IELTS

Task 2:
How to write at a 9 level

by Ryan Higgins

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Foreword

This eBook has been written to provide the IELTS student with a brief summary outlining how to write an effective essay in the Task 2 portion of the IELTS exam. It is hoped that this eBook acts as a supplement to the student's repertoire of IELTS writing resources and *not* the student's sole source of guidance for their studies in essay writing. Although valuable, reading up on the subject of IELTS essay writing alone will not ascertain success on the Task 2 portion of the IELTS exam. Students should be actively practicing their essay writing skills on a regular basis with direct instruction from an IELTS instructor.

Regarding structure, readers may at first feel the organization of this book seems awkward. Directions on how to write introduction, supporting and conclusion paragraphs are not grouped into a single chapter but rather intertwined among subjects such as basic essay structure, essay question analysis, coherence and cohesion and thesis writing. It is felt that in presenting these subjects in this manner, the student of IELTS essay writing will be better able to understand how each can be used to strengthen their abilities.

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1.1 – What is required on the IELTS writing exam?

How well do you know Task 2 of the IELTS exam? Fill in this excerpt about the writing section of the IELTS exam using these words – ***descriptive report, 60, different, 2, essay, allot, letter***

The writing portion of the IELTS exam is _____(1) minutes in length. The Academic and General portions of the listening exam are _____(2). The written portion of the Academic training exam asks the student to complete _____(3) tasks. The first task asks the student to write a _____(4) based on information given in a picture, diagram or graph. The second task asks students to write an _____(5) in response to a question given. The General Training exam differs in task 1. On this exam, students are asked to write a _____(6). For both exams, students are expected to _____(7) 20 minutes to task one and 40 minutes to task two.

Answers: *(1) 60 (2) different (3) 2 (4) descriptive report (5) essay (6) letter (7) allot*

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1.2 What is an essay?

Let's start with a review of these basic English structures:

What is a word?
A word is a group of letters.

What is a sentence?
A sentence is a group of words.

What is a paragraph?
A paragraph is a group of sentences.

What is an essay?
An essay is a group of paragraphs.

Essays present an organized argument that is supported by examples. In your IELTS essay, your exam marker will be looking for:

- Organized structure with clearly defined paragraphs
- Coherent sentences that link together using linking phrases
- A clear thesis that *directly* answers the essay question
- Real life examples that support the argument
- A clear introduction and conclusion
- Adherence to length requirement (minimum 250 words)

The easiest way to score well on the IELTS Task 2 writing portion is to structure your writing in a solid essay format. A strong argument essay structure can be split up into 4 paragraphs, each containing 4 sentences (except the conclusion paragraph, which only contains 3 sentences).

Look at this essay structure:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

- Sentence 1 - Background statement
- Sentence 2 - Detailed background statement
- Sentence 3 - Thesis
- Sentence 4 - Outline sentence

Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

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Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

- Sentence 1 - Summary
- Sentence 2 - Restatement of thesis
- Sentence 3 - Prediction or recommendation

This essay structure contains a total of 15 sentences and will put your essay at roughly 250-275 words. Each sentence should be short, written clearly and should link to other ideas presented in the essay using cohesive phrases. We will learn about how to do this in Chapter 2.

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1.3 Analyzing Task 2 essay questions

Understanding the meaning of an essay question is essential to writing a solid essay in response. For all essay questions, you should first pinpoint these 3 attributes:

1. Scope

2. Keywords

3. Instruction words

Let's read our essay question:

Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. Given time, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Scope involves the topics that *can* and *cannot* be included in your written response. In this example essay question, the *scope* is 'technology' and 'education' related topics. Given this essay question, we cannot start talking about topics outside of this scope. This may seem like a simple concept, but it is surprising how many students go off on tangents in their writing, discussing topics that have little to do with their essay question.

Keywords are the words in the question which tell us how the various ideas relate together. Here, we see the phrase 'increasingly prevalent'. What does this tell us about technology? We also see 'completely replace'. What is the connection? What are these keywords telling us about the question?

Finally, we need to locate the *instruction words*. Where is the question telling us to do something? Here:

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

This sentence is instructing us with a question. To answer this question properly we must answer it concisely and directly. To do this, we must use a ***thesis***.

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What is a thesis?

An essay's thesis is only one sentence long, but it is ***the most important sentence in the entire essay***. The reason for this is because it is the sentence that states our opinion in relation to what is being asked of us by the essay question. A thesis is very easy to write. Often, the thesis will reflect and even borrow words from our essay question. Thus, in the example question above our thesis can only be one of two things:

It is agreed that technology will replace teachers in the classroom.

Or

It is not agreed that technology will replace teachers in the classroom.

Remember, writing your thesis using a few words from your essay question is effective because your examiner will clearly see the link between your essay question and your essay. In other areas of your essay, however, try to vary your vocabulary as much as you can.

Try it yourself!

With a friend, discuss what the scope, keywords and instruction words are for these sample Task 2 writing questions:

Public transportation is a great way to travel, particularly within a metropolis. The metro is the most convenient way to get around a city. Do you agree or disagree?

Scope:
Keywords:
Instruction words:

Increasingly, the western world has been outsourcing its labour-related jobs to cheaper alternatives available in less-developed countries. Although this creates opportunities for people in poorer nations, it is a policy that is criticized by many in the west. Write an essay response supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour related jobs.

Scope:
Keywords:
Instruction words:

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Violence among young people has increased dramatically over the past 50 years. This rise moves in tandem with the growth in violent media. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that violent media is the main cause of violence among young people. Refute this claim.

Scope:
Keywords:
Instruction words:

As more and more students enter universities, academic qualifications are becoming devalued. To get ahead in many professions, more than one degree is now required and in future it is likely that people will take a number of degree courses before even starting work. This is an undesirable situation. Take a stance and respond to this argument.

Scope:
Keywords:
Instruction words:

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1.4 Common exam question keywords and instruction words

Common keywords

It is vitally important that you understand exactly what the keywords and instruction words of your essay question mean and how the various ideas introduced in your essay question relate to each other. Look at this chart. Can you think of any other keywords to add that show these various relationships and instructions?

Fast increase	Climbed, increased rapidly, fast growth
Slow increase	Gradual, steady climb
No change	Steady, stable, unchanging,
Slow Decrease	Gradual, modest decline
Fast decrease	Dropped, fell,
Sudden change up/down	Spike, dive, nose-dive
Unstable figures	Volatile, rapid changes, unstable, unpredictable
Figures that are similar or the same	In tandem, similar, mirror each other, in parallel
Maximum	Peak, highest
Minimum	Bottomed-out,
Unexpected results	Bizarre, strange, against expectations
Expected results	Normal, unexciting, as expected
Happening at the same time...	While, during, at the same time, at this time, also
Contrasting	Despite this, while, whereas, however, on the other hand, differs from, in contrast to, conversely, unlike, although
Comparing	In the same vein, likewise, similarly, this mirrors, just as, has in common, moves in tandem, parallels, alike, like, reflects, almost the same

Common instruction words

Asking you to support	…support this statement…, …back this statement…, …prove this statement…
Asking you to refute	…refute this statement…, …disprove this statement…, …show this statement to be untrue…
Asking you to support or refute	…do you agree or disagree…, …where do you stand…, …take a stand…, …how do you see this situation…, …come to a reasoned conclusion
Asking you to compare (*Discussion essays – please see chapter 5*)	…contrast these two ideas…, …compare these issues…, …discuss these ideas…
Asking you to analyze (*Discussion essays – please see chapter 5*)	…present a discussion on this issue…, …discuss this topic…, …analyze this topic…

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2.1 The writing process – How to write an introduction paragraph

Read this essay question again:

Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. Given time, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

What does the introduction paragraph do?

The introduction paragraph acts as a roadmap for your essay. When your IELTS examiner reads the introduction to your essay, they should ***already know exactly what the rest of your essay will look like***. Let's look at the structure of an argument essay's introduction paragraph in detail. As we saw before, the introduction paragraph has four sentences:

- Background sentence
- Detailed background sentence
- Thesis
- Outline

The background sentence simply says something general about the topic given in the essay question. ***It does NOT state any opinion about the essay question***. In the case of our essay question, we would say something general about technology. For example:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever increasing.

Here, we have written a general sentence about one of the main topics of our essay question: technology. The second sentence in our introduction paragraph is a more detailed background statement. So in this sentence, we would probably want to include some information about the growing presence of technology in the classroom. Thus a detailed background sentence for this essay question could be:

Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen.

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As you recall, the *thesis* is the most important sentence in your entire essay because it **answers the essay question directly**. In the case of our essay question, we are being asked **if we agree or disagree that technology will someday take the place of a teacher in the classroom**. Let's think about this question for a second:

What will this mean?

...students will learn entirely from computers

Is this likely?

...probably not

Why not?

...because a robotic teacher would not be able to discipline misbehaving students
...because a robotic teacher would be less able to cater to a student's individual needs
...because a robotic teacher would have little authority in the classroom
...because a robotic teacher's classroom would be boring and would hinder learning
...etc

Is it easier to agree with this statement or disagree?

...disagree!

Now that we have decided our opinion regarding this subject, let's write our thesis as a *direct response* to the essay question:

It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

So far we have finished our background, detailed background and thesis sentences and our introduction paragraph is really starting to take shape, but we still need to tell our IELTS examiner what points we are going to use to support this thesis. The *outline* sentence does this. In your IELTS exam essay, you should use 2 points. Each point will be discussed separately in your supporting paragraphs. What points best support our thesis? Let's choose 2 that we can find real examples for later on:

Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher's hindrance to a student's learning process will show this.

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Congratulations! You have written your first introduction paragraph. Let's look at it together:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher's hindrance to a student's learning process will show this.

As you can see, anyone looking at your introduction paragraph knows exactly what you will talk about in the rest of the essay. The introduction paragraph contains your argument (thesis) as well as what topics you will use to support your argument (shown in your outline sentence).

Try it yourself!

With a friend, discuss this essay question and brainstorm some ideas that support it and some ideas that refute it. Then choose to agree or disagree based on which path you think is easiest. Finally, write the introduction paragraph for an essay:

Public transportation is a great way to travel, particularly within a metropolis. The Shanghai metro is the most convenient way to get around the city. Do you agree or disagree?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Let's try a harder essay question:

Violence among young people has increased dramatically over the past 50 years. This rise moves in tandem with the growth in violent media. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that violent media is the main cause of violence among young people. Do you agree or disagree?

_____

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One more time:

Increasingly, the western world has been outsourcing its labour-related jobs to cheaper alternatives available in less-developed countries. Although this creates opportunities for people in poorer nations, it is a policy that is criticized by many in the west. Write an essay response supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour related jobs.

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2.2 Coherence and cohesion

What does coherence mean?

...the logical ordering of words allowing the reader to easily understand what is written.

What does cohesion mean?

...the linking of ideas together creating clear relationships between different ideas.

Coherence and *cohesion* are a measure of how logical your ideas are presented in your essay and how well the ideas work together. *Coherence* is best achieved by employing short, grammatically correct sentences that are concise and to the point. *Cohesion* can be achieved by using *linking words* in your writing to create relationships between the various sentences and paragraphs in your essay.

The table below shows some phrases we can add to the beginning of our sentences to create cohesion.

Similarity	Likewise, similarly, also, as well, in tandem with this, coupled with this,
Contrast	On the other hand, however, although, but, taken from another viewpoint, in contrast, conversely
Series	First, second, finally, lastly
Evidence	Such as, for example, for instance, take the example of
Result	Thus, because of this, as a result, it is clear that, as can be seen, therefore, it is no surprise, consequently
Conclusion	Finally, in conclusion, this shows, thus, therefore, in the end, to summarize, to sum up, to reiterate
Importance	Primarily, above all, of most importance is, notably
Additional	Also, as well, further, to add to this, moreover

Linking words are very important in your essay. To score effectively on your IELTS exam, you should make an effort to implement short concise sentences coupled with linking words. Almost every sentence in your essay should have a linking word of some sort. In fact, the only sentences that can omit linking words are your background sentence and thesis.

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Which linking words did we use?

The paragraph we wrote as our introduction made use of linking words. Can you identify them? Here, they have been outlined in red:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher's hindrance to a student's learning process will show this.

Let's look at how these linking words help all sentences in the paragraph work as a team.

Even in – this is a phrase used in English to make it clear that a topic's characteristics match the characteristics of a topic presented before it. In our intro paragraph above, we are saying that technology in the classroom is ***also*** ever-increasing. Can you see how 'even in' links the ideas of our *background* sentence with our *detailed background* sentence?

This – probably the most commonly used linking word, here *this* refers to our thesis and states that the supporting ideas of *lack of discipline* and *educational hindrance* will act in support of this thesis. Can you see how the word '*this*' causes the outline sentence to link with the idea presented in the thsis?

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3.1 Proving our thesis – How to write supporting paragraphs

Supporting paragraphs exist to help prove the thesis using real and factual information. If you recall, supporting paragraphs are made up of 4 sentences. Let's review their structure:

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

In Chapter 1, we wrote the introduction paragraph to this essay question:

Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. Given time, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Let's read this intro paragraph again, paying close attention to the fourth sentence, the *outline* sentence:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher's hindrance to a student's learning process will show this.

This outline sentence (shown in red) dictates the topics we must use in our supporting paragraphs:

- the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students
- the hindrance a robotic teacher would cause to the learning process of a student

Can you think of any real life examples that show these topics in action? Let's brainstorm some ideas…

- the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students
  - *...kids would not feel the need to listen to a robotic teacher*
  - *...kids naturally fool around in class and a robotic teacher would have a harder time interpreting misbehavior is occurring*
- the hindrance a robotic teacher would cause to the learning process of a student
  - *...students often do not understand and need the teacher to explain in different ways, this is a teaching method that a robotic teacher could not employ*
  - *...kids require more motivation to be taught effectively and this is something that a robotic teacher simply could not offer*

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We have come up with 2 supporting examples for both topics introduced in our *outline* sentence. Our next step is to choose the examples that we feel are strongest. Looking at the brainstorm we made above, let's go with:

- *...kids naturally fool around in class and a robotic teacher would have a harder time interpreting misbehavior is occurring*

and

- *...kids require more motivation to be taught effectively and this is something that a robotic teacher simply could not offer*

When we finish this step, writing the supporting paragraphs to our essay becomes actually quite easy! All we have to do now is write out the 4 needed sentences paying close attention to our coherence and cohesion. The first sentence is our *topic*:

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students.

In this sentence (the *topic* sentence), we are simply stating the topic we declared in our *outline* sentence of the introduction paragraph. This sentence should be very clear and its meaning should ***exactly*** match the meaning presented in the introduction paragraph's *outline* sentence.

Now we need to support this claim with our example:

For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time.

Can you see how the example directly supports the topic by presenting some factual, real-life info? We have referred to the idea of children, who universally misbehave, and have used this to show a true example of why a robotic teacher is a poor idea.

Now we must link this *example* sentence to our *topic* sentence. We need a sentence that shows ***why*** this example proves our topic. We do this with our *discussion* sentence:

Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide.

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OK, we are now almost finished. The last sentence in your supporting paragraph is the *conclusion* sentence. This sentence is very important as it has to link the topic and argument presented in the supporting paragraph back to the *thesis*. So our conclusion sentence here woud be something like:

Thus this makes it clear why technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

That is all there is to it! Now let's put the sentences of our supporting paragraph together:

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students. For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time. Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide. Thus this makes it clear why technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

Can you see how the sentences in this paragraph work together? Read it again and identify the linking words.

Try it yourself!

Now you are ready to try. Look at the steps we took to create the first supporting paragraph. Use the same process to come up with the content of the second supporting paragraph and write it below. Remember, the topic and example of this paragraph have already been decided. You will be writing about how a robotic teachers hinders the learning process of a student and using children's motivational needs as your example.

_____

_____

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How did you do? Your paragraph should resemble something like this:

Secondly, a robotic teacher would disrupt a student's learning process and in effect slow a student's ability to absorb information from lessons. For instance, kids require motivation to be taught effectively. Such is a quality human teachers possess but technologically driven instructor do not. From this it becomes quite evident that robotic instructors will never take the place of real teachers in a classroom.

We have now finished both supporting paragraphs of our essay. Let's look at the essay in its entirety:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher's hindrance to a student's learning process will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students. For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time. Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide. Thus this makes it clear why technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would disrupt a student's learning process and in effect slow a student's ability to absorb information from lessons. For instance, kids require motivation to be taught effectively. Such is a quality human teachers possess but technologically driven instructor do not. From this it becomes quite evident that robotic instructors will never take the place of real teachers in a classroom.

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Now let's read the essay again and look for signs of cohesion:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher's hindrance to a student's learning process will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students. For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time. Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide. Thus this makes it clear why technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would disrupt a student's learning process and in effect slow a student's ability to absorb information from lessons. For instance, kids require motivation to be taught effectively. Such is a quality human teachers possess but technologically driven instructor do not. From this it becomes quite evident that robotic instructors will never take the place of real teachers in a classroom.

Can you see the way the sentences create cohesion between each other using linking words (highlighted in red)? Do you see how the paragraphs create cohesion between each other using both linking words (*firstly*, *secondly*) and their conclusion sentences that link back to our thesis (all of these examples are underlined)? This is a solid piece of writing that puts together a well-structured argument. Each sentence is clear and builds upon the ideas presented in the sentences (and paragraphs) before it.

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Try it yourself!

Now, try this exercise yourself. Here we have an essay with an introduction paragraph and conclusion paragraph but no supporting paragraphs. Read the essay question and write the 2 missing paragraphs.

In achieving personal happiness, our relationships with other people (family, friends, colleagues) are more important than anything else. Issues such as work and wealth take second place. Argue in support of this claim.

The increasing pressures of today's money driven world can often cause people to gravitate toward material items. But personal happiness can never be achieved through such things as work, success and wealth. Although these things may be nice 'extras', it is argued that healthy relationships with family, friends and colleagues are the true secrets to personal happiness. This will be shown be analyzing the often lonely lives of many wealthy celebrities as well as the advice of older people who speak from experience.

As seen above, wealth can not buy true happiness and everyone comes to this realization in their old age. It is true, family, friends and colleagues and the relationships formed with them are what creates happiness. Thus, the more love you give, the more you get!

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Now, try this more difficult exercise. Write both supporting paragraphs for the introduction paragraph you wrote in chapter 1 in response to the question below.

Violence among young people has increased dramatically over the past 50 years. This rise moves in tandem with the growth in violent media. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that violent media is the main cause of violence among young people. Do you agree or disagree?

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Let's try again:

Increasingly, the western world has been outsourcing its labour-related jobs to cheaper alternatives available in less-developed countries. Although this creates opportunities for people in poorer nations, it is a policy that is criticized by many in the west. Write an essay response supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour related jobs.

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4.1 Putting it all together – How to write a conclusion paragraph

The conclusion paragraph is the easiest paragraph to write in the entire essay because most of the information being presented is just repeating the information presented in the introduction and supporting paragraphs. The conclusion paragraph only has 3 sentences:

- Summary
- Restatement of thesis
- Prediction or recommendation

The summary sentence restates the topics that were discussed in supporting paragraphs 1 and 2. It should begin with a linking phrase such as 'To summarize' or 'In summary'. The restatement of thesis simply repeats the thesis in different words. The last sentence can be written as a prediction (a logical guess as to what will happen to your essay subject in the future) or a recommendation (what you hope will become true concerning your essay subject). The conclusion paragraph is sometimes confusing to students because they feel they are repeating themselves too much. But remember that this is not an error. A proper essay should have unity and by writing your conclusion as a mirror reflection of your introduction you will achieve this.

Now take a quick look at the entire structure of the essay. By now you should have committed this structure to memory. Can you see how the essay's introduction and conclusion paragraphs are similar? Can you see how they work to frame the supporting information given in the supporting paragraphs?

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

- Sentence 1 - Background statement
- Sentence 2 - Detailed background statement
- Sentence 3 - Thesis
- Sentence 4 - Outline sentence

Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

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Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

- Sentence 1 - Summary
- Sentence 2 - Restatement of thesis
- Sentence 3 - Prediction or recommendation

Let's look at the introduction paragraph and supporting paragraphs that we have written for our initial essay question:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher's hindrance to a student's learning process will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students. For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time. Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide. Thus this makes it clear why technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would disrupt a student's learning process and in effect slow a student's ability to absorb information from lessons. For instance, kids require motivation to be taught effectively. Such is a quality human teachers possess but technologically driven instructor do not. From this it becomes quite evident that robotic instructors will never take the place of real teachers in a classroom.

As stated above, the first sentence of our conclusion paragraph should summarize the topics we have discussed in our supporting paragraphs. Thus, we need to group these ideas into one sentence:

- a robotic teacher's lack of discipline in the classroom
- a robotic teacher's disservice to its students' learning needs

In summary, a robotic teacher lacks the discipline needed to instruct students properly and actually operates to retard a student's ability to learn new information.

Our second sentence must restate the thesis in new words. Let's first look at our thesis:

It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

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OK, now that we have the basic understanding, let's change 'disagree' to 'cannot support' and rearrange the other words a bit:

Thus it is clear why the idea of having a class run entirely by a machine cannot be supported.

The last sentence can be written as a recommendation or prediction. Let's go with a prediction:

After analyzing this subject, it is predicted that the negative aspects of the debate over computerized teaching will forever be stronger than the positive ones and because of this computers will never replace teachers.

Our conclusion paragraph is now complete. Let's put the sentences together:

In summary, a robotic teacher lacks the discipline needed to instruct students properly and actually operates to retard a student's ability to learn new information. Thus it is clear why the idea of having a class run entirely by a machine cannot be supported. After analyzing this subject, it is predicted that the negative aspects of the debate over computerized teaching will forever be stronger than the positive ones and because of this computers will never replace teachers.

Quickly scanning for cohesion, we can see that this paragraph links both among its sentences and among the former paragraphs of the essay.

Congratulations! You have written a well-structured, cohesive essay! Start to finish it reads:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher's hindrance to a student's learning process will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students. For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time. Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide. Thus this makes it clear why technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would disrupt a student's learning process and in effect slow a student's ability to absorb information from lessons. For instance, kids require motivation to be taught effectively. Such is a quality human teachers possess but technologically driven instructor do not. From this it becomes quite evident that robotic instructors will never take the place of real teachers in a classroom.

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In summary, a robotic teacher lacks the discipline needed to instruct students properly and actually operates to retard a student's ability to learn new information. Thus it is clear why the idea of having a class run entirely by a machine cannot be supported. After analyzing this subject, it is predicted that the negative aspects of the debate over computerized teaching will forever be stronger than the positive ones and because of this computers will never replace teachers.

As a whole, can you see how the sentences link together? How about the paragraphs? Do you see how the summary links not only to the supporting paragraphs but also back to the introduction? Can you feel how the introduction paragraph provides a map of the entire essay? Can you see how the conclusion paragraphs compliments this map and brings the entire essay to a close?

Try it yourself!

Now try an essay from start to finish. Look to the essay we wrote together if you need some guidance.

In some cultures, children must follow very strict rules of behaviour while in others they are allowed to do almost anything they want. Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. Given time, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

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Try again. Really focus on your cohesion and making sure the entire essay works as a large, cohesive unit.

The age of information technology has taken a lot of people by surprise. While it has become a way of life for some, others know very little about it. Eventually we will have a polarised society and this will lead to serious social problems. Form an opinion based on the info above and write a well-reasoned essay.

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4.2 Cohesion at the essay level

Let's look again at our completed essay. In addition to having cohesion at a sentence level, we have cohesion at an essay level:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher's hindrance to a student's learning process will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students. For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time. Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide. Thus this makes it clear why technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would disrupt a student's learning process and in effect slow a student's ability to absorb information from lessons. For instance, kids require motivation to be taught effectively. Such is a quality human teachers possess but technologically driven instructor do not. From this it becomes quite evident that robotic instructors will never take the place of real teachers in a classroom.

In summary, a robotic teacher lacks the discipline needed to instruct students properly and actually operates to retard a student's ability to learn new information. Thus it is clear why the idea of having a class run entirely by a machine cannot be supported. After analyzing this subject, it is predicted that the negative aspects of the debate over computerized teaching will forever be stronger than the positive ones and because of this computers will never replace teachers.

In yellow, we can see our supporting paragraphs' topic sentences referring back to the information presented in our introduction paragraph's outline sentence.

In blue, our supporting paragraph conclusion sentences directly link each supporting paragraph's idea back to the thesis.

In green, our summary sentence links back to both supporting paragraphs *and* the outline sentence in the introduction.

And finally in red, our restatement of thesis brings the essay to a close by reinforcing the argument made in the thesis at the beginning of the essay.

Thus it is easy to see how the sentences in the entire essay work together as a team and cause the essay to operate as one large, cohesive unit.

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5.1 Discussion essays – How to analyze a topic in an essay

There is a chance you will be asked on your exam to *analyze*, *critique* or *discuss* a topic. These types of essay questions are difficult to fit into the argument essay format and thus must be responded to in a different manner.

The first thing to understand is exactly when an essay question needs to be responded to using a discussion-style essay format. If you recall from 3.1, essay questions can be understood by identifying three things – scope, keywords and instruction words. To identify what type of essay to write, we need to only look at the instruction words as these words tell us what to do. Let's look at our original essay question:

Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. Given time, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

As you recall from 3.1, the instruction words here are asking us to choose a side – agree or disagree. Thus the question is making it very clear that it wants to see our opinion and because of this there is only ***one*** essay style we can use: an argument essay. Now take a look at this question:

Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. Given time, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyze both sides of this argument.

Here, the instruction words have changed. What are they telling us to do? We have to look at both sides of the statement and this is difficult to do using an argument essay format. It is important to look closely at what the essay question is asking for in its instruction words. Does it want to see you opinion? Or is it asking for a discussion on a topic? For a list of possible instruction words asking you to write a discussion essay, please review 1.4.

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5.2 What is the difference between argument and discussion essays?

Let's look at the sentence structure of both an argument essay and a discussion essay:

Argument Essay

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

- Sentence 1 - Background statement
- Sentence 2 - Detailed background statement
- Sentence 3 - Thesis
- Sentence 4 - Outline sentence

Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

- Sentence 1 - Summary
- Sentence 2 - Restatement of thesis
- Sentence 3 - Prediction or recommendation

Discussion Essay

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

- Sentence 1 - Background statement
- Sentence 2 - Detailed background statement
- Sentence 3 – Statement of points of view to be analyzed
- Sentence 4 - Outline sentence

Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 – Statement of first point of view
- Sentence 2 – Example supporting this point of view
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 – Statement of second point of view
- Sentence 2 – Example supporting this point of view
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

- Sentence 1 – Summary
- Sentence 2 – Statement of position
- Sentence 3 - Prediction or recommendation

As you can see, both essays have the same number of sentences, 15. Many of the sentences in the essays are also similar or exactly the same. However one major difference that you may have noticed is that the discussion essay lacks a thesis! As you learned in 1.3, a *thesis* is the most important sentence is the essay. So how can an essay exist without one?

To answer this we must look at what the essay's purpose is. An argument essay's purpose is to state an opinion and prove it. However a discussion essay's purpose is to analyze the opinions of

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others and finally come to a reasoned conclusion. When we write an argument essay, our opinion is stated right at the beginning in the *thesis* sentence, however when we write a discussion essay our opinion is stated at the end in our *statement of position* sentence. In a way, an argument essay and a discussion essay mirror each other.

Let's look again at this essay question:

Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. Given time, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyze both sides of this argument.

Analyzing both sides of this argument challenges us to come up with reasons that both support and refute it. Please read this suggested response:

In today's world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. The argument that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom is a subject that is both supported and refuted by many. Both sides of this argument will be analyzed before a reasoned conclusion is drawn.

Firstly it is easy to see the progressive rate at which technology is able to mimic both the physical and mental abilities of human beings. For example, the Honda robot Asimov can today move its body and manipulate objects with human-like precision. Therefore the possibility of robotic teachers in the future truly becomes a plausible outcome given time. Because of this it is easy to see why the argument that technology could replace human teachers in the classroom has garnered support.

However on the other side of this argument it must be remembered that a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students. For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time. Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide. Thus this makes it clear why the argument that technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom could also be plausible.

In summary, both sides of the argument regarding the possibility of a technologically driven classroom have strong support. However after analyzing both camps it is clear that the idea of having a class run entirely by a machine cannot be supported. As such, it is predicted that the negative aspects of the debate over computerized teaching will forever be stronger than the positive ones and because of this computers will never replace teachers.

As you can see, many areas remain quite similar to our original argument essay. However in this essay we have been careful *not* to share our opinion on this topic until after we have analyzed the opinions of others.

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6.0 Review what you have learned in this book

Try this brief quiz to ensure you have retained what was taught in this book.

What are the 3 areas you should look for in the IELTS Task 2 writing questions?

_____

How many paragraphs should your IELTS Task 2 response be?

_____

What is the most important sentence in an argument essay? What does it do?

_____

Name one way argument essays and discussion essays are different.

_____

What is cohesion?

_____

Fill in the missing information in this argument essay outline:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

- Sentence 1 - _____
- Sentence 2 - Detailed background statement
- Sentence 3 - _____
- Sentence 4 - Outline sentence

Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - _____
- Sentence 3 - _____
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - _____
- Sentence 3 - _____
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

- Sentence 1 - _____
- Sentence 2 - Restatement of thesis
- Sentence 3 - _____

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Write 3 examples of *cohesive* phrases that you could use to show a contrast:

_____

_____

_____

Write a thesis for this essay question:

New York City is a huge metropolitan area and as with most huge cities has a number of means of public transportation. A metro system is the most effective way to get around large cities like New York. Support this statement.

_____

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6.0 Review what you have learned in this book (*Answers*)

What are the 3 areas you should look for in the IELTS Task 2 writing questions?
Scope
Keywords
Instruction words

How many paragraphs should your IELTS Task 2 response be?
4

What is the most important sentence in an argument essay? What does it do?
The thesis is the most important sentence in and essay. It acts as a direct answer to the essay question and presents the writer's opinion or argument.

Name one way argument essays and discussion essays are different.
Argument essays present the writer's opinion in the introduction paragraph (via the *thesis*). Discussion essays present the writer's opinion in the conclusion paragraph (via the *statement of position* sentence).

or

Argument essays state and prove an argument while discussion essays analyze the opinions of others.

What is cohesion?
Cohesion is the process of writing with fluent, linking ideas.

Fill in the missing information in this argument essay outline:
Paragraph 1 - Introduction

- Sentence 1 – ***Background statement***
- Sentence 2 - Detailed background statement
- Sentence 3 - ***Thesis***
- Sentence 4 - Outline sentence

Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - ***Example***
- Sentence 3 - ***Discussion***
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - ***Example***
- Sentence 3 - ***Discussion***
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

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Paragraph 4 - Conclusion

- Sentence 1 - ***Summary***
- Sentence 2 - Restatement of thesis
- Sentence 3 – ***Prediction or recommendation***

Write 3 examples of *cohesive* phrases that you could use to show a contrast:
…on the other hand…
…however…
…conversely…

Write a thesis for this essay question:

New York City is a huge metropolitan area and as with most huge cities has a number of means of public transportation. A metro system is the most effective way to get around large cities like New York. Support this statement.

A metro system is by far the most effective way to get around large cities like New York.

or

A metro system is not the most effective way to get around large cities like New York.

or

A metro system is not as effective as a bus system to get around large cities like New York.
(Of course, here you can substitute any system where 'bus system' is written.)

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