm without gloves

TECHNOLOGY

Exclusive: UN cybercrime chief warns against US and Iran cyberattacks

Transport

'Transport info': <https://www.transportinfo.org.uk>

Transport info is a free online resource which gives daily news on the transport industry. Everything from cars, trains and aviation is covered. It is UK based and easy to read.

This is an example of the main webpage:

Rail Road Shipping Aviation Bus Cycling General

transportinfo.org.uk TODAY'S TRANSPORT NEWS IN THE UK, HAND PICKED FOR YOU EACH MORNING

Brought to you by cogitamus

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PublicAffairs AWARDS 2012 WINNER Campaign of the Year - Private Sector

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Breaking News

HS2 will destroy or damage hundreds of UK wildlife sites, says report

Survey reveals internationally protected natural habitats are among the areas at risk. HS2 will destroy or irreparably damage five internationally protected wildlife sites, 693 local wildlife sites, 108 ancient woodlands and 33 legally protected sites of special scientific interest, according to the most comprehensive survey of its

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Government Issues

'BBC Politics News': <https://www.bbc.com/news/politics>

The BBC is a news corporation based in the UK. It covers all types of news but often the articles are related to UK politics and government issues. It is a good place to read issues related to the UK government.

This is what the webpage looks like:

The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the BBC logo, a 'Sign in' button, and a menu of categories: Home, News, Sport, Reel, Worklife, Travel, Future, Culture, and More. A search bar is located on the right. Below this is a red banner with the word 'NEWS' in white. Underneath the banner is another navigation bar with categories: Home, UK, World, Business, Politics, Tech, Science, Health, Family & Education, Entertainment & Arts, Stories, Video & Audio, In Pictures, Newsbeat, and More. The main content area is titled 'Politics' and includes sub-categories: Parliaments, Brexit, and Election 2019.

The main content area features several news articles:

- Flybe rival calls bailout 'misuse of public funds'**: Willie Walsh, chief executive of the owner of British Airways, attacks the government-backed rescue. (1h | Business)
- Government strikes deal to rescue Flybe**
- Why Flybe matters**
- 'I would be devastated if Flybe went under'**
- HS2 'threatens' natural habitats**: Wildlife group says rare species could be wiped out by rail link and calls for a "greener" approach. (8h | UK)
- Johnson rejects Sturgeon's indyref2 demand**: Boris Johnson confirms he will not agree to Nicola Sturgeon's request for a second independence referendum. (22h | Scotland politics | 7149)
- Crowdfunding for Big Ben Brexit bongs questioned**: Commons authorities have cast doubt on meeting the £500,000 estimated costs using public donations. (15h | UK Politics)
- Next phase of Labour leadership contest under way**: Lisa Nandy wins the NUM's backing as the candidates seek.
- Replace Iran nuclear plan with 'Trump deal' - PM**: The PM says he wants to work with the US and others on a new plan to.
- Ex-Speaker Bercow claimed £1,000 taxi fare**: The former Commons Speaker's spending in the run-up to his

Culture

'Euronews - Culture': <https://www.euronews.com/lifestyle/culture>

Euronews covers all sorts of news throughout the world. There is a section on culture, which contains short, easy-to-read articles on a daily basis. The content of these articles includes everything from film, food, music, arts + much more.

Here are some of the articles you could expect to read:

The screenshot shows the Euronews website's culture section. The navigation bar includes: euronews, Europe, World, Business, Sport, Culture, Living, Sci-tech, Travel, Video, and a menu icon for Programmes. The main content area features a grid of article cards, each with a video thumbnail, a category label, and a headline. The articles are as follows:

- CINEMA**: The Favourite lives up to its name at European cinema's night of nights
- USA**: Apple lands first Golden Globe nominations; Netflix leads field
- CINEMA**: Films tipped to win 2019 European Film Awards
- MUSICA**: Korngold's mysterious opera "Die Tote Stadt" mixes Hitchcock and Freud
- FRANCE**: 'J'accuse' screenings cancelled after anti-Polanski protest
- RUSSIA**: Nikita Vlasov wins top prize at the Russian Outdoor Film Festival
- MUSICA**: From Wagner to Broadway: Terfel takes Sydney Opera by storm
- CULT**: Dubai's eclectic music scene
- USA**: Woody Allen settles \$68 million suit against Amazon
- USA**: Madonna is frequently hours late for concerts, a fan says. He's suing.

On the right side of the grid, there is a 'MOST' section with a horizontal line and two large blue numbers: 1 and 2.

Globalisation

'Financial Times': <https://www.ft.com>

The Financial Times is a news organisation related to globalisation. Some of the articles may be difficult to read, but there are many that are quite simple. You can certainly find some words to learn which may come in handy in an essay question. Examples could include: 'finance', 'trade', 'economy', 'empire', 'business' etc.

This is what the homepage looks like at the time of writing:

The screenshot shows the Financial Times homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'FINANCIAL TIMES' logo and 'myFT' branding. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with categories like HOME, WORLD, US, COMPANIES, TECH, MARKETS, GRAPHICS, OPINION, WORK & CAREERS, LIFE & ARTS, and HOW TO SPEND IT. A search icon and a 'fastFT' logo are also present. The main content area features a large headline: 'US and China prepare to seal 'phase one' trade deal'. Below the headline, there is a sub-headline: 'Hard-fought agreement brings fragile truce but tough problems remain unresolved'. To the right of the headline is an image of two smartphones connected by a red line, with the text 'Analysis The Big Read US tech backlash forces China to be more self-sufficient'. Below the main headline, there is a list of bullet points: 'Where next for the renminbi after US-China breakthrough?', 'Chinese export growth slows to 3-year low', and 'US lifts China 'currency manipulator' tag ahead of trade deal'. At the bottom of the page, there are four small images: a man in a suit, gold bars, a group of people at a conference, and two men in suits.

Family Issues

'Citizens advice': <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/>

Citizens advice is a UK-based network of charities which give help and advice about most things. There is a full section about family issues, such as marriages/divorces, children, schools/education, relationships and so much more.

They are more advice articles than news articles, but they are still great to use to learn new words and broaden your 'Family Issues' vocabulary.

Here's an example of what you can expect:

The screenshot shows the Citizens Advice website interface. At the top left is the 'citizens advice' logo. On the right, there are links for 'Cymraeg' and 'Sign in', and a search bar with a magnifying glass icon. Below this is a dark blue navigation bar with white text for various categories: 'Benefits', 'Work', 'Debt and money', 'Consumer', 'Housing', 'Family', 'Law and courts', 'Immigration', 'Health', and 'More from us'. Underneath the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'England > Family'. The main heading is 'Family' in a large, bold, blue font. Below the heading is a paragraph of introductory text: 'Find out what your rights are if your relationship has broken down, for example whether you can stay in the family home or who the children should live with. You can also find out how to deal with things like making a will, registering a birth or changing your name, and where else to go for help.' Below this text are three white boxes with blue borders. The first box is titled 'Living together, marriage and civil partnership' and contains three links: 'Getting married', 'Living together and marriage: legal differences', and 'Registering a civil partnership'. The second box is titled 'Family search' and contains the text 'Search for articles in our relationships section.' followed by a search input field and a green 'Search' button. The third box is titled 'Ending a relationship' and contains the text 'Find out how to end a relationship and sort out things like money, children and your home.'

Environment

'Science Daily': https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/earth_climate/environmental_issues/

Science daily is an online science website consisting of research-based information. It has an 'environment' section, with easy to read articles based around environmental issues. It's a great place to learn a few new words/synonyms.

The link will take you to a page similar to this:

ScienceDaily
Your source for the latest research news

Follow f t in Subscribe RSS

New: Fossil Is the Oldest-Known Scorpion

Follow all of ScienceDaily's latest research news and top science headlines!

Health Tech Enviro Society Quirky Search

Environmental Issues News January 17, 2020 Print Email Share

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Climate Signals Detected in Global Weather

Jan. 2, 2020 — Searched for and found: climate researchers can now detect the fingerprint of global warming in daily weather observations at the global scale. They are thus amending a

Earth Was Stressed Before Dinosaur Extinction

Dec. 11, 2019 — By measuring the chemistry of fossilized seashells collected in Antarctica, researchers discovered that Earth was already experiencing carbon cycle instability before the

Crime & Law

'BBC News - Crime': <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cldy2dmy748t/crime>

The BBC News website is a great resource for many articles (as mentioned above). The topic of Crime/Law is one of them.

Here's what the page will look like:

The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the BBC logo, a 'Sign in' button, and a menu of categories: Home, News, Sport, Reel, Worklife, Travel, Future, Culture, and More. A search bar is located on the right. Below this is a red banner with the word 'NEWS' in white, followed by a secondary navigation bar with links for Home, UK, World, Business, Politics, Tech, Science, Health, Family & Education, Entertainment & Arts, Stories, Video & Audio, In Pictures, Newsbeat, and More.

The main content area is titled 'Crime'. It features two news articles:

- Violent crime fear over CCTV switch off plans**
 - 22:58 17 Jan
 - Rachel Flint, BBC News
 - A crime expert warns A&E departments will be overrun with serious assault injuries if plans go ahead.
 - Read more >
- Knife possession offences reach record high**
 - 4:34 17 Jan
 - There were 14,135 offences in the year to September 2019 - the most since data was first compiled in 2007.
 - Read more >

Remember:

Before you go clicking on the links for each of the 10 common topics, understand that you do not need to read lots and lots of articles.

The purpose of us giving you these links is to broaden your vocabulary in each common topic area, by choosing a handful of words, finding their meaning and some related synonyms which you may be able to use in a question. It will also give you practice for the reading component of the IELTS.

The Band 7+ Task 2 Framework

So, now you should be aware of some of the topics you may get asked about and how to improve your vocabulary in these sections. Now we will look at what your answer should look like. We call this the 'Task 2 Framework'.

But first, look at the table below. These are the official Task 2 band descriptors; how examiners mark your answer.

We have highlighted the key parts which rely on a well-structured and distinctly paragraphed essay. Make sure you study these band descriptors carefully, so you can see how important it is to write in a logical way.

Writing Task 2 Band Descriptors:

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully addresses all parts of the task presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skilfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sufficiently addresses all parts of the task presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task presents a clear position throughout the response presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to overgeneralise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use presents a clear central topic within each paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately uses paragraphing, but not always logically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication

As you can see above, the green highlights band 7, 8 and 9 answers, whereas the red highlights a band 6 answer. These band descriptors clearly state that a band 7+ answer requires a **LOGICAL paragraph structure**.

If you do not have a logical paragraph structure, you will not score above band 6. It really is as simple as that. This is exactly why you must use a **structured framework** for your task 2 essay, which we have provided below.

Here's the OVERALL framework we recommend for Task 2:

TASK 2 ESSAY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

- Paraphrase the question (**ONE SENTENCE**)
- State your opinion (*only if requested)
- State the aim of your essay (**ONE SENTENCE**)

Main Paragraph 1

- Discuss the **FIRST PART** of the question
- Justify this information/explain why
- Give 1-2 examples

Main Paragraph 2

- Discuss the **SECOND PART** of the question
- Justify this information/explain why
- Give 1-2 examples

Conclusion

- Conclude the information ('In conclusion...')
- State your opinion again (optional & only if necessary)

This framework gives you a general structure to follow, but you must be aware that there are different types of task 2 question and you will be required to write a specific type of answer for each one. Hence, you will have to adapt the framework slightly. We will cover them in detail later in this book.

Each type of question will have 2 distinct parts to it, and these are what you should base Main Paragraph 1 and Main Paragraph 2 around.



Tip!

Check out the 'How to analyse a task 2 question' section again to remind yourself how to decide what to write for each type of question!

Let's look a little closer at the specific details of the framework, so you can see exactly what we mean for each paragraph:

Framework - Specific Details

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

Paraphrase the question

A sentence to paraphrase the question (using synonyms). See the 'How to paraphrase in writing task 2' section for methods.

* State your opinion

A sentence about your opinion on the subject, or whether you agree or disagree with it & why this is your opinion. **Only include this if you are asked!** Start the sentence with something like '*In my opinion.....*'.

State the aim of your essay

A sentence stating what your essay aims to do ('*This essay aims to....*').

Paragraph 2 - 1st Main Paragraph

Discuss the **FIRST** part of the question

This depends on the question type. It could be the 'advantages', the 'problems' or the first part of a 'two-part question'. Have a look at the '**How to analyse a task 2 question**' section for more information.

Justify this information/explain why

Say why it is an 'advantage' or a 'problem'.

Give 1-2 examples

Back up this information with an example or two.

Paragraph 3 - 2nd Main Paragraph

Discuss the **SECOND** part of the question

Again, this depends on the type of question you are asked but you should focus on the second part of the question. For example, the 'disadvantages', the 'solutions' or the second part of a 'two-part' question.

Justify this information/explain why

Say why it is a 'disadvantage' or a 'solution'.

Give 1-2 examples

Back up this information with an example or two.

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

Conclude the information

One sentence which briefly concludes your points.

***State your opinion again (optional)**

You can reiterate your opinion (only if the question asks for your opinion!).

Now, I know this seems complicated and there seems to be a lot to remember, but it will become much easier and simpler the more you practice.

Practicing really is the most efficient way to learn, because your brain will form new neural pathways so you will be able to complete the essay framework subconsciously (you will be able to do it without even thinking).

How much should you practice? As much as you can! The more you practice, the better you will get. After all, practice makes perfect!

On the following pages we will show you exactly how to write a model answer to a task 2 question.

Using the framework to write a model answer:

Some people believe the introduction of machines into the workplace will be highly beneficial to businesses. Others think they will cause problems affecting jobs and income.

Discuss both views and give your opinion. Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Model answer:

There are mixed views on the increasing use of machines in industry including the advantages and disadvantages they bring. In my opinion, the introduction of machines is beneficial over the long-term, although I believe there are some short-term disadvantages to consider. This essay aims to discuss the main arguments for and against the increase in robots within the workplace and the impact this will have on humans.

One of the major advantages of using machines in industry is an improved efficiency of tasks. Unlike humans, robots are able to work around the clock, without any emotional requirements. For example, they do not require holidays, pay-rises or sickness leave. They never arrive late to work and do not have to stop for toilet breaks, whereas humans do. This means there will be greater productivity and less wasted time if machines performed certain tasks.

In contrast, a major disadvantage of automated work is a reduction of available jobs for humans. If there are more machines doing the work, there will be less jobs available, so more people will become unemployed. This also has the impact of less income for families. One example is the car manufacturing industry, where robots are being used extensively to construct vehicles. A result has been less human jobs available and many staff being made redundant in recent years.

In conclusion, there are definite positives of using machines in the workplace, including improved efficiency and reduced overheads. However, this is at the expense of increased unemployment and lower family incomes. Nevertheless, I think the benefits certainly outweigh the negatives overall.

Word Count: 265

This is a breakdown of our model answer:

Introduction

1. Paraphrase the question
2. State your opinion
3. State the aim of your essay

There are mixed views on the increasing use of machines in industry including the advantages and disadvantages they bring. In my opinion, the introduction of machines is beneficial over the long-term, although I believe there are some short-term disadvantages to consider. This essay aims to discuss the main arguments for and against the increase in robots within the workplace and the impact this will have on humans.

1st Main Paragraph

1. Discuss the FIRST part of the question
2. Justify this information
3. Give an example

One of the major advantages of using machines in industry is an improved efficiency of tasks. Unlike humans, robots are able to work around the clock, without any emotional requirements. For example, they do not require holidays, pay-rises or sickness leave. They never arrive late to work and do not have to stop for toilet breaks, whereas humans do. This means there will be greater productivity and less wasted time if machines performed certain tasks.

2nd Main Paragraph

1. Discuss the **SECOND** part of the question
2. Justify this information
3. Give 1-2 examples

In contrast, a major disadvantage of automated work is a reduction of available jobs for humans. If there are more machines doing the work, there will be less jobs available, so more people will become unemployed. This also has the impact of less income for families. One example is the car manufacturing industry, where robots are being used extensively to construct vehicles. A result has been less human jobs available and many staff being made redundant in recent years.

Conclusion

1. Conclude the information
2. State your opinion again (optional & only if the question asks for it)

In conclusion, there are definite positives of using machines in the workplace, including improved efficiency and reduced overheads. However, this is at the expense of increased unemployment and lower family incomes. Nevertheless, I think the benefits certainly outweigh the negatives overall.



Remember!

'Practice makes perfect!'

We recommend you write out your own answer to this question, with the help of the framework - give it a go now.

Types Of Writing Task 2 Question:

There are 5 different types of question in Task 2. Each one will require you to do something different, so it is important that you are aware of these.

Each type of question also has its own 'framework' which are slightly modified versions of the framework we gave you above. We will go into details about them below.

TYPES OF QUESTION IN TASK 2

* **Agree or disagree** - e.g. *'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement?'*
*(*Include your opinion in the introduction & conclusion)*

Advantages & disadvantages - e.g. *'Discuss the advantages and disadvantages.'*

* **Discussion** - e.g. *'Discuss both views and give your opinion'*
*(*Include your opinion in the introduction & conclusion)*

Problem & solution - e.g. *'What are the problems with this and what are some solutions?'*

Two-part questions - *There will usually be a statement followed by two separate questions.*

** If a question asks you to '**Give your own opinion**' or '**To what extent do you agree or disagree?**' make sure you include your opinion in the **INTRODUCTION** and **CONCLUSION** paragraphs.

If a question does not ask you to give your opinion, do not give it!

How To Analyse Any Task 2 Question

Imagine this scenario...

You have spent hours and hours preparing to write the perfect essay, getting lots of advice from 'IELTS Gurus' and formulating the perfect plan to score a perfect band 9 essay. You get into the exam, open the exam question sheet only to find out that you do not understand what the question is actually asking. You have no idea what to write or how to write it.

Uh Oh!

All of the time you have spent preparing for the exam has been a complete waste of time.

You spend the next 40 minutes guessing what to write, knowing that you have failed miserably to answer the question. You finish the writing section knowing that you have not scored higher than band 5.

Not a good scene is it?

This scenario is one which you don't want to be in.

Instead, you want to be fully prepared to answer the question **accurately**.

One of the most important ways to prepare for task 2 is to practice analysing the question! After all, if you do not understand the question thoroughly, how do you know what to write?

When people don't understand the question, this is what happens:

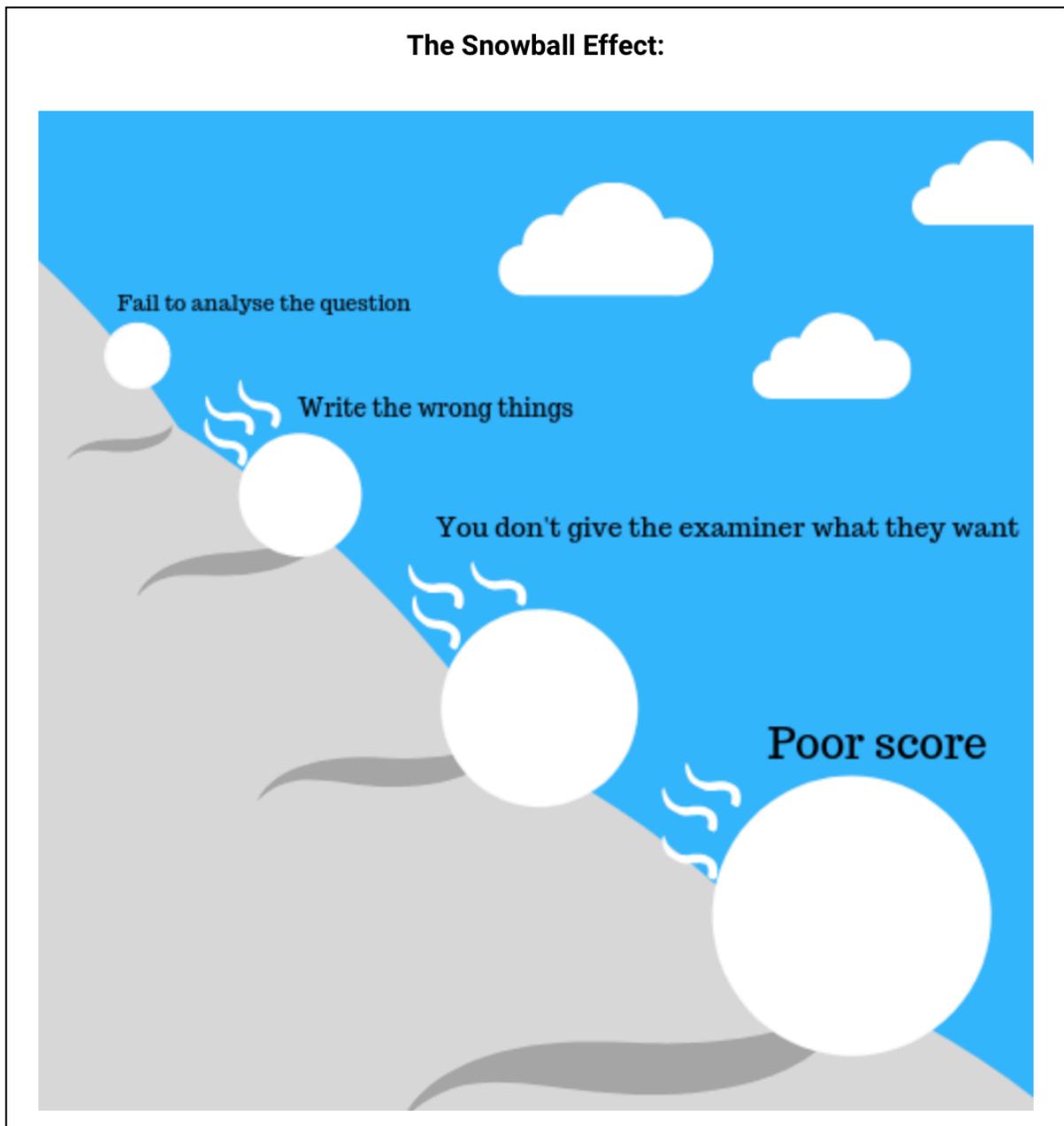
You fail to analyse the question...

Therefore, you fail to write a good answer...

Therefore, you fail to give the examiner what they want...

Therefore, you score poorly in Task 2.

This is commonly known as the '**Snowball effect**'.



You need to avoid the snowball effect.

To do this, you first need to understand exactly how to analyse any task 2 question so you can go on to score band 7, 8 or 9. This following information will help you achieve this.



Beware!

Two of the main reasons students fail to score well in task 2 are:

1. They fail to read the question properly!
2. They do not understand what the question is asking!

What information should I know before analysing a task 2 question?

We will start by looking at the minimum requirements to achieve a band 7+ because, after all, this is the minimum we want you to achieve.

The highlighted areas below are directly related to whether you can 'analyse the question' effectively.

Writing Task 2 Band Descriptors:

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fully addresses all parts of the task ▪ presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention ▪ skilfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sufficiently addresses all parts of the task ▪ presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sequences information and ideas logically ▪ manages all aspects of cohesion well ▪ uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings ▪ skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation ▪ produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uses a wide range of structures ▪ the majority of sentences are error-free ▪ makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ addresses all parts of the task ▪ presents a clear position throughout the response ▪ presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to overgeneralise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout ▪ uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use ▪ presents a clear central topic within each paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision ▪ uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation ▪ may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ uses a variety of complex structures ▪ produces frequent error-free sentences ▪ has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors

These band descriptors state that to score band 7+ you MUST:

1. Address all parts of the task

(answer **all** of the question)

2. Present a clear position throughout the task

(give a well-structured answer and give your personal opinion where asked)

3. Logically organise the information

(understand the question and relate your answer to this, with clear progression)

4. Present a clear central topic in each paragraph

(each paragraph must relate to the question in a specific way)

In order to do these 4 things, you have to be able to analyse the question effectively. If you don't, you simply cannot do these things and therefore you will score a MAXIMUM of band 5!

So, that's the background information. Now let's get stuck into how you analyse the question.

Remember, there are 5 different question types, so we have broken the information down specifically for each one.

Question Analysis

Question Type 1: Agree or disagree

Example question:

Some scientists believe that humans are responsible for global warming, which will cause sea levels to rise by over 50cm in the next 100 years. They believe this will cause catastrophic damage to millions of lives and result in many deaths each year.

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

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

Write 250 words

So, how would you go about analysing this so you know what to write? There are 3 steps to success.

Here's the 3 steps for analysing this type of question:

Step 1: Identify the key words

Key words are **uncommon words**, which you will not necessarily hear in everyday language. They may also be numbers or words with capital letters (for example a name or capital city etc.). You can highlight or underline these on the exam paper. These will always be found in the main paragraph (above the instructions).

Some scientists believe that **humans are responsible for global warming**, which will cause **sea levels** to rise by **over 50cm** in the **next 100 years**. They believe this will cause **catastrophic damage** to **millions of lives** and result in many **deaths each year**.

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

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

Write 250 words

The idea behind identifying the key words is to know the **exact details** of the question. In other words, you understand exactly what is being said, by who and any other specific details. These are what you will base your answer on and these are what you write about.

You should not write about anything else, other than the details of the question.

The significance of these key words:

- 'Some scientists' (**Some**, not all, **scientists**, not teachers, not doctors)
- 'Humans are responsible for global warming' (**Humans**, not trees or dogs)
- 'Sea levels to rise by over 50cm in the next 100 years' (**over 50cm**, not over 10cm, **next 100 years**, not the next 50 years)
- 'Cause catastrophic damage' (**lots of damage**, not a small amount)
- 'Millions of lives' (**millions**, not thousands)
- 'Many deaths each year' (**many**, not a few. **Deaths**, not illness, **each year**, not every month)

Hopefully this highlights the SPECIFIC details. The reason why we are being so particular on this point is that so many students write off-topic and this is what causes a low band score.

Again, have a look at the band descriptors above to see how important it is to be specific and answer the question properly. If you start talking about teachers, when you should be talking about scientists, you will fail. Be specific!

Step 2: Identify the main task.

This could be a question or a direct order and is usually found immediately after the content/key word paragraph.

Some scientists believe that humans are responsible for global warming, which will cause sea levels to rise by over 50cm in the next 100 years. They believe this will cause catastrophic damage to ~~millions of lives and result in many deaths~~ each year.

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

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

Write 250 words

In this example the main task is the question: 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement?', but it could also be written something like 'What is your opinion about this statement?' or 'Do you agree or disagree?'.
These are all asking for YOUR opinion. So make sure you write about YOUR opinion in the Introduction and Conclusion paragraphs.

These are all asking for YOUR opinion. So make sure you write about YOUR opinion in the Introduction and Conclusion paragraphs.

Furthermore, it is this part of the question which forms the basis of paragraph 2 and 3 (the main paragraphs).

The best way to write your answer is by giving 1 reason why you agree or disagree with the statement in **paragraph 2**, then another different reason why you agree/disagree in **paragraph 3**.

Here's what we mean:

How the main task of this AGREE OR DISAGREE question fits into the framework:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction (***Include your opinion**)

Paragraph 2 - One reason you agree/disagree with justification & examples

Paragraph 3 - Another reason you agree/disagree with justification & examples

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion (***Include your opinion**)

Step 3: Read the instructions CAREFULLY.

Instructions actually tell you what to do, so you need to read them carefully!

The instructions are found under the main paragraph and will tell you what to do!

You must answer these specifically. **Do not write about anything else. Just write exactly what the instructions tell you to write!**

Again, you can highlight or underline these on the question paper.

Some scientists believe that humans are responsible for global warming, which will cause sea levels to rise by over 50cm in the next 100 years. They believe this will cause catastrophic damage to millions of lives and result in many deaths each year.

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

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

Write 250 words

If we look at the instructions in the example above, we can see that there is more than 1 instruction. In fact, there are 3 instructions. They are:

**1. Give reasons for your answers
(JUSTIFY YOUR REASONS)**

**2. Include any relevant examples from
your own knowledge or experience
(GIVE EXAMPLES)**

3. Write (at least) 250 words



** You should do this in
paragraph 2 & paragraph 3.*

*See the '**Band 7+ task 2 framework**' section for
more information*

So now you have all the information you need to write the answer. You know the specific details to write about, you know the main task of the question and you know what the examiner wants you to do (the instructions).



Tip!

In the task 2 question, if it says 'Write 250 words', make sure you write AT LEAST 250 words. Not 250 words exactly.

I know this is a lot of information to take in, but I promise that if you practice doing this, it will become much easier.

Let's move on and discuss how you analyse the next type of question.

Question Type 2: Advantages & disadvantages

Example question:

Many countries are investing significant amounts of money into developing driverless cars.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of driverless cars?

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

Write 250 words

Here's the 3 steps for analysing this type of question:

Step 1: Identify the key words.

Many countries are investing **significant amounts of money** into **developing driverless cars**.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of driverless cars?

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

Write 250 words

The significance of these key words:

- 'Many countries' (**Lots of them**, not just one. **Countries**, not cities or towns).
- 'Significant amounts of money' (**Lots of money**, not a little bit of money).
- 'Developing driverless cars' (**Driverless cars**, not all cars).

Step 2: Identify the main task.

Many countries are investing significant amounts of money into developing driverless cars.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of driverless cars?

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

Write 250 words

For this question type, there are 2 clear parts to it:

1. The **advantages** of driverless cars
2. The **disadvantages** of driverless cars.

These should form paragraph 2 and paragraph 3, respectively.

Here's how we suggest these fit into the framework:

How the main task of this ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES question fits into the framework:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

Paragraph 2 - The advantages of driverless cars with justification & examples

Paragraph 3 - The disadvantages of driverless cars with justification & examples

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

Step 3: Read the instructions CAREFULLY.

Many countries are investing significant amounts of money into developing driverless cars.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of driverless cars?

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

Write 250 words

The instructions for this question are the same as the one above:

**1. Give reasons for your answers
(JUSTIFY YOUR REASONS)**

**2. Include any relevant examples from
your own knowledge or experience
(GIVE EXAMPLES)**

3. Write (at least) 250 words



** You should do this in
paragraph 2 & paragraph 3.*

*See the 'Band 7+ task 2 framework' section for
more information*

Question Type 3: Discussion

Example question:

Some countries treat their tap water with Fluoride; a chemical which helps prevent tooth decay. Some people believe this is 'mass medication' and doesn't give people the choice, whereas other people believe this is a positive thing as it helps prevent against tooth decay in the population.

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

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

Write 250 words

Here's the 3 steps for analysing this type of question:

Step 1: Identify the key words.

Some countries treat their tap water with Fluoride; a chemical which helps prevent tooth decay. Some people believe this is 'mass medication' and doesn't give people the choice, whereas other people believe this is a positive thing as it helps prevent tooth decay in the population.

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

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

Write 250 words

Here's a breakdown of these key words:

- 'Some countries treat their tap water' (**some countries**, not all. **Tap water**, not bottled water).
- 'Fluoride' (**a specific chemical**, nothing else)

- 'Prevent tooth decay' (**prevents tooth decay**, not any other benefit)
- 'Some people believe' (**some people**, not all)
- 'Mass medication' (Fluoride in tap water given to **everyone**, not a few people)
- 'Doesn't give people the choice' (**people must have Fluoride in tap water**)
- 'Other people believe' (**different people**, not the same)
- 'Population' (**The people who live there**, not people who live in a different place)

Step 2: Identify the main task

Some countries treat their tap water with Fluoride; a chemical which helps prevent tooth decay. Some people believe this is 'mass medication' and doesn't give people the choice, whereas other people believe this is a positive thing as it helps prevent against tooth decay in the population.

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

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

Write 250 words

For the '**discussion**' question, you should write about both arguments.

Paragraph 2 should form the basis of ONE argument and paragraph 3 should form the basis of the OTHER argument.

In the question above, one argument is that Fluoride in tap water is a bad thing (people do not have a choice of whether they want Fluoride in their water - this can be termed 'mass medication') and the other argument is that Fluoride in tap water is beneficial (it helps to prevent tooth holes/decay to people in the population).

** Remember, you must also include your own opinion because the question asks you to **give your own opinion**. **

Here's how these points will fit into the framework:

How the main task of this DISCUSSION question fits into the framework:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction (***Include your opinion**)

Paragraph 2 - Discuss the argument FOR Fluoride in tap water with justification & examples

Paragraph 3 - Discuss the argument AGAINST Fluoride in tap water with justification & examples

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion (***Include your opinion**)

Step 3: Read the instructions **CAREFULLY**.

Some countries treat their tap water with Fluoride; a chemical which helps prevent tooth decay. Some people believe this is 'mass medication' and doesn't give people the choice, whereas other people believe this is a positive thing as it helps prevent against tooth decay in the population.

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

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

Write 250 words

You guessed it! The instructions are the same as the other types of question:

**1. Give reasons for your answers
(JUSTIFY YOUR REASONS)**

**2. Include any relevant examples from
your own knowledge or experience
(GIVE EXAMPLES)**

3. Write (at least) 250 words



** You should do this in
paragraph 2 & paragraph 3.*

*See the '**Band 7+ task 2 framework**' section for
more information*

Question Type 4: Problems & Solutions

Example question:

School class sizes are increasing at a faster rate than ever before. It is common to have at least 35 students in each class in many Western countries.

What are some problems with large class sizes and what are some solutions?

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

Write 250 words

Here's how to analyse this type of question:

Step 1: Identify the key words.

School class sizes are increasing at a faster rate than ever before. It is common to have at least 35 students in each class in many Western countries.

What are some problems with large class sizes and what are some solutions?

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

Write 250 words

Here's a breakdown of these key words:

- 'School class sizes' (**the class sizes in school**, not college or university)
- 'Increasing' (**getting bigger**, not smaller)
- 'Faster rate than ever before' (**the most it has ever been**, not the slowest)
- 'Common' (**frequent/usual**, not occasional/rare)

- 'At least 35 students in each class' (**minimum 35 students per class**, not a maximum)
- 'Many Western countries' (**Many**, not a few. **Western countries**, not every country)

Step 2: Identify the main task

School class sizes are increasing at a faster rate than ever before. It is common to have at least 35 students in each class in many Western countries.

What are some problems with large class sizes and what are some solutions?

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

Write 250 words

For problems & solutions questions, there are 2 clear main tasks; '**Problems**' & '**Solutions**'.

These are the 2 main things to include in paragraph 2 and paragraph 3.

In this particular question, the problems and solutions are related to large class sizes. So in **paragraph 2**, you should discuss the **PROBLEMS** with large class sizes and in **paragraph 3** you should discuss some **SOLUTIONS** to the problems.

As always, you should **JUSTIFY** your statement and give **EXAMPLES** where appropriate.

This is an overview of the framework for this question:

How the main task of this PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS question fits into the framework:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

Paragraph 2 - Discuss some PROBLEMS with large class sizes with justification & examples

Paragraph 3 - Discuss some SOLUTIONS to the problems with justification & examples

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

Step 3: Read the instructions CAREFULLY.

School class sizes are increasing at a faster rate than ever before. It is common to have at least 35 students in each class in many Western countries.

What are some ~~problems with large class sizes~~ and what are some ~~solutions~~?

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

Write 250 words

The instructions are the same for all task 2 questions:

1. Give reasons for your answers (JUSTIFY YOUR REASONS)

2. Include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience (GIVE EXAMPLES)

3. Write (at least) 250 words



** You should do this in paragraph 2 & paragraph 3.*

See the 'Band 7+ task 2 framework' section for more information

Question Type 5: Two-Part Questions

Example question:

People tend to have children later in life nowadays because they dedicate more time to developing their career instead.

What are the implications of having children later in life?

What are the benefits of dedicating more time to a career?

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

Write 250 words

Here's how to analyse this type of question:

Step 1: Identify the key words.

People tend to have **children later in life nowadays** because they **dedicate more time to developing their career instead**.

What are the implications of having children later in life?

What are the benefits of dedicating more time to a career?

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

Write 250 words

Here's a breakdown of these key words:

- 'People' (**All people in general**, not specific people)
- 'Children' (**children/babies**, not pets)
- 'Later in life nowadays' (**older now than people in the past**)
- 'Dedicate more time to developing their career' (**Time**, not money. **Career**, not family)

Step 2: Identify the main task

People tend to have children later in life nowadays because they dedicate more time to developing their career instead.

What are the implications of having children later in life?

What are the benefits of dedicating more time to a career?

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

Write 250 words

In two-part questions, the main tasks are obvious. It is the 1st question and 2nd question and these will form the basis of paragraph 2 and paragraph 3.

For this specific question, **paragraph 2** should be based around the implications of having children later in life (at an older age than 'normal').

Paragraph 3 should be based around the benefits of dedicating more time to a career (as opposed to having children at a 'normal' age).

Here is the framework overview for this specific question:

How the main task of this TWO-PART QUESTION fits into the framework:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

Paragraph 2 - Discuss some IMPLICATIONS of having children later in life, including justification & examples

Paragraph 3 - Discuss some BENEFITS of dedicating more time to a career, with justification & examples

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

* Note - Paragraphs 2 & 3 in the framework above is specific to this example.

Depending on the 2 questions you get asked in the real exam, you will have to adapt the framework accordingly.

Step 3: Read the instructions CAREFULLY.

People tend to have children later in life nowadays because they dedicate more time to developing their career instead.

What are the implications of having children later in life?

What are the benefits of dedicating more time to a career?

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

Write 250 words

Again, these are the same instructions as the other task 2 questions we have discussed.

**1. Give reasons for your answers
(JUSTIFY YOUR REASONS)**

**2. Include any relevant examples from
your own knowledge or experience
(GIVE EXAMPLES)**

3. Write (at least) 250 words



** You should do this in
paragraph 2 & paragraph 3.*

*See the '**Band 7+ task 2 framework**' section for
more information*

So, this is how you should analyse each type of essay question. It may seem complex at first sight, but in reality it is a very simple process which only involves 3 steps.

The most important things to remember are:

1. Identify & understand the key words

Only write about these details. KEEP IT RELEVANT!

2. Identify the main task

This is what you will be writing about. There should be two parts to it, and these will form the basis of paragraph 2 & paragraph 3.

3. Follow every instruction

The instructions for all types of question will generally be the same, but your answers will be different.

If it helps, you can underline/circle/highlight these details on the actual question paper in the exam so you can quickly refer back to them during the task to make sure you are keeping your answer relevant.

You will be given a separate answer paper and the examiner will ONLY see your answer paper.



Tip!

You can find dozens of band 7+ model answers which have been written using these exact methods in our Academic Writing Practice Questions book.

IELTS Excellence Task 2

Planning Strategy

Now you know how to analyse each type of task 2 question, and how the information fits into the Task 2 Framework, we will discuss the best way to plan your essay.

In the [IELTS Excellence Writing Task 1 Study Book](#), we discussed how to write an effective plan for a Task 1 question. We strongly advise writing a plan for a Task 2 question to help you achieve a band 7, 8 or 9.

The Task 2 plan is different to Task 1, but the concept remains the same.

The 3 major questions to ask when writing your plan are:

- 1. What information do I have to start with?***
- 2. What do I need to give the best answer?***
- 3. How am I going to write my answer (the correct information and methods)?***

As before, you MUST understand the task 2 framework, so you know exactly where your plan will fit into your answer correctly. Make sure you take another look at the framework if you cannot remember it.

Where do you write the plan?

You should write your plan directly onto the actual **question** paper. Do not write it on your **answer** paper.

When the test is finished, the examiner will only see your answer sheet. The question sheet will be taken away and destroyed.

Let's look at an example of how the planning strategy works, using the following Task 2 question:

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

School class sizes are increasing at a faster rate than ever before. It is common to have at least 35 students in each class in many Western countries.

What are some problems with large class sizes and what are some solutions?

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

Write at least 250 words

Our 3-step Essay Writing Plan:

Step 1: Underline or highlight the key words

This technique is discussed in the 'How To Analyse Any Task 2 Question' section. By highlighting these words, it is easier to know which words to paraphrase in the introduction.

Here's an example:

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

School class sizes are increasing at a faster rate than ever before. It is common to have at least 35 students in each class in many Western countries.

What are some problems with large class sizes and what are some solutions?

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

Write at least 250 words

Step 2: Identify the 2 parts of the main task

The main task is usually found under the context/key words part of the question.

This sentence has 2 parts to it (as described in the '**How To Analyse Any Task 2 Question**' section).

For this example, you can see that the 2 parts are 1. '**SOME PROBLEMS with LARGE CLASS SIZES**' and 2. '**SOME SOLUTIONS for LARGE CLASS SIZES**', so these should form the basis of paragraph 2 (P2) and paragraph 3 (P3).

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

School class sizes are increasing at a faster rate than ever before. It is common to have at least 35 students in each class in many Western countries.

What are **some problems** with **large class sizes** and what are **some solutions?**

P2

Topic

P3

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

Write at least 250 words

Step 3: Read the instructions THEN make your plan

In this question, the instructions are:

- 'give reasons for your answers' (**justification**)
- 'include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience' (**examples**)
- 'write at least 250 words'.

Here is a reminder of the framework specific to a **PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS** question (taken from the 'How To Analyse Any Task 2 Question' section):

Framework for this **PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS** question:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction - paraphrase the question & write the aim of the essay

Paragraph 2 - Discuss some **PROBLEMS with large class sizes with justification & examples**

Paragraph 3 - Discuss some **SOLUTIONS to the problems with justification & examples**

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

Your plan should be based around this framework. A good plan, with practice, should take no longer than **3-5 minutes**.

However, it is SO important that you practice writing an essay plan, because you will only be able to do it well if you actually **PRACTICE** writing them!



Remember!

The **INTRODUCTION** should always contain a sentence which **PARAPHRASES** the key details in the question and a sentence stating the **AIM** of the essay.

This is an example of what your plan should look like. You will notice that it follows the framework above.

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

School class sizes are increasing at a faster rate than ever before. It is common to have at least 35 students in each class in many Western countries.

What are some problems with large class sizes and what are some solutions?

P2 ↑

Topic ↑

P3 ↑

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

Write at least 250 words

- Intro
- P1 1) 'Students per class', 'Developed countries', Highest level ever, Minimum of 35 students per class.
 2) Aim of this essay:
- P2) Some problems
- 1) More disruption
 - toilet breaks
 - noise
 - late
 - 2) less time with teacher
 - less 1-on-1 support
 - teachers stressed
 - unhappy teacher
- + Eg.s
- P3) Some solutions
- 1) More teachers/support staff - more 1-on-1 time
 - 2) More schools - smaller class sizes
 - 3) More funding - more schools/teachers
- + Eg.s
- P4) Conclusion 'In conclusion...'

So, how will this plan actually help you write the essay?

Here is a model answer using the plan above. Notice the essay framework and how the essay is structured?

The number of school students per class in developed countries is currently at its highest level ever, with a minimum of 35 people on average. The aim of this essay is to discuss some problems with large class sizes and potential solutions to these issues.

Firstly, a significant problem with large class sizes is the greater amount of disruption caused by a higher number of students. Inevitably, numerous students will result in more noise in the classroom and a higher proportion of interruptions and toilet breaks. Another problem is that there is less one-on-one support from the teacher because they do not have enough time to speak to each student individually. These problems will lead to poor concentration, low-quality teaching and therefore unsatisfactory examination results. For example, studies have shown a link between increased class sizes and lower grades in assessments.

Potential solutions to these issues include an increase in funding from governments, which could lead to more teachers or support staff being employed or even more schools in general. By increasing the number of schools and teachers, there would be less students per class. This would reduce the amount of disruption in classrooms, whilst increasing the time teachers are able to spend with each student. My experience tells me that the schools which perform the best are the ones which receive the most funding.

In conclusion, large class sizes are detrimental to education because there are more interruptions and a lower quality teaching environment. However, this can be rectified by increasing investment into the education system.

Word count: 260

Can you see how **ALL** parts of the question are answered adequately?

Without a plan and practice, this would be extremely difficult to do in the real exam within the 40 minute time limit. A good plan will actually **SAVE YOU TIME**, because you know exactly what you need to write!

As you can see, the first part of your answer includes paraphrasing the question. So let's discuss the best ways to do this...

The 4 Principles Of Paraphrasing In Paragraph 1

As you can see in the planning section above, you must paraphrase in the 1st paragraph.

Knowing how to paraphrase effectively is vital for Task 2 and it is a skill we strongly recommend you invest study time in to get it right. Those who are confident in paraphrasing will achieve higher band scores overall on the IELTS exam.

Why is paraphrasing so important?

The **first sentence** in the **introduction paragraph** of your essay must paraphrase the task 2 question, so it is really important that you have the ability to rewrite the question without simply repeating the same words.

By paraphrasing the question, you are showing the examiner that you understand the question and that your range of vocabulary is good enough that you don't have to copy the question word-for-word.

What is paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing is rewriting a piece of text in a different way, including changing the words by using synonyms and changing the order of the text. It is a difficult skill to master because you need to ensure that the changes you make are still in context and make sense.

Do I need to paraphrase every word?

No, not all of them.

Some synonyms do not translate literally and can have different meanings depending on the context.

By trying to change every word you are more likely to make mistakes and your sentences may not make sense. You need to decide which words you are

comfortable with changing and leave the words you may not be as confident about or cannot think of an alternative for. There are other ways to paraphrase without using synonyms. We will discuss them below.

How can I paraphrase?

There are 4 most effective ways of paraphrasing and we will go through each of the following in more detail to ensure you feel confident enough to use them. These are:

1. *The use of synonyms*
2. *Changing the form of the word*
3. *Changing the order of the words*
4. *Use numbers and symbols instead of words and vice versa*

Let's look at each technique in more detail...

1. The use of synonyms

Synonyms are a very effective way of paraphrasing. By using similar words, with the same meaning, you will demonstrate to the examiner that you have an extensive range of vocabulary.

We strongly recommend that you use our synonym banks and create short lists of your own (see the '**10 Common Essay Topics You Need To Know**' section about how to create your own lists). You should make great effort to become familiar with these synonyms and learn how to use them in the correct context.



Beware!

Incorrect use of synonyms can have a detrimental impact on your band score and therefore should only be used if you are confident with their use.

Here is an example of how a sentence can be paraphrased by using synonyms.

Original:

'The cost of food shopping has increased significantly since the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU.'

With synonyms:

*'The **price** of **grocery** shopping has **gone up considerably** since the **UK opted** to leave the **European Union**.'*

2. Changing the form of the word

For this technique, you can use the same words as the question but change the word form. This will show the examiner that you have great vocabulary skills and will in turn help you achieve a higher band score.

Examples of changing the form of words include:

increasing – on the increase

imagined – imaginative

decision - decided

Essentially, you are using the same base word, you are just changing it to suit the sentence. For example changing it into its noun form from its verb form.

Here's a working example:

Original:

'Scientists are regularly reporting that they are developing new cures for common illnesses.'

Modified:

*'Scientists regularly **report** that they are **involved** in the **development of** new cures for common illnesses.'*

3. Changing the order of the words

To change the order of the words you will naturally change the sentence structure. This will show the examiner your grammatical range and accuracy, which will help you to achieve a higher band score.

Here's an example:

Original:

'Nowadays, machinery is replacing humans in the workplace, which is having an effect on employment levels.'

Modified:

*'**Employment levels are being affected because humans are becoming replaced by machinery in the workplace.**'*

You can then take this a step further by introducing synonyms to the new sentence to paraphrase further and show your ability:

'The number of people in employment is being impacted because workers are being replaced by machines in their places of work.'

4. Use numbers and symbols instead of words and vice versa

This is a simple but effective way to paraphrase and involves you changing the number or symbol into word form.

Again, it shows the examiner your ability to use a range of vocabulary and understanding of switching between numbers and words.

Here is an example of a sentence written using numbers and symbols, and the same sentence written using words:

Original:

'The population of the world has increased by 20% in the last 10 years.'

Modified:

*'The population of the world has increased by **twenty percent** in the last **ten years**.'*

What effect will paraphrasing have on my band score?

The main skill paraphrasing emphasises to the examiner is your range of vocabulary.

The table below shows the areas paraphrasing addresses within the band score descriptors, and also stresses the importance of accuracy and ensuring you make as few errors as possible to score the higher bands.

THE EFFECT OF PARAPHRASING ON BAND SCORE IN TASK 2			
BAND 5	BAND 6	BAND 7	BAND 8
Limited range of vocabulary	Reasonable range of vocabulary	Good range of vocabulary	Excellent range of vocabulary - fluent/native capabilities
Repetition of words/sentences is common	Occasional repetition of words/sentences	Infrequent or no repetition of words/sentences	No unnecessary repetition of words/sentences
Lack of accurate sentences. Unclear meaning of sentences	Some inaccurate sentences but their meaning is mostly clear	Only a few minor errors in sentences	One or two minor errors in sentences

How can I practice paraphrasing?

There are many opportunities to practice paraphrasing, you don't just need to do it during your allocated IELTS preparation time.

For example, why not take some sentences from an English blog or magazine article and try to paraphrase them on your lunch break? Or while having breakfast? Try and make paraphrasing a habit during your daily routine. If you do this, you will be a paraphrasing guru in no time!

The synonym banks contained within our study guides are a must-have resource when paraphrasing, as you need to make sure you understand the alternative words and ensure they are being used in the correct context.

IELTS Excellence Task 2

Synonym Bank

The use of synonyms in task 2 is required if you wish to score band 7, because it shows you are able to adapt your vocabulary in any given situation.

The writing task 2 band descriptors state a band 7 answer: '*Uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision*'. This means your word choice should be specific to the question you get asked!

Below is a synonym bank you should study for each question type. If you become comfortable using these words, you will be able to use them in the real exam.



Task 2 ESSAY QUESTION Synonym Bank

BASE WORD	SYNONYMS
ADVANTAGES	benefits, positives, merits
DISADVANTAGES	drawbacks, negatives, downsides
PROBLEMS	issues, difficulties, complications
SOLUTIONS	answers, resolutions
AGREE	concur, coincide
DISAGREE	disapprove, fail to agree, differs
OPINION	belief/believe, view, stance
IN CONTRAST	conversely, in contradiction, opposite

Question Type 1: Advantages & Disadvantages

In this type of question, you will be required to write about advantages and disadvantages of a given topic.

Therefore, make sure you learn these synonyms:

Advantages - *benefits, positives, merits*

Examples:

'Some **benefits** include...'

'The **positives** are...'

'Some **merits** include...'

Disadvantages - *drawbacks, negatives, downsides*

Examples:

'Some **drawbacks** include...'

'One **negative** is...'

'The **downsides** are...'

Question Type 2: Problems & Solutions

You will be given some background context and then asked to discuss some problems and potential solutions.

Learn the following synonyms as they will help in this type of question:

Problems - *issues, difficulties, complications*

Examples:

'The **issues** with _____ include...'

'One **difficulty** is...'

'Some of the **complications** are...'

Solutions - *answers, resolutions*

Examples:

'Some **answers** to the problem are...'

'One **resolution** is...'

Question Type 3: Agree or Disagree

In this type of question, you will be required to write about whether you agree or disagree with a dilemma.

Here are some synonyms you could use:

Agree - *concur, coincide*

Examples:

*'I **concur** with the statement.'*

*'My personal opinion on this issue **coincides** with this view.'*

Disagree - *disapprove, fail to agree, differs*

Examples:

*'Personally, I **disapprove** of this view.'*

*'I **fail to agree** with this view.'*

*'My own view **differs** from this opinion.'*

Question Type 4: Discussion

This type of question will require you to discuss differing opinions.

Synonyms we recommend learning are:

Opinion - *belief/believe, view, stance*

Examples:

*'Some people **believe** that the poor are getting poorer.'*

*'The **belief** of some people is that the poor are getting poorer.'*

*'One **view** is that the rich are getting richer.'*

*'Some people take the **stance** that the rich should give to the poor.'*

In contrast - *conversely, in contradiction, opposite*

Examples:

*'Kevin believes that education is the most important part of school. **Conversely**, Alice thinks that making friendships is more important.'*

*'Some people believe that computers should be made standard in all schools. This is **in contradiction** to the view of other people, who think textbooks are a better way of learning.'*

*'The two groups of people have **opposite** views on the current education system.'*

Question Type 5: Two-Part Question

Two-part questions do not follow a typical pattern, so it is not really possible to give you a list of synonyms that you could use.

However, if you learn the synonyms we have provided above, you will meet the band 7 criteria *'Uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision.'*

Just make sure you use them in the right context. Hence, practice is very important.



Remember!

If you are not confident about how a specific word should be used, do not use it! Band 7 scores require minimal errors!

The IELTS Excellence 'Four-Two-Fifty' Word Count Technique

In the sections above, we discussed how to analyse a question, structure your answer into paragraphs, the best way to write an effective plan and paraphrase in your essay.

This section will talk about a special technique you can use to make sure your answer is the correct number of words. One of the most ESSENTIAL parts of your answer that you simply MUST get right is the word count. After all, this is one of the instructions.

In the writing task 2 question, you will be asked to '**Write at least 250 words**'. If you don't, you will score poorly.

So we have developed a fool-proof way for you to make sure you hit the 250 word count minimum. However, it will take practice!

Firstly, we recommend that you print off some IELTS writing answer sheets so you can practice just like in the real exam. Why? Because you need to use the same sized paper that you will be given in the exam.

Head over to <https://ielts-excellence.com/WritingAnswerSheet> to download and print these now.

Why can't you simply count the number of words in the real exam?

Reason 1:

The main reason is **time**. If you sit and count every single word in the real exam after writing your answer, you will run out of time and run the risk of messing the whole answer up.

Imagine this...

You're sitting in the exam after spending over 35 minutes planning and writing your task 2 answer.

*You decide to spend the last 5 minutes counting the number of words and find out that you have actually only written **230 words** (the minimum is 250 words).*

Uh oh!

*Then, ***suddenly*** the exam finishes.*

You don't have ANY time to write more words and you fail to score band 7 because you have not fulfilled all requirements of the question.

Not a good scenario is it? You certainly don't want this to happen in the exam.

Reason 2:

It is easier to prepare **before** the exam if you know how many lines you need in the real exam (we will show you how to decide the number of lines you need to write).

By counting the number of lines you have written, you are able to estimate the number of words in total. It is a much quicker method than counting every single word.

For example, say you have worked out that you need to write **30 full lines** in your answer to meet the minimum 250 words count (we show you how to do this below). But in the real exam, by the end of paragraph 3, you have only written **22 lines**. You know that paragraph 4 should contain at least **8 lines** (to make sure the whole answer is at least **30 lines**).

Alternatively, you could write some more lines in the other paragraphs before starting paragraph 4.

On the next few pages, we will show you an example task 2 question followed by 2 essays written by 2 different students. The essay answers are exactly the same, with the same word count. However, there is a difference in the total number of lines, even though the answers are identical.

Task 2 Question:

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

The current world population is over 7 billion and is increasing faster than ever before. This growth is becoming a big problem because of the high demand for resources, such as land, food and water.

How much do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Student 1 answer:



IELTS Writing Answer Sheet – TASK 2



Candidate Name

Centre Number

Candidate Number

Module (shade one box):

Academic

General Training

Test date

D D

M M

Y Y Y Y

TASK 2

With the population of the world growing at a staggering rate, the pressure for the provision of housing and amenities is higher now than it ever has been. In my opinion, I strongly agree that the increasing growth of the world population, which currently stands at over 7 billion, is a serious cause for concern.

Firstly, I believe that ~~the~~ population growth is putting a strain on communities, with people struggling to obtain affordable housing, employment and school places for their children. The government has not budgeted for this inevitable population growth, and therefore does not have the funds to improve the situation. In order to address this ever-worsening situation, the government needs to formulate a long term plan to ensure that their solutions

Do not write below this line

are sustainable even when the population growth increases further. We cannot rely on the ratio of births and deaths being similar anymore because people are living longer nowadays and we need to ensure we are making provisions for this fact.

On the other hand, once the issue has been raised, the government should take action and allocate funds to resolving the problem. This could be in the form of building more houses and amenities, which in turn would create jobs and opportunities for the community. Although this may not be an immediate resolution, it will have a positive effect on the economy in the long term.

In conclusion, I believe that the rate of population growth is increasing faster than the solutions that can be put in place. However, once these solutions have been put in place, such as more housing, schools and amenities, it will lead to a growth in the economy.

Do not write below this line

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Candidate Number:	<input type="text"/>	TR	<input type="text"/>	CC	<input type="text"/>	LR	<input type="text"/>	GRA	<input type="text"/>	
Examiner 2 Number:	<input type="text"/>	Underlength	<input type="text"/>	No. of words	<input type="text"/>	Penalty	<input type="text"/>	Off-topic	Memorised	Illegible
Candidate Number:	<input type="text"/>	TR	<input type="text"/>	CC	<input type="text"/>	LR	<input type="text"/>	GRA	<input type="text"/>	
Examiner 1 Number:	<input type="text"/>	Underlength	<input type="text"/>	No. of words	<input type="text"/>	Penalty	<input type="text"/>	Off-topic	Memorised	Illegible

Student 2 answer:



IELTS Writing Answer Sheet – TASK 2



Candidate Name

Centre Number

Candidate Number

Module (shade one box): Academic General Training

Test date

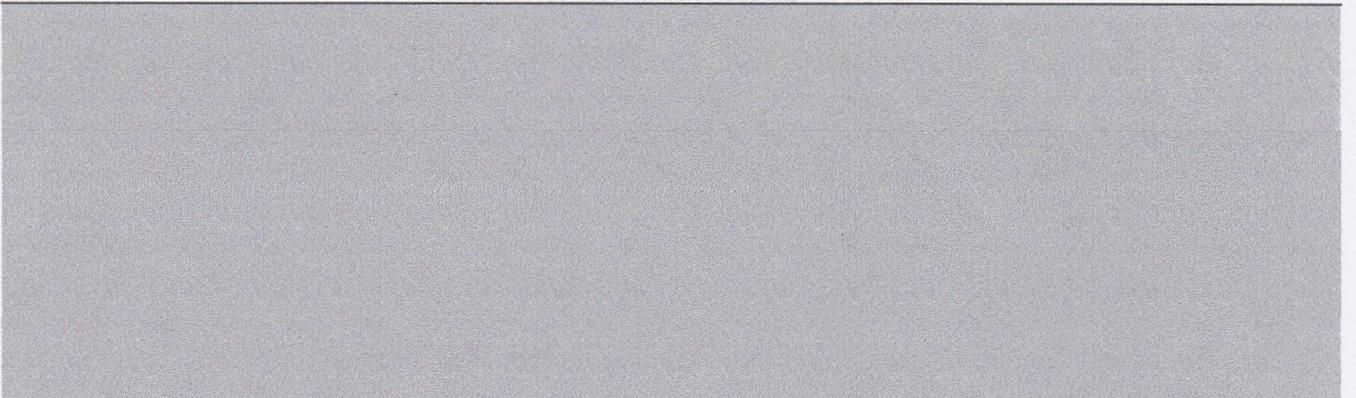
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TASK 2

With the population of the world growing at a staggering rate, the pressure for the provision of housing and amenities is higher now than it ever has been. In my opinion, I strongly agree that the increasing growth of the world population, which currently stands at over 7 billion, is a serious cause for concern.

Firstly, I believe that population growth is putting a strain on communities, with people struggling to obtain affordable housing, employment and school places for their children. The government has not budgeted for this inevitable population growth, and therefore does not have the funds to improve the situation. In order to address this ever-worsening situation, the government needs to formulate a long term plan to ensure that their solutions are sustainable even when the population growth increases further. We cannot rely on the ratio of births and deaths being similar anymore because people are living longer nowadays and we

Do not write below this line



need to ensure we are making provisions for this fact.

On the other hand, once the issue has been raised, the government should take action and allocate funds to resolving the problem. This could be in the form of building more houses and amenities, which in turn would create jobs and opportunities for the community. Although this may not be an immediate resolution, it will have a positive effect on the economy in the long term.

In conclusion, I believe that the rate of population growth is increasing faster than the solutions that can be put in place. However, once these solutions have been put in place, such as housing, schools and amenities, it will lead to a growth in the economy.

Do not write below this line

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Candidate Number:

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TR		CC		LR		GRA	
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Examiner 2 Number:

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Underlength	No. of words	Penalty

Off-topic	Memorised	Illegible

Candidate Number:

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TR		CC		LR		GRA	
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Examiner 1 Number:

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Underlength	No. of words	Penalty

Off-topic	Memorised	Illegible

Let's look at how we find out the total number of lines for each student.

Student 1 example:

In the above examples, if you count the number of words for each **FULL LINE**, student 1 writes between **8-10 words** per line **on average**, though some lines contain 7 words and 11 words.

This student should take the **LOWEST AVERAGE** number per line (**8 words**) when working out how many lines they need to write.

Next, the total number of words required in the answer (**250 words**) is divided by the lowest average number of words per line for student 1 (**8 words**).

In this case:

$$250 \div 8 = \underline{31.25}$$

We advise always rounding-up the number to the next whole number. In this case this would be **32**.

So student 1 needs to write **32 full lines** to ensure they write at least 250 words in the answer.

Student 2 example:

Let's look at the calculations for the 2nd student:

If we count the number of words per line in the 2nd student's answer, we can see that most **full lines** contain between 11-13 words **on average**. There are a few which contain 9 or 10 words, but these are infrequent.

So, student 2 should take the lowest common number (**11 words**) for the calculation.

Words per average line: 11

Words needed in the answer: 250

$$250 \div 11 = \underline{22.7}$$

Remember, after rounding up to the nearest whole number, the student knows they need to write **23 full lines** in task 2.

Can you see the difference between student 1 and student 2?

Student 1 has to write **32 full lines**, whereas student 2 has to write **23 full lines**. The difference is purely down to the style and size of handwriting.

This means that if student 1 writes less than 32 full lines in the answer, they will probably not write above 250 words overall. Not good.

Yes, you could argue that student 1 could simply count the number of words they have written, instead of the lines, but this would take too much time. It is much easier to count 32 lines than 250 words.

Now it's your turn!

Here we will show you the exact steps required to work out how many lines you need to write in task 2...

Make sure you have a calculator ready because this part requires a bit of maths!

The number of lines you need to write in task 2 depends on how many words, on average, you write per line when handwriting.

****** STOP ******

****** THIS BIT IS VERY IMPORTANT! ******

You must use the exact same size paper as the real exam when you do this, otherwise this will differ in the actual exam.

Use the link below for official IELTS writing answer sheet. **You must print this off and use it when you practice! PRINT IT OFF NOW.**

Go to www.ielts-excellence.com/WritingAnswerSheet now to access the official IELTS answer sheet.

Have you printed it off?

OK, we can continue...

Now you have printed off the official IELTS writing answer sheet, you need to write the following model answer onto the answer sheet in your own handwriting.

**WRITE THIS MODEL ANSWER ONTO THE OFFICIAL IELTS
ANSWER PAPER YOU HAVE PRINTED.
IT MUST BE HANDWRITTEN!**



With the population of the world growing at a staggering rate, the pressure for the provision of housing and amenities is higher now than it ever has been. In my opinion, I strongly agree that the increasing growth of the world population, which currently stands at over 7 billion, is a serious cause for concern.

Firstly, I believe that population growth is putting a strain on communities, with people struggling to obtain affordable housing, employment and school places for their children. The government has not budgeted for this inevitable population growth, and therefore does not have the funds to improve the situation. In order to address this ever-worsening situation, the government needs to formulate a long term plan to ensure that their solutions are sustainable even when the population growth increases further. We cannot rely on the ratio of births and deaths being similar anymore because people are living longer nowadays and we need to ensure we are making provisions for this fact.

On the other hand, once the issue has been raised, the government should take action and allocate funds to resolving the problem. This could be in the form of building more houses and amenities, which in turn would create jobs and opportunities for the community. Although this may not be an immediate resolution, it will have a positive effect on the economy in the long term.

In conclusion, I believe that the rate of population growth is increasing faster than the solutions that can be put in place. However, once these solutions have been put in place, such as more housing, schools and amenities, it will lead to a growth in the economy.

This answer contains 277 words, to give an additional 'safety net' (remember you need to write at least 250 words). You are always better off writing slightly more than you need, so we have used this model answer for this reason.

Once you have written the model answer onto the official IELTS answer sheet, you need to work out your **personal number** of lines using the following steps:

Step 1 - Count how many words you have written on each line

Step 2 - Identify the **lowest common number** of words you wrote per line (the lowest, most common number)

Step 3 - Divide '250' by the **lowest common number** from Step 3

Step 4 - 'Round-up' the calculated number to the nearest whole number - this is how many lines you need to write in task 2.

So now you have your own personal number!

What next?

Read on to find out how to use it when writing in the real exam...

Using The 'Four-Two-Fifty' Technique In Your Answer

Now you know how many lines you need to write in task 2, you can keep a running-check on the line count as you write your real answer in the exam.

We have developed a technique to help you in the exam called the 'Four-Two-Fifty technique'.

Why is it called the 'Four-Two-Fifty technique'?

Because if you want to score at least band 7, you should write **4 paragraphs** and write at least **250 words**.

Refer to our task 2 framework, which discusses the 4-paragraph structure you should use, including an **Introduction, Main Paragraph 1, Main Paragraph 2 and a Conclusion**.

How to use this technique:

The number of lines you write for each of the 4 paragraphs will differ depending on the question, but generally both of the **main detail paragraphs (paragraphs 2 & 3)** will have around **twice as many lines** as the **introduction and conclusion paragraphs (paragraphs 1 & 4)**. This is approximate - it doesn't have to be exact.

Your introduction and conclusion will have about the same number of lines as each other.

Here's an example:

Let's assume you have worked out that you need to write **30 lines**.

You know you will need to write approximately twice as many lines in the **2 main paragraphs** (paragraph 2 and 3) than the introduction and conclusion paragraphs.

So for this example you will need around:

Introduction	5 lines (approx.)
Main Paragraph 1	10 lines (approx.)
Main Paragraph 2	10 lines (approx.)
Conclusion	5 lines (approx.)

= 30 lines in total.

Now, it is very important to understand that this is just **approximate** and the above example may not be the same number for you!

The following points are the most important rules to follow:

RULE 1. Calculate your **own personal line number ACCURATELY**

RULE 2. Write **4 separate paragraphs.**

RULE 3. Try and write **twice** as many lines in **Main Paragraph 1** and **Main Paragraph 2** compared with the **Introduction** and **Conclusion** paragraphs.

*** If these are slightly different, DO NOT WORRY! It is the TOTAL number of lines that really matter!! ***

RULE 4. Your task 2 answer in the real exam must be **AT LEAST** equal to your personal line number that you have worked out.

What are the benefits of the 'Four-Two-Fifty' technique in the exam?

The main benefits are that you are able to work out how many lines you need to write for each paragraph **BEFORE** exam day. You can literally find out how many lines you need to write right now, by following the instructions above.

Additionally, **DURING** the exam, you can keep a tally on the number of lines after you write each paragraph, so you know how many more you have to write in the remaining paragraphs. By keeping a running total, you can ensure you meet the minimum 250 word requirement.

These are HUGE benefits and are sure to give you an advantage over the other students who do not use this technique. Just make sure you practice using it before exam day.

Want to boost your chances in the exam with some IELTS-beating practice questions & band 7+ model answers? [Check out our Practice Question & Model Answer eBooks here!](#)

Now, in the following sections of this book, we will show you how to generally improve the quality of your writing and grammar.

The 9 Writing Band 7+ Noun-Verb Agreement Rules To Help Improve Your Band Score

This section is essential for both task 1 and task 2

What is a noun?

We won't go into extensive detail about what a noun is, and all the different types. That is not the purpose of this book. Understanding the complexities and different definitions of nouns will not gain you better marks in the IELTS. After all, most native English speakers do not fully understand nouns in detail. However, you must recognise what a noun is and the correct way to use them.

In simple terms, a noun is a type of word used to identify something.

For example:

A person (man, woman, doctor, teacher, Peter)

An animal (dog, cat, cow, pig)

A place (UK, garden, house)

An object (table, car, house, orange).

What is a verb?

Put simply, a verb is a type of word used to define an action or a state of being. Verbs form the main part of a sentence and are responsible for the sentence 'making sense'. All sentences should contain a verb, otherwise the reader will not understand what you are trying to say.

There are 2 types of verb; 'action' verbs and 'state of being' verbs. They can be past, present or future tense.

Examples include:

An action (jump, swim, running, playing, looking, thinking, wrote)

A state of being (is, was, were, am, are, will be)

As mentioned above, if a verb is not included in a sentence, the sentence will not make any sense.

Below are examples of sentences with and without verbs, to emphasise this point:

Incorrect: *'They the mountain.'*

Correct: *'They **climbed** the mountain.'*

Incorrect: *'He football all day.'*

Correct: *'He **played** football all day.'*

Incorrect: *'She 30 years old tomorrow.'*

Correct: *'She **is** 30 years old tomorrow.'*

Incorrect: *'I in the shower when you called.'*

Correct: *'I **was** in the shower when you called.'*

The 9 noun-verb agreement rules & how to use them to score Band 7+ in the writing section

Okay, so now you have an idea about what nouns and verbs are, we need to discuss how they work together.

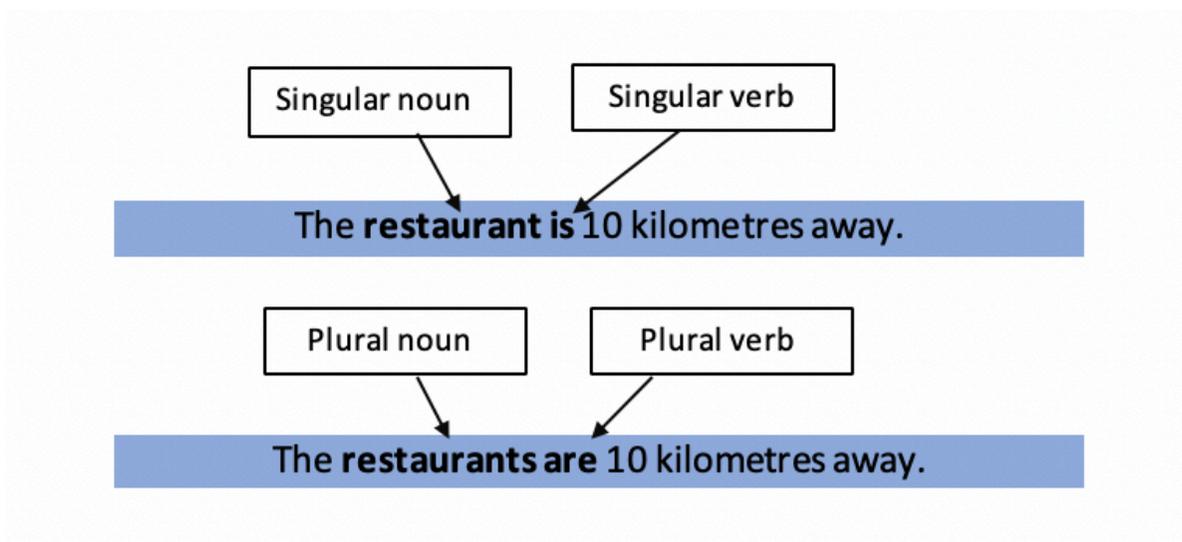
There are certain rules which you must follow when completing the writing tasks so your sentences are grammatically correct. Incorrect use of the noun-verb rules is one of the main ways students fail to score above a band 5 in the writing section...

It can be a little tricky and you may need to read over this part several times, so stay focussed!

Rule 1:

Singular nouns require a singular verb, whereas plural nouns require plural verbs

Example:



Rule 2:

When using a plural, third person (such as 'they') in the present tense, the verb must NEVER finish with an '-s'.

Examples:

Correct:

They **believe** electric cars are beneficial.

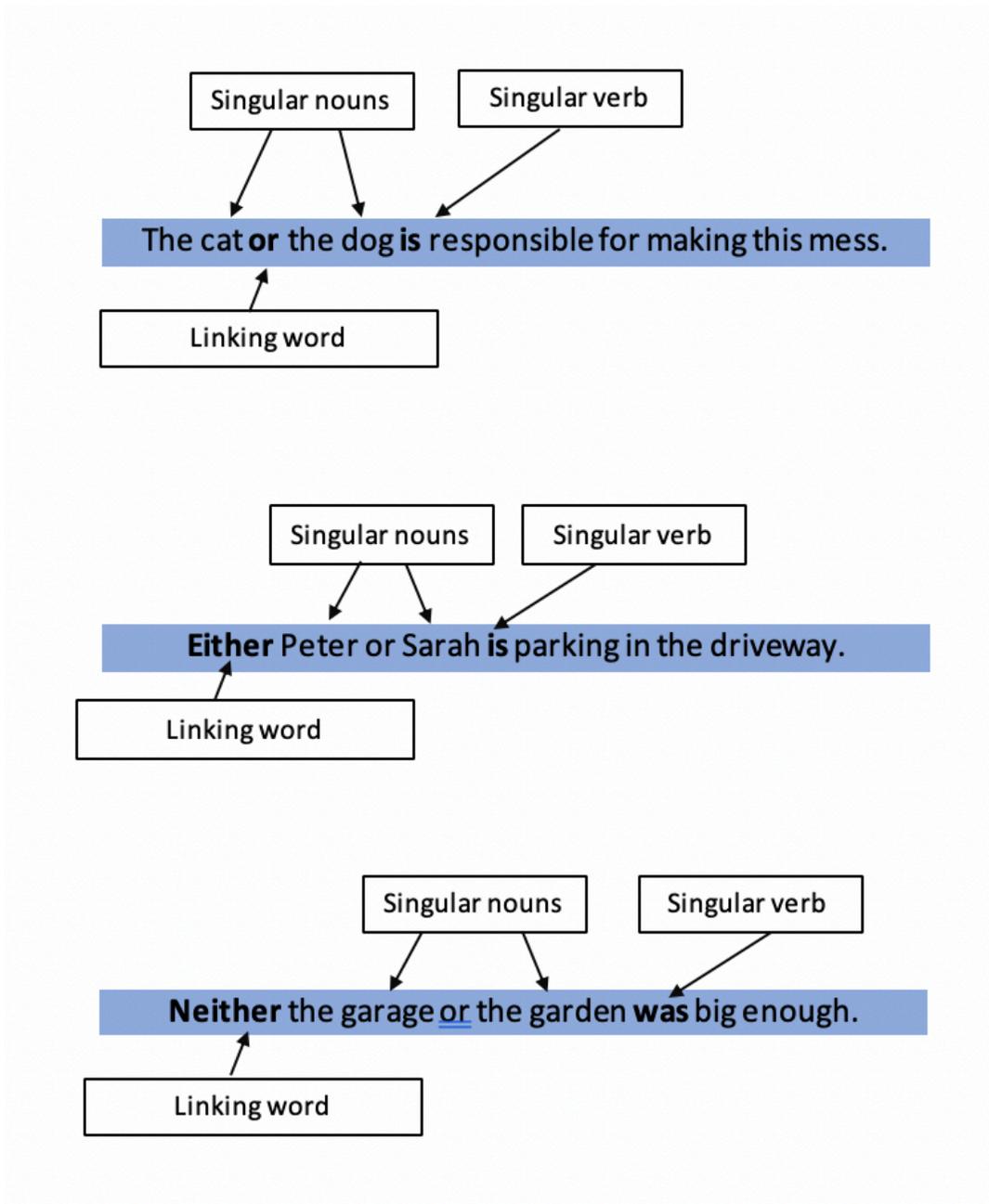
Incorrect:

They believes electric cars are beneficial.

Rule 3:

Two singular nouns need a SINGULAR verb (e.g. 'is', 'was') when linked by '**or**', '**either**' or '**neither**'.

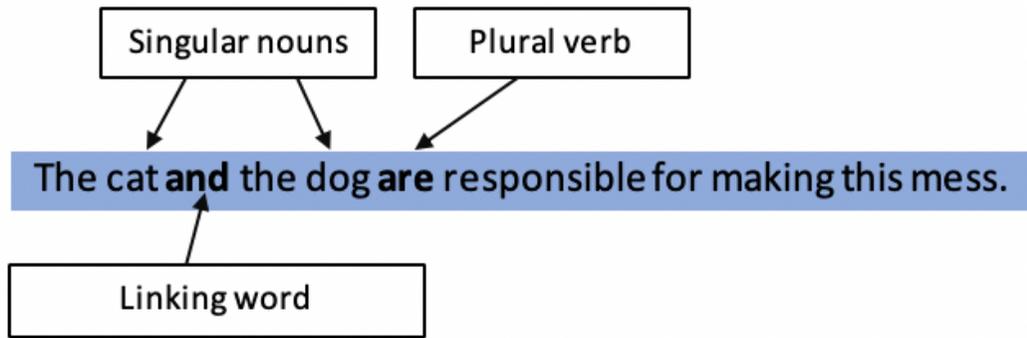
Examples:



Rule 4:

****Opposite to rule 3****

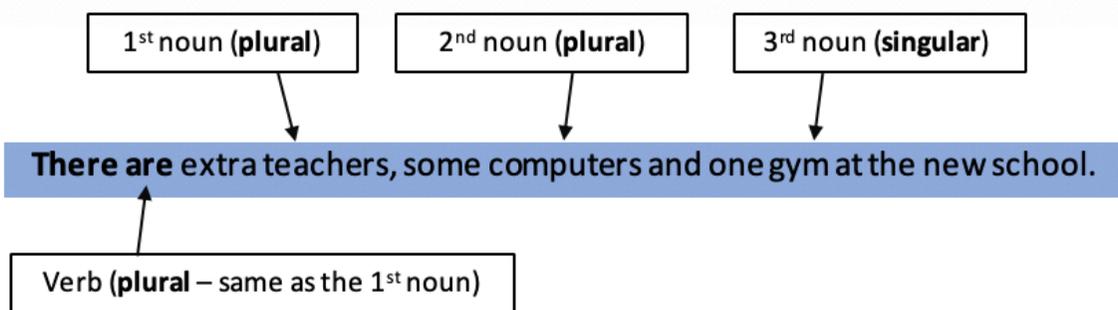
Two singular nouns need a PLURAL verb (e.g. 'are') when linked by '**and**'.



Rule 5:

When using multiple nouns, you must match the verb to the first noun (**singular** or **plural**).

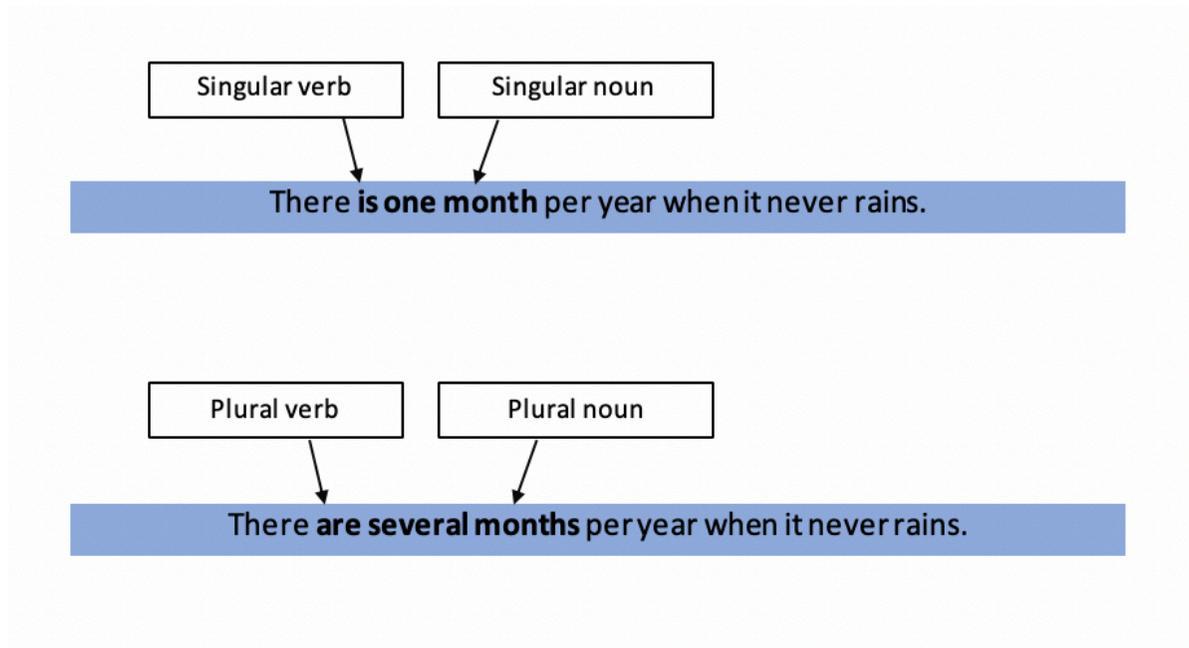
Example:



Rule 6:

When writing ‘there is’ or ‘there are’ in a sentence, you must match the noun to the verb, depending if it is singular (e.g. is, was) or plural (e.g. are, were).

Example:

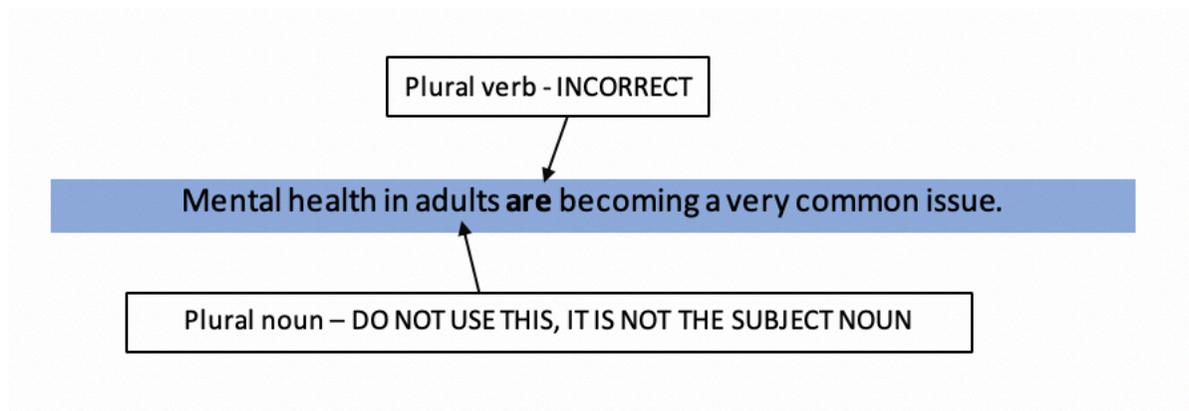


Rule 7:

Make sure you always match the verb to the subject (main focus) of the sentence (and not the last noun) when there is additional information between the subject and verb.

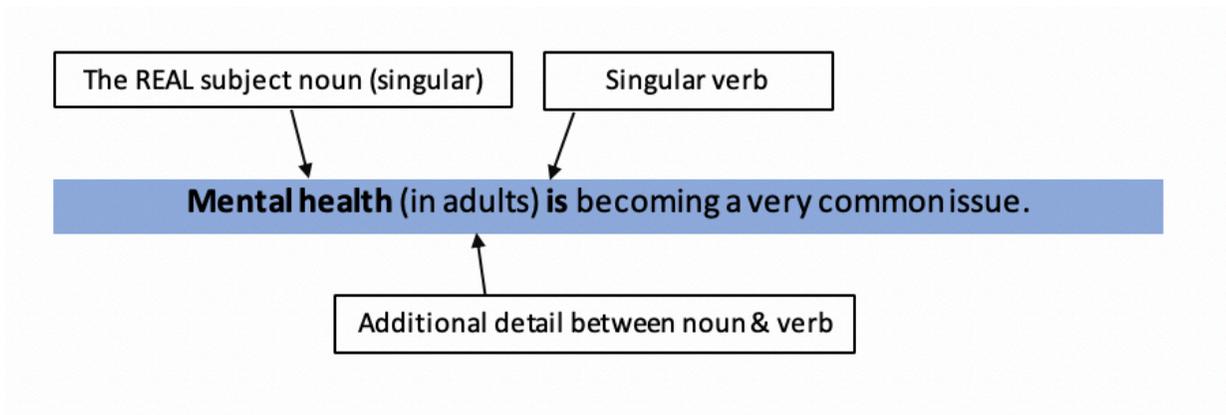
Example:

Incorrect:



This sentence is incorrect because the real SUBJECT of the sentence was not identified properly. The writer has incorrectly chosen to use the plural noun '**adults**' to match the verb '**are**' to (plural). Many students make the same mistake in the IELTS.

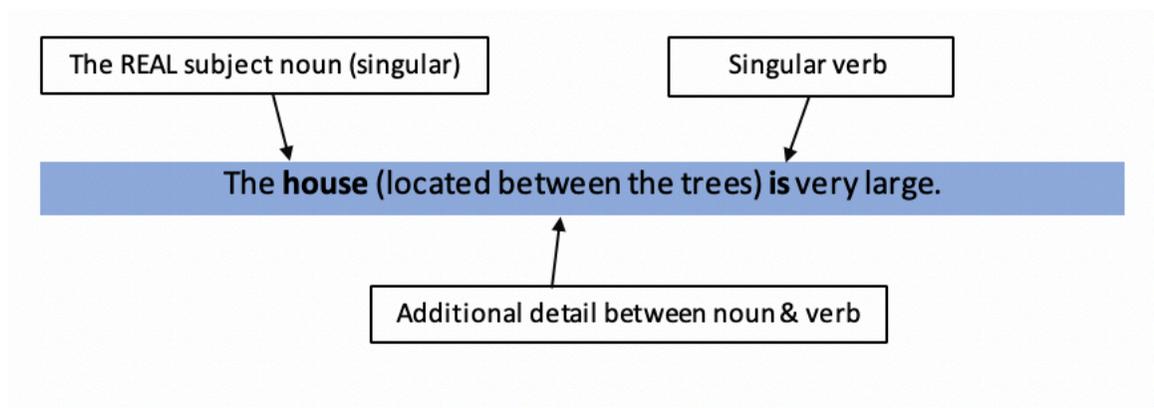
Correct:



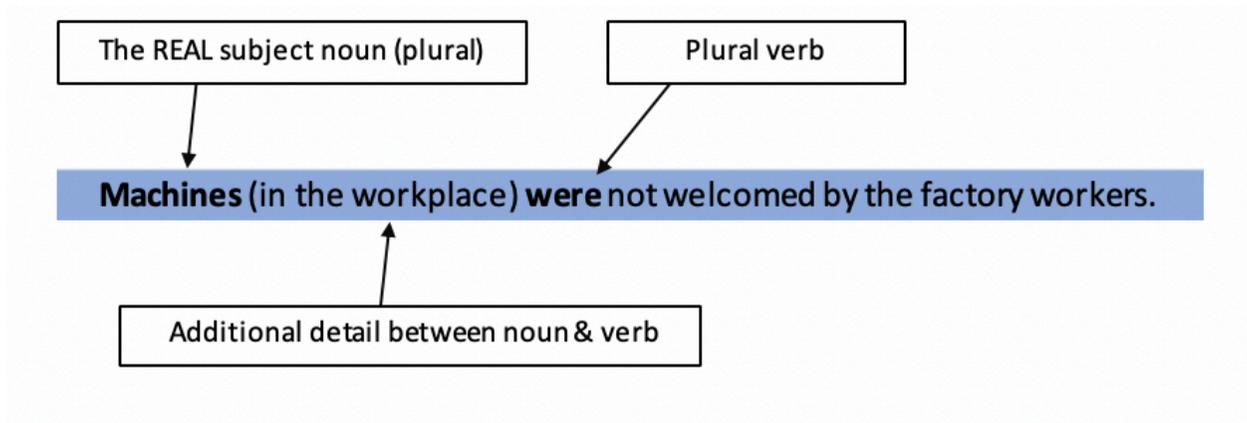
This sentence is correct, because '**Mental health**' is the subject noun and it is singular. 'in adults' is just additional information. Therefore, a singular verb should be used to match it; in this case the correct verb is, '**is**'.

Other CORRECT examples:

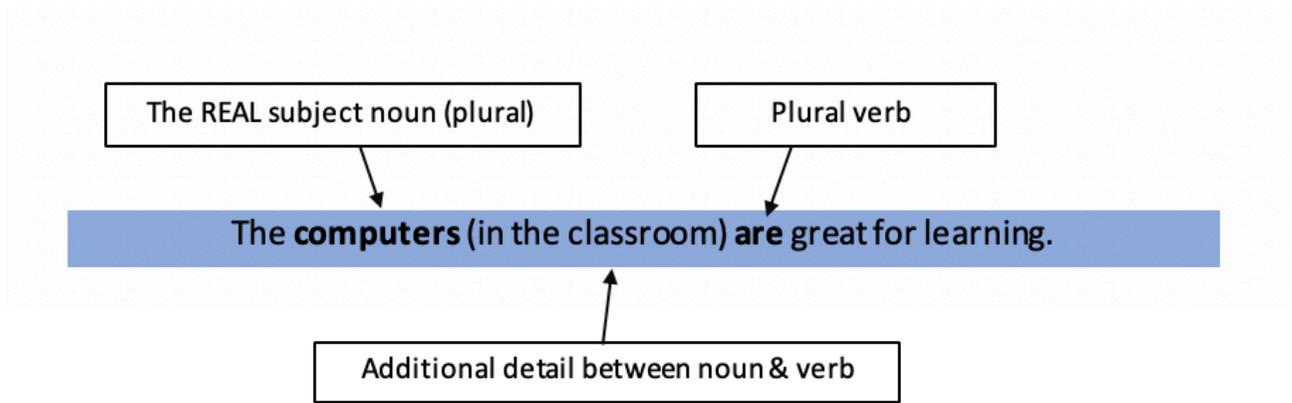
Example 1:



Example 2:



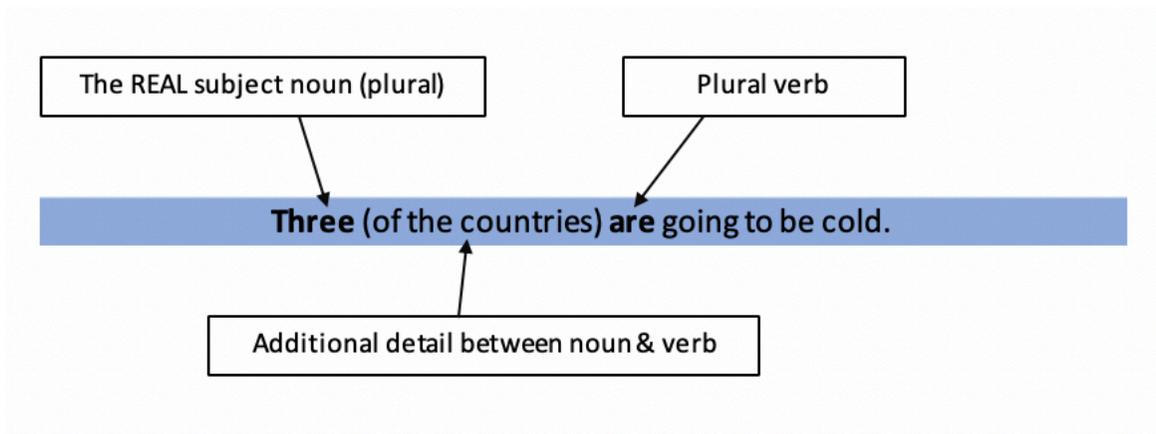
Example 3:



Rule 8:

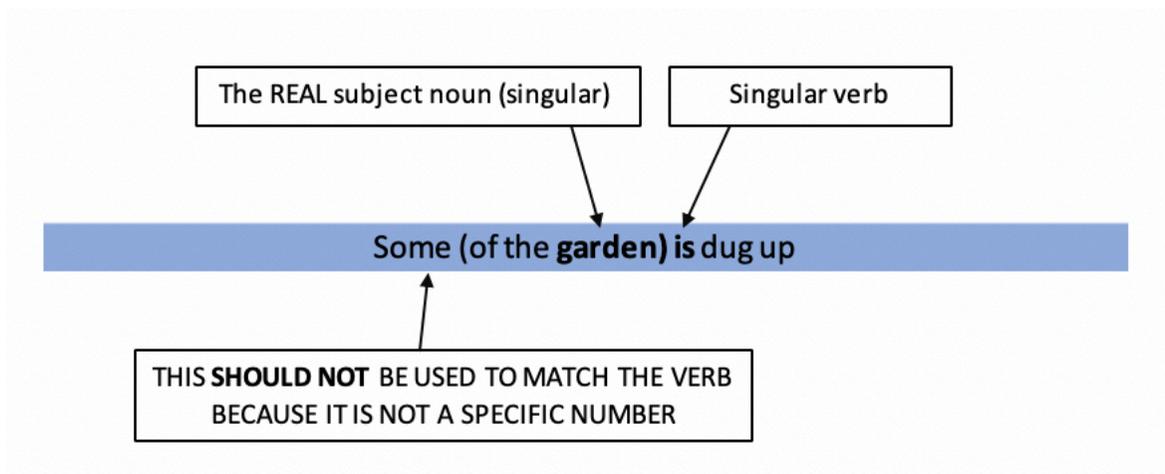
This rule follows on from rule 7. When writing a sentence using a specific number (e.g. **Three** of the countries..., **One** girl...), the **number** is the subject and the verb should agree with it (singular – singular, plural – plural).

Example:



However, if a less specific term is used when describing a number (e.g. A lot of the countries..., Some of the garden...), this should not be used by the verb. Instead, the noun in the next part of the sentence must be used to match the verb (e.g. A lot of the **countries**..., Some of the **garden**...).

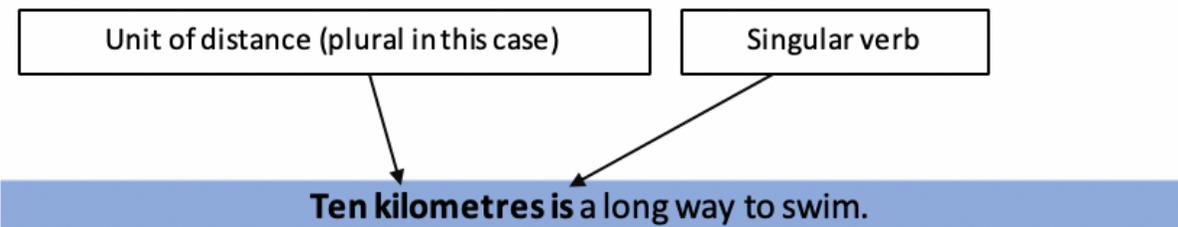
Example:



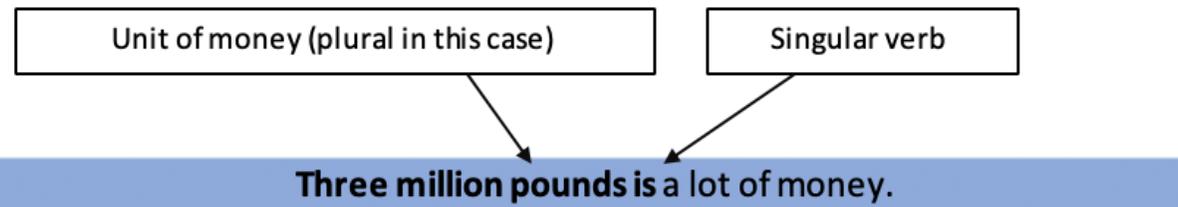
Rule 9:

When discussing units of time, distance, speed, and amount of money etc., use a singular verb even if the unit is plural. Note, this **must be a unit** (a way of measuring something).

Example 1:



Example 2:



The Use Of Cohesive Devices (Connecting Words) In Task 2

Cohesive devices are words or phrases that illustrate a connection between sections of text. Basically, they link parts of a sentence together and help give context to information.

Why do I need to know about cohesive devices?

Remember, the aim is for you to score at least band 7 in the IELTS. You need to use cohesive devices appropriately and accurately in your task 1 and task 2 answers, as they are part of the marking criteria in the 'Coherence and Cohesion' band descriptors.

'Coherence and cohesion' forms 25% of your score, so if you fail to use cohesive devices appropriately you will not score band 7 in the writing section.

Here's the band 7, 8 & 9 descriptors for task 2 with the 'Coherence & Cohesion' column highlighted in red:

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully addresses all parts of the task presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skilfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sufficiently addresses all parts of the task presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task presents a clear position throughout the response presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to overgeneralise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use presents a clear central topic within each paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors

As you can see, the use of a range of cohesive devices are required to score at least band 7 (highlighted in green). They guide the examiner through your writing and ensure that your task 2 answer is meaningful without going off topic.

Therefore, it is important to know how to use them effectively.

What are the most common cohesive devices?

Arguably, the most commonly used cohesive devices are '**and**' and '**but**', although there are many more.

Let's look at examples of the most common types below and discuss how they completely change the meaning of each sentence:

Example 1: *'The restaurants in Berlin are efficient **and** cheap.'*

Example 2: *'The restaurants in Berlin are efficient **but** expensive.'*

As you can see, the use of the two different cohesive devices changes the meaning of the sentence completely.

Example 1 (and) is providing extra information by indicating that the restaurants are cheap as well as efficient. It is adding extra weight to an argument/opinion. In other words, 'cheap' is a good thing and 'efficient' is also a good thing. You would know that if someone said this sentence, they have a very positive opinion overall.

In contrast, '**and**' can also be used for two **bad** points, such as *'The weather is cold and it's raining.'*

You wouldn't use '**and**' for 1 good and 1 bad point. Which brings us on to example 2...

Example 2 (but) shows you are giving a contradicting opinion, because there is a **good point** (they are efficient) and a **bad point** (they are expensive). Usually, 'but' is used when you are giving mixed information (good and bad).

What are some other cohesive devices?

There are plenty of examples of cohesive devices and they all fall into certain categories, or 'ranges' depending on what you are trying to achieve.

Here are some examples:

To compare information	To contrast information	To add more detail to information	To list information	To conclude information	To emphasise specific information	To give an example of a point
SIMILARLY	IN CONTRAST	IN ADDITION	FIRSTLY	IN CONCLUSION	PREDOMINANTLY	FOR EXAMPLE
EQUALLY	CONTRASTINGLY	AND	SECONDLY	TO SUMMARISE	ABOVE ALL	TO ILLUSTRATE
LIKEWISE	AS OPPOSED TO	ALSO	THEN	TO SUM UP	IN PARTICULAR	SUCH AS
CORRESPONDINGLY	DIFFERENCE	ADDITIONALLY	SUBSEQUENTLY	IN A NUTSHELL	SPECIFICALLY	AS SHOWN IN/ BY
IN COMPARISON	IN CONTRADICTION TO	FURTHERMORE	LASTLY	ON A FINAL NOTE	ESPECIALLY	INCLUDING

You need to get the balance right with using cohesive devices in your answer as many students make the mistake of overusing them and this can lead to incorrectly placed words. This will affect the fluency of your writing and the examiner will mark you down as a result, so it's really important to get the balance right.

You may still score band 7 if you have minor over-use or under-use of these words, though you run the risk of the answer becoming unreadable or lacking understanding, which will automatically result in a low band score.

So, the take home note is this:

"Use a range of cohesive devices in your answer, but make sure you use them accurately and do not use them too often!"

The best way to become familiar with cohesive devices is to read articles and blogs one paragraph at a time and note down the cohesive words you come across to see how they are used.

Using Complex Structures In The Writing Section

In order to achieve a band 7 or above, you are required to 'use a variety of complex structures' which demonstrates a good grammatical range and accuracy, as stated in the writing band descriptors below:

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully satisfies all the requirements of the task clearly presents a fully developed response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skilfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers all requirements of the task sufficiently presents, highlights and illustrates key features/bullet points clearly and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers the requirements of the task (Academic) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages (General Training) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriate clearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors

What is a complex structure?

In simple terms, a complex structure (also known as a complex sentence) is just two or more 'clauses' (parts) put together. A clause is a verb surrounded by some context. We put them together to make sentences.

Many students are confused by the name 'complex sentences' and 'complex structures' because they sound... complex. However, this is a misconception and is just one way to mean 'a sentence with 2 or more clauses (parts)'.

There are two main types of clause and it is really important you understand these because they are one way to form a complex structure.

The 2 main types of clause you need to know:

1. Independent clause - An independent clause makes sense on its own.

It does not depend on any other sentence for it to make sense.

For example:

'I rode my bicycle to school.'

2. Dependent clause - A dependent clause relies on another sentence for it to make sense. Hence, it needs an independent clause to support it.

For example:

'because I missed the bus'.

On its own, a **dependent clause** doesn't make any sense. We need more information to be able to understand it. This is where an **independent clause** is needed.

Making a complex sentence using the examples above:

If we put the dependent and independent clauses together, we get a **complex sentence**.

Complex sentence:

'I rode my bicycle to school because I missed the bus.'

Other ways to make complex sentences:

You can also make a complex sentence using two or more **simple sentences** **PLUS** a **linking word**.

Look at the following example of how 2 simple sentences can make a complex sentence:

Simple sentences:

1. *'Pollution is bad for the environment.'*
2. *'Plastic in our oceans kills some animals.'*

The complex sentence:

*'Pollution is bad for the environment **and** plastic in our oceans kills some animals.'*

Linking word

In this example, '**and**' is used as a linking word.

Seems simple, right?

Let's increase the difficulty by showing you how to make a complex sentence using **THREE** clauses.

Here's an example:

Clause 1 (independent):

'Nowadays, machinery is preferred by many industries.'

Clause 2 (dependent)

'because it is much more efficient'

Clause 3 (dependent)

'although it can be more costly to develop and install the machines.'

The complex sentence:

*'Nowadays, machinery is preferred by many industries **because** it is much more efficient, **although** it can be more costly to develop and install the machines.'*

Linking words

These three clauses are connected with linking words. In this case, the linking words are '**because**' and '**although**'.

So now we know what complex sentences are and how to make them so now is the time to practice.

Start simple and build on the sentences until they become more complex.

Remember, accuracy is really important so only use complex sentences if you are completely confident.



Remember!

Always start a complex sentence with a simple sentence, then add another simple sentence (with a connecting word) Or a dependent clause.

The NUMBER 1 Complex Structure Pitfall

The biggest mistake IELTS students make is trying to use **too many complex sentences** in an attempt to impress the examiner. The keyword in the band descriptor to achieve a band 7 score is 'variety', so you need to demonstrate both complex and simple sentences throughout your essay!

To score a band 8 or 9, you need to use a '*wide range of structures*' (as shown in the band descriptors table a few pages earlier). This **does not** mean you need to use MORE complex structures/sentences, you simply need to use a **GREATER RANGE** or **DIFFERENT TYPES** of them.

For example, you can demonstrate a great range of complex sentences by using different connecting words (such as 'and', 'but', 'whereas', 'however', 'which'), and using two or three independent and dependent clauses. Have another look at the examples we discussed in the section above.

A word of warning though - another common mistake we see is students writing complex sentences which simply do not make sense. This is frowned upon by the examiner and you risk scoring band 5 or below. Always make sure anything you write makes sense!



Beware!
IF YOU ARE UNSURE IF A COMPLEX SENTENCE MAKES SENSE, DO NOT WRITE IT!!!

So far, the sections above all aim to help you achieve at least band 7 in the writing section. If you do everything correctly, you will certainly achieve band 7, 8 or 9 in the writing section.

However, we have also developed a set of rules which are designed to help you if you hit a mental block and cannot think what to write for task 2. It is known as the 'Damage Limitation Strategy' and we cover it in the next section.

IELTS Excellence Task 2

'Damage Limitation' Strategy

Just like for task 1, we have devised a 'damage limitation' strategy to help you if you are completely stuck with a task 2 essay question. This strategy should only be used if you absolutely do not know what to do or what to write in an essay question, so you are still able to score band 7 or above overall in the IELTS. It gives you a structure to follow in the exam.

Before we get into the detail, here's a quick recap of how the IELTS is scored:

How is my IELTS score calculated?

You will receive a score for each of the 4 parts (writing, reading, listening & speaking). An average overall score is taken from these 4 individual scores. This is your overall IELTS score.

See the illustration below:

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{Writing} \\ + \\ \text{Reading} \\ + \\ \text{Listening} \\ + \\ \text{Speaking} \end{array} \right) \div 4 = \text{Overall Score}$$

What is the absolute minimum needed for a band 7 score overall?

The diagram below shows the overall score you would achieve depending on how you score in the 4 sections. Your overall score will be in an 0.5 increment (e.g. 5.0, 5.5, 6.0, 6.5, 7.0, 7.5, 8.0 and so on).

This means that if your average overall score is a 0.25 increment, it will be increased to the nearest 0.5.

For example, a score of 6.25 will be increased to 6.5 and a score of 6.75 will be rounded-up to a score of 7.0.

So in fact, you can actually get an overall band score of 6.75 as this will be officially calculated as a band score of 7!



So, how does the damage limitation strategy work in TASK 2?

In reality, you don't want to score any less than a band 6 in both parts of the writing section because you will have to score extremely well (at least a band 8) in either reading, listening or speaking to still get an overall IELTS score of band 7.

Our TASK 2 'damage limitation' strategy is therefore designed for you to get at least band 6 in the task 2 writing question and IS ONLY RECOMMENDED IF YOU CANNOT THINK OF ANYTHING TO WRITE OR DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION.

Let's look at the official band descriptors for task 2 to see what the examiner needs to give you a score of band 6 versus band 7:

Band 6 descriptors:

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately uses paragraphing, but not always logically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication
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Band 7 descriptors:

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses all parts of the task presents a clear position throughout the response presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to overgeneralise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use presents a clear central topic within each paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
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What do the band descriptors mean? We have simplified the requirements for you here:

Band 6	Band 7
Answer ALL question requirements	Answer ALL question requirements
Write in a structured format & show your understanding	Write in a structured format & show your understanding without repetition
Say what the main points are and briefly discuss them	Say what the main points are AND discuss them in detail
Write in a logical, progressive way <u>overall</u>	Write in a logical, progressive way <u>throughout</u>
Give some key features	Gives key features with accurate explanations
Use cohesive words (connecting words), but they may be slightly inaccurate	Use cohesive words (connecting words) accurately
Use paragraphs (relatively well)	Use paragraphs , each with a clear structure and central topic (e.g. Introduction, main topic 1, main topic 2, conclusion).
Have a good range of vocabulary (including less commonly used words), some inaccuracies allowed but must still make sense.	Accurate use of less common vocabulary. Use of alternate words to describe the same thing (man, human, adult) and collocations (extreme heat, heavy rain). Occasional error allowed.
Use simple sentences and occasional complex sentences	Use mostly complex sentences
Some errors in grammar & punctuation but your answer still makes sense.	Most sentences are error-free . Some errors in grammar & punctuation but these are rare.

So, here is the Damage Limitation Strategy:

Step 1. Answer the question!

One of the most important things you must do is actually answer the question.

It sounds obvious doesn't it?

But you would be surprised how many students fail to actually answer the question. It is one of the most common reasons why students fail to get their desired score. If you do not do this, you will not score above Band 5 overall.

Obviously, your answer will depend on the type of question you get. To remind yourself how to analyse the different question types, go back to the '**How To Analyse Any Task 2 Question**' section of this book.

Here is a reminder of the different types of task 2 essay question:

TYPES OF QUESTION IN TASK 2

* Agree or disagree - e.g. 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement?'
(*Include your opinion in the introduction & conclusion)

Advantages & disadvantages - e.g. 'Discuss the advantages and disadvantages.'

* Discussion - e.g. 'Discuss both views and give your opinion'
(*Include your opinion in the introduction & conclusion)

Problem & solution - e.g. 'What are the problems with this and what are some solutions?'

Two-part questions - There will usually be a statement followed by two separate questions.

In addition to the first part of the question, you will also have specific instructions.

Commonly, they are:

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

'Write at least 250 words.'

Therefore, to answer the question properly, you must:

- 1. Answer the main task (**depending on the question type**)*
- 2. Give reasons for your answers*
- 3. Include relevant examples **where relevant***
- 4. Write at least 250 words (check out our '**Four-Two-Fifty**' technique for guidance)*

Step 2. Use paragraphs and maintain sentence structure

You simply **MUST** use paragraphs to score above a band 5 in the writing section. Aim for 4 paragraphs, as per our recommended task 2 framework.

The content of these paragraphs is covered below:

Paragraph 1: Introduction (paraphrase the question)

Paragraph 2: Discuss the first part of the question (e.g. Problems)

Paragraph 3: Discuss the second part of the question (e.g. Solutions)

Paragraph 4: Conclusion (summarise the rest of your essay)

You will notice that this is the same framework we recommend for scoring band 7. It should also be used in the damage-limitation strategy (band 6).

The difference is that you do not have to be as detailed for it to be scored band 6.

JUST MAKE SURE YOU WRITE IN PARAGRAPHS!

Even if you do not know what to write about, you will stand a much better chance to get a band 6 if you write your essay around these 4 paragraphs.

Step 3. Briefly outline the MAIN points

Unlike a band 7 essay, which requires a **detailed discussion** about the main points with justifications and examples, a band 6 essay only requires a **brief outline** of the main points. However, you still have to mention them and actually discuss them. This means at least 1 or 2 sentences after a main point which gives weight to your point (it justifies your answer).

For example, if you have an essay which asks about the **advantages and disadvantages of electric cars**, you must discuss:

1. The advantages of electric cars (less pollution, renewable energy)

AND

2. The disadvantages of electric cars (more expensive, lack of charging stations).

You can keep it brief, but you must still talk about the main points. When writing your answer, always ask '**WHY?**' and this will help guide you into discussing your answer.

For example, '*WHY is less pollution an advantage?*', '*WHY is a greater expense a disadvantage?*'.

Step 4. Use at least 1 complex sentence per paragraph

You do not need to use lots of complex sentences to score band 6, but you must use some. Aim for 1 in each of the 4 paragraphs. Check out the '**Using Complex Structures In The Writing Section**' part of this book to remind yourself about complex sentences.

Step 5. Demonstrate good grammar and vocabulary

You don't need 'perfect' grammar and vocabulary skills to score band 6, although you need to have a somewhat reasonable ability to write well.

A band 6 score requires use of **some** less common words (1 or 2 per paragraph) and only a few grammatical errors. IT MUST STILL MAKE SENSE TO AN EXAMINER!

In practice, this means that you should not write any words that you are unfamiliar with. Equally, you should keep your grammar and punctuation simple. Do not try to overcomplicate things.



Remember!

It is better to do a simple task correctly rather than a complicated task incorrectly.

Step 6. Keep it simple!

You are not trying to score band 9, your aim is to score band 6. This means you should keep your answer simple! Don't overcomplicate things.

The steps above are mainly based around the **FRAMEWORK, GRAMMAR, FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS** and **PARAGRAPHING**. It is less related to the actual topic of the question. However, you must still be able to briefly discuss both parts of the question.

**** As long as you get the basics right and you follow the steps above, you will score band 6. You should only use this strategy if you are struggling with the question. It is a 'last resort' option ****

Final Word

Congratulations! You have made it to the end of the book. You should be extremely proud of yourself for getting this far.

There is no doubt that preparing for the IELTS is challenging and difficult. You are not alone. Everybody who takes the test finds it daunting, native English speaker included. After all, your future life depends on you achieving a great band score.

We hope this book has helped you understand everything required to achieve band 7+ in the Writing Task 2 section of the IELTS.

One of the main things to remember is that you need to put a lot of hard work into your preparation, but it will pay off.

If you need help with any other part of your IELTS preparation, we would love to be involved. Our aim is for you to achieve your dream and not let the IELTS get in the way.

There is a range of other IELTS Excellence eBooks designed to help you SMASH the IELTS. Just head over to www.ielts-excellence.com/premium to see the full range.

If you know anyone who would benefit from our help or any of the resources we offer, please direct them to our website: <https://ielts-excellence.com>

In the meantime, would you be able to do us a massive favour? When you get the band 7+ score in the IELTS, please let us know!

All the best for your successful journey!

Sam, Sarah & the IELTS Excellence team

