

1. We'll work on these areas:

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

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

2.

## **IELTS Writing Task 2: how to write an introduction**

For IELTS Writing Task 2, keep your introduction short and simple. Don't waste time writing a long introduction; the main body paragraphs are more important.

***A good IELTS Writing introduction needs only 2 things:***

1. A sentence that introduces the topic
2. A sentence that gives a short, general answer to the question

***Here is an example of an IELTS Task 2 question:***

As computers are being used more and more in education, there will soon be no role for the teacher in the classroom. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

***Here is my introduction:***

It is true that computers have become an essential tool for teachers and students in all areas of education. However, while computers are extremely useful, I do not agree with the idea that they could soon replace teachers completely.

1. In the first sentence I introduce the topic of computers in education.
2. In the second sentence I answer the question and make my opinion clear. Don't wait until the conclusion to give your opinion.

Remember, do a simple introduction, then you can focus on the main paragraphs.

## **IELTS Writing Task 2: main body paragraphs**

After your introduction (see last week's lesson) you need to write 2 or 3 main body paragraphs. This is the most important part of your essay.

If you have been following this blog for a while, or if you have bought my ebook, you may have seen today's paragraph before. However, I'm reusing it for 2 reasons:

1. It's a great example of how to write an "advantages" paragraph using a "firstly, secondly, finally" structure.
2. There are some excellent comments from students below this lesson. If you read them carefully, you will learn a lot.

### ***Main body "advantages" paragraph (band 9):***

There are several advantages to using computers in education. **Firstly**, students learn new skills which will be extremely useful for their future jobs. For example, they learn to write reports or other documents using a word processor, and they can practise doing spoken presentations using PowerPoint slides. **Secondly**, technology is a powerful tool to engage students. The use of websites or online videos can make lessons much more interesting, and many students are more motivated to do homework or research using online resources. **Finally**, if each student has a computer to work on, they can study at their own pace.

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: problem & solution introduction**

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

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

Here's my introduction:

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

#### ***Note:***

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

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: 'discussion' introduction**

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

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

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

Here's my 2-sentence introduction:

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

3.

### **"Band 7 Vocabulary"**

When I say "band 7 vocabulary", I'm really talking about vocabulary that could help you to get a band 7 **or higher**. Examiners are looking for "less common" words and phrases, correct and relevant collocations, and maybe some idiomatic language.

I've written the following paragraph using some of the ideas from the lesson below. I've underlined the band 7 (or higher) vocabulary.

#### ***Advantages of studying abroad:***

Many students choose to study abroad because there are greater opportunities in a particular foreign country. Foreign universities may offer better facilities or courses. They may also be more prestigious than universities in the student's own country and have teachers who are experts in their fields. Therefore, by studying abroad, students can expand their knowledge and gain qualifications that open the door to better job opportunities. A period of study abroad can also broaden students' horizons. In the new country, they will have to live and work with other students of various nationalities. Thus, overseas students are exposed to different cultures, customs and points of view.

(106 words)

4.

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: education / practical skills**

Several students have asked me to help them with this IELTS question:

***Some people think that school children need to learn practical skills such as car maintenance or bank account management along with the academic subjects at school. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

Here are some suggestions (this is NOT an essay):

#### **1. Introduce the topic then give your opinion**

I would write that it is true that children learn academic subjects at school, but

not many practical skills. However, I would then disagree that schools should teach skills like bank account management and car maintenance.

## **2. First supporting paragraph**

I would write a paragraph about the importance of academic subjects like maths, science, languages etc. We live in a knowledge-based economy where independent thinking and problem solving are the most important skills. With timetables already full, schools do not have time to teach children anything else.

## **3. Second supporting paragraph**

I would argue that bank account management is a 'life skill' that anyone can learn by simply opening a bank account. Most adults have no problem managing their finances without being taught accounting lessons at school. Other skills like car maintenance are not really necessary. Most people take their cars to a qualified mechanic.

## **4. Conclusion**

Repeat the idea that schools are already doing a good job teaching the traditional academic subjects. If they start to teach practical skills, the study of important academic subjects will suffer.

5.

## **IELTS Writing Task 2: money and consumerism**

Here are some vocabulary ideas for the topic of money and consumerism. You could use these ideas to write an essay:

***Many people say that we now live in 'consumer societies' where money and possessions are given too much importance. Others believe that consumer culture has played a vital role in improving our lives. Discuss both views and give your opinion.***

### **General ideas:**

a consumer society, materialistic, earn money, make money, make a profit, success, material possessions, connect wealth with happiness, status symbols, the power of advertising.

### **Positives of consumerism:**

employment, income, salaries, products that we need, reduce poverty, better standard of living, quality of life, creativity and innovation, trade between countries.

### **Negatives:**

create waste, use natural resources, damage to the environment, throw-away culture, people become greedy, selfish, money does not make us happy, loss of traditional values.

6.

## **IELTS Writing Task 2: 'online shopping' topic**

This was a recent IELTS exam question:

***Online shopping is increasing dramatically. How could this trend affect our environment and the kinds of jobs required?***

My advice is to plan your essay with a 4-paragraph structure:

### **1. Introduction: topic + response (2 sentences are enough)**

Introduce the topic of 'online shopping becoming more popular'. Then write that it will have a significant impact on the environment and on jobs.

### **2. Paragraph about the environment**

Write about simple ideas e.g. people will drive less, so there will be less pollution, less destruction from the building of new roads, but perhaps more packaging.

### **3. Paragraph about jobs**

Simple ideas e.g. many shop workers will lose their jobs, unemployment may rise, but there will be more skilled jobs in IT (computer programmers, web designers).

### **4. Conclusion: repeat your response**

Overall opinion: online shopping may have a negative effect on employment, but it might be a good thing for the environment.

7.

## **IELTS Writing Task 2: using the ebook**

A few people have asked me how to use the ebook. One way is to practise writing paragraphs using the ebook ideas.

### **Some ideas from the ebook about the benefits of mobile phones:**

- The mobile phone is the most popular gadget in today's world.
- We can stay in touch with family, friends and colleagues wherever we are.
- Users can send text messages, surf the Internet, take photos and listen to music.
- Mobiles have also become fashion accessories.
- Mobile phones have revolutionised the way we communicate.

### **By linking these ideas (and adding a few things) I can write a paragraph:**

The mobile phone has become the most popular gadget in today's world. The reason for this is that it is portable and versatile. Mobile phones are now carried at all times by most people, allowing us to stay in touch with family,

friends and colleagues wherever we are. Furthermore, they now have many more functions than a standard telephone; mobile phone users can send text messages, surf the Internet, take photos and listen to music, as well as making calls. Mobiles have become fashion accessories, and they have revolutionised the way we communicate.

(93 words)

8.

### **IELTS Writing: to what extent do you agree?**

A good way to answer this question is:

*To a certain extent I agree that... However, I also think that...*

By saying that you agree to a certain extent (not completely), you can now talk about both sides of the argument.

#### **Example question:**

People visiting other countries should adapt to the customs and behaviours expected there. They should not expect the host country to welcome different customs and behaviours. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

#### **My introduction:**

To a certain extent I agree that visitors to other countries should respect the culture of the host country. However, I also think that host countries should accept visitors' cultural differences.

After this introduction, you can write one paragraph about each view.

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9.

### **IELTS Writing Task 2: 'marriages' topic**

***Marriages are bigger and more expensive nowadays than in the past. Why is this the case? Is it a positive or negative development?***

To plan an essay for this topic, consider the following questions:

1. Would you call this an 'opinion' essay or a 'discussion' essay?
2. For a 4-paragraph essay, what would each paragraph be about?
3. What 2 things do you need to do in the introduction?
4. Do you have any ideas to explain why weddings are bigger/expensive?
5. Should you choose 'positive' or 'negative', or can you discuss both?

Feel free to answer these questions in the comments area. I'll give you my answers tomorrow, and I'll try to write a full essay for next week.

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