IELTS
Academic and General Task 2:
How to write at a band 9 level

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Ryan Thomas Higgins.

Layout by Daria Lacy

Cover by Dominique Gamelin

Telegram channel for IELTS: @mockTashkent

FOREWORD

The 2016-2017 version of this book marks the 5th update since this work was first released in 2010. The purpose of this book has always been to provide the IELTS candidate with a brief but actionable summary of how to write an effective essay in the Task 2 portion of the Academic and General IELTS exams. This book should act as a supplement to the candidate's repertoire of IELTS Writing resources. Although a helpful guide, candidates should couple what they learn from this book with active practice and personal feedback from an IELTS Writing coach. For candidates that do not have access to guidance, free feedback may be received from the 'Post your writing' section of the IELTSNetwork.com forum.

IELTS candidates should remember that there is no universally 'correct' IELTS essay format. Examiners award marks to a candidate's written language based on its strength across four different criteria - Task Achievement, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resources, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy. This book provides Task 2 structural suggestions that are designed to be flexible and able to fulfil these four criteria given any IELTS essay question. However, candidates still need to think critically about the question they receive on the exam. Tailoring the Task 2 structures taught in this book may be required.

This work has been read for accuracy by a practising IELTS examiner on 16 June 2014. 'Practising IELTS examiner' is defined as a person holding a letter from the IELTS Test Partners indicating their current status as an active IELTS examiner. The proofreading examiner answered 'yes' when asked (1) whether all information provided in this book is accurate and in line with IELTS success and (2) whether all sample responses in this book would be likely to score band 9 if produced in an actual IELTS sitting. The participating examiner was asked to operate at a capacity that they felt did not call their confidentiality arrangement with Cambridge ESOL, the British Council, and IDP Australia into question.

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1.1



HAT IS REQUIRED ON THE IELTS WRITING EXAM?

The writing portion of the IELTS is 60 minutes in length and requires the candidate complete two writing samples referred to as *Task 1* and *Task 2*. The candidate's overall writing band weights a third to Task 1 and two thirds to Task 2. Candidates are thus expected to allot 20 minutes to Task 1 and 40 minutes to Task 2.

The Academic and General Writing exams are different. Task 1 of the Academic exam requires the candidate describe information presented in a graph, table, chart, diagram or map, or some combination of these sources. Task 1 of the General exam requires the candidate write a letter. Candidates must write essays to fulfil Task 2 on both exams; however, General Module candidates do not forfeit marks if their writing is less formal in tone.

Despite these differences between the Academic and General exams, the marking rubric examiners use to grade Task 2 on both tests is very similar. Candidates are assessed on their performance in four categories: Task Achievement, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resources, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy. The *Task Achievement* portion of the mark gauges the extent to which the candidate is able to fulfil the requirements of the essay task. *Coherence and Cohesion* is a measure of the candidate's ability to deliver and connect ideas in a way that expresses a message clearly. The *Lexical Resources* portion of the mark assesses the accuracy, variety and relevance of the vocabulary a candidate uses in their essay. *Grammatical Range and Accuracy* grades the candidate's demonstration of grammatical competence and execution.

These four sections are interdependent, and thus performing poorly in one often lowers performance in others. Although the marking breadths are usually displayed as having a lateral relationship in most public IELTS literature (see Figure 1.1), this relationship is more accurately described as one founded on the strength of a candidate's grammatical and lexical resources (see Figure 1.2).

IELTS TASK 2 Writing band descriptors (public version)

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	▪ 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	▪ uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention ▪ skilfully manages paragraphing	▪ uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'	▪ uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	▪ sufficiently addresses all parts of the task ▪ presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas	▪ sequences information and ideas logically ▪ manages all aspects of cohesion well ▪ uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately	▪ 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	▪ uses a wide range of structures ▪ the majority of sentences are error-free ▪ makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	▪ addresses all parts of the task ▪ presents a clear position throughout the response ▪ pre[illegible]	▪ logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout ▪ uses a [illegible]	▪ uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision ▪ uses [illegible]	▪ uses a variety of complex structures ▪ produces frequent error-free sentences ▪ has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors

Figure 1.1

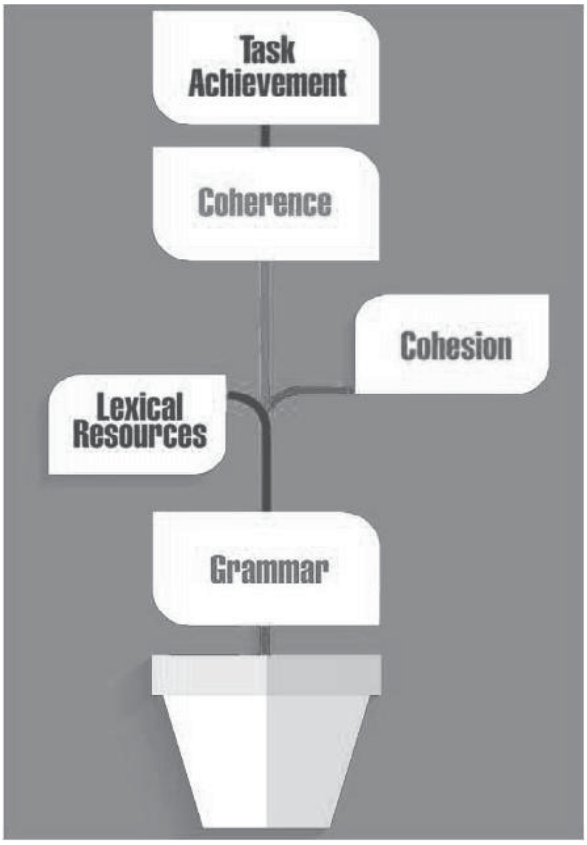


Figure 1.2

Accurate grammatical and lexical demonstration acts as a base for the communication of any message. A candidate with weak grammatical and lexical execution *cannot* score well for coherence — the message simply isn't clear enough to make this possible. Poor grammar and lexical choices can also impact the ability of the sentences and paragraphs in a candidate's response to work together, thus reducing the clarity with which the links between ideas can be seen, traits otherwise known as c*oherence* and *cohesion*. When both coherence and cohesion suffer, the response's fulfilment of task is limited, as the candidate simply does not have the ability to extend the answer and develop a full response.

Assuming the candidate has interpreted the Task 2 question correctly and structured their essay appropriately, the interdependence that exists between these four assessed areas reveals overarching traits of certain IELTS Writing bands. For example, when the IELTS examiner reads a band 5 candidate's writing, there will be occasional moments when they lose track of what the writer is saying. These periodic instances of complete incoherence are,

however, not present at the band 6 level, and this is a clear distinguisher between the two. Band 6 candidates are capable of producing ideas that can be understood by the examiner a majority of the time despite grammatical and lexical inaccuracy in more than 50% of all sentences. It is for this reason that candidates often get stuck at the band 6 level: they don't realise they are making mistakes because their writing successfully communicates a message. Band 7 candidates are an improvement on this. They produce coherent ideas and are capable of writing accurate sentences more than 50% of the time; however, mild wording issues result in regular instances of awkward constructions or improper tone. Band 8 and beyond is denoted by increasingly few grammatical and lexical errors despite a growth in the complexity of sentence structures.

1.2



HAT IS AN ESSAY?

In IELTS Task 2, the candidate is required to write an essay, a structure that must be understood before it can be effectively created. The easiest way to define an essay is to first define the smaller units it is made of:

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.

In its most basic form, an essay supports, refutes or analyses a topic through the use of examples, discussion and reason. The purpose of an essay is to either (1) declare a position on a topic and persuade the reader to agree or (2) derive a position on a topic after discussing this topic in writing. The most straightforward approach to scoring well in Task 2 is to structure the response in a logical way that allows the candidate to make and analyse claims, share and discuss examples, and draw conclusions, all within 40 minutes. This is best done using a structure that is divided into four or five paragraphs. Each paragraph is subdivided into several sentences, and each sentence carries out a specific job. When united, the sentences work towards a strong centralised purpose: either to argue in support of a position, or to discuss multiple positions.

To illustrate, look at this argument 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 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic
- 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 an IELTS essay at roughly 250-275 words, a length that is long enough to allow the candidate to fulfil their essay question but also short enough that it can be produced within 40 minutes. Each sentence should present a clear idea and link to other areas in the essay using cohesive phrases.

Following an essay structure such as the above provides the IELTS candidate with numerous advantages. For one, it allows the candidate to save time in the examination room, as a decision on essay format has been made ahead of time. Secondly, this structure encourages cohesion at the essay level, which directly benefits a candidate's Coherence and Cohesion mark. This in turn improves the candidate's Task Achievement mark, as using the structure guides the candidate towards a fuller response to the essay question. Finally, simply knowing that the essay's structure has already been decided can be a huge confidence boost for the candidate when in the

exam room, and confidence always leads to better writing. Being capable of producing and adapting essay structures before entering the exam room gives the candidate control over their exam and sets up a scenario within which they are much more likely to be successful.

1.3



NTERPRETING TASK 2 ESSAY QUESTIONS

Understanding the meaning of an essay question is essential to writing a solid essay in response. When interpreting essay questions, the candidate should first pinpoint these three attributes: *keywords*, *qualifying words*, *action words*.

To demonstrate these three properties, take the following essay question:

> ***Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. In the not too distant future, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?***

Keywords are the topics that focus the candidate's writing. In other words, they are the subjects that can be included in the candidate's written response. In this example essay question, 'technology' and 'education' are the two controlling *keywords*. Topics outside the spheres of 'technology' and 'education' thus have no place in this essay.

Qualifying words are the words in the question which tell the candidate how the various ideas relate. They are often the words that describe degree and frame some overarching opinion. In the above sample question, the phrase 'increasingly prevalent' is used. Notice how this clarifies what is being said about technology - *technology is being used more and more in classroom education*. The phrase 'completely replace' shapes the relationship expected to develop between technology and education - *teachers are going to be eliminated by technological advancement*. 'In the not too distant future' makes clear that the prediction in the question is expected to occur somewhat soon. Notice how these *qualifying words* shape the question and give it increased precision and depth. It is very important the candidate understands the nature of this depth to ensure their response is accurately aligned to the question.

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Here are some simplified examples of *qualifying words* grouped by what they describe:

Contrast

Technology's presence is growing the world over. **Despite this**, its ability to replace a human in the near future is unlikely.

Although technology's presence in the classroom is growing the world over, its ability to replace a human teacher in the near future is unlikely.

Technology-based instructors are very good at teaching simple concepts through repetitive games. **However,** they are incapable of maintaining control of young students in a dynamic classroom setting.

Technology-based instructors are very good at teaching simple concepts through repetitive games. **On the other hand**, they are incapable of maintaining control of young students in a dynamic classroom setting.

Unlike a human teacher, technology-driven instructors can carry on teaching for an indefinite period of time.

In contract to a human teacher, technology-driven instructors can carry on teaching for an indefinite period of time.

A human teacher can only teach for a finite amount of time, **whereas** a technology-driven instructor can carry on teaching indefinitely.

A human teacher can only teach for a finite amount of time, **while** a technology-driven instructor can carry on teaching indefinitely.

A human teacher can only teach for a finite amount of time. **Conversely,** a technology-driven instructor can carry on teaching indefinitely.

A human teacher can only teach for a finite amount of time. **This differs from** a technology-driven instructor, which could carry on teaching indefinitely.

Compare

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students. This is something it has **in common with** human teachers.

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students, **as would a** human teacher.

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students, a trait it **has in common with** human teachers.

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students. Human teachers would **likewise** need to tailor their teaching approach.

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students. **Similarly,** human teachers would **also** need to tailor their teaching approach.

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students. **This mirrors** the approach of human teachers, who would **also** need to tailor their teaching.

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students. **This parallels** the approach of human teachers, who would **also** need to tailor their teaching.

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students. **This reflects** the approach of human teachers, who would **also** need to tailor their teaching.

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students. **This resembles** the approach of human teachers, who would **also** need to tailor their teaching.

A technology-driven teacher would need to adjust lessons to its students. In this way, the approach of human teachers is **alike**.

Support

A technology-driven teacher would not tire, a quality **beneficial** to lessons that require extended periods of repetition.

A technology-driven teacher would not tire, a quality **advantageous** to lessons that require extended periods of repetition.

A technology-driven teacher would not tire, a **positive** trait when it comes to lessons that require extended periods of repetition.

A technology-driven teacher would not tire, a **desirable** trait when it comes to lessons that require extended periods of repetition.

Refute

Technology-based teaching would have difficulty catering to individual students needs, a **drawback** to this teaching arrangement.

Technology-based teaching would have difficulty catering to individual students needs, a **disadvantage** to this teaching arrangement.

An **undesirable** trait of technology-driven teaching is the difficulty it would have when catering to individual students needs.

An **negative** trait of technology-driven teaching is the difficulty it would have when catering to individual students needs.

Increase

Technology's role in the classroom **has been climbing** the world over.

Technology's role in the classroom **has been increasing** the world over.

Technology's role in the classroom **has been growing** the world over.

Maintain

Technology's role in the classroom is expected to **remain steady** into the foreseeable future.

Technology's role in the classroom is expected to **remain stable** into the foreseeable future.

Technology's role in the classroom is expected to **remain unchanged** into the foreseeable future.

Decrease

Technology's presence in the classroom is expected to **decline** in the foreseeable future.

Technology's presence in the classroom is expected to **drop** in the foreseeable future.

Technology's presence in the classroom is expected to **shrink** in the foreseeable future.

A **reduced** presence of technology in the classroom is expected to carry on into the foreseeable future.

Instability

Technology's initial growth as a classroom presence was **volatile**.

Technology's initial growth as a classroom presence was **varied**.

Technology's initial growth as a classroom presence was **unstable**.

Technology's initial growth as a classroom presence was **unpredictable.**

Maximum/Minimum

Technology's presence in the classroom **spiked** in the early 2000s.

Technology's presence in the classroom **peaked** in the early 2000s.

Technology's presence in the classroom **hit a trough** in the early 2000s.

Technology's presence in the classroom **hit bottom** in the early 2000s.

Remarkable

Technology's presence in the classroom has grown in **unexpected** ways.

Technology's presence in the classroom has grown in **astounding** ways.

Technology's presence in the classroom has grown in **unorthodox** ways.

Action words are the words that elicit response from the candidate and ultimately channel the candidate's writing towards an argument or discussion essay structure. In the above example essay question, the *action words* are 'do you agree or disagree with this statement', a phrase that instructs the candidate to choose and support a position. This scenario is best responded to using an argument essay structure.

Here are some additional IELTS *action words* grouped by what they require:

Requiring the candidate support

Support this statement.

Argue in favour of this statement.

Prove this statement.

Requiring the candidate refute

Refute this statement.

Disprove this statement.

Why is this statement untrue?

Requiring the candidate support or refute

Do you agree or disagree?

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

What is your opinion?

How do you feel about this?

Come to a reasoned conclusion.

Requiring the candidate compare/discuss

Contrast these two ideas.

Compare these issues.

Discuss this problem.

Present a discussion on this issue.

Analyse both sides of this statement.

Combining the *keywords* with the *qualifying words* delivers an understanding of the context within which the Task 2 question is framed. Responding appropriately to the *action words* within this context is at the very base of IELTS essay success.

When engaging the exam, a misinterpreted question can instantly cause a candidate's writing to drop several bands, as it could mean all examples, discussion and conclusions are misaligned with the IELTS Writing task. To avoid this, the candidate should always take a moment to mentally paraphrase the question before they start writing to ensure they understand precisely what the question is asking. For example, a fitting reword of the above essay question could be:

Do you agree or disagree that technology will supersede the role of teachers in the near future?

Now that the question is fully understood, it can be responded to effectively.

Try it yourself!

Decide what the *keywords*, *qualifying words* and *action words* are for these sample Task 2 writing questions. Then rewrite each question in your own words.

Of all public transportation options, a metro is the most convenient way to get around a large city. Do you agree or disagree?

Keywords:

Qualifying words:

Action words:

Reworded question:

The world's wealthiest countries have increasingly been outsourcing labour-related jobs to cheaper alternatives in other nations. Write an essay supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour.

Keywords:

Qualifying words:

Action words:

Reworded question:

Many people feel violent media encourages real-life violence among young people. What do you think causes young people to behave violently?

Keywords:

Qualifying words:

Action words:

Reworded question:

More than one university degree is required to get ahead in many professions today. In the future, it is likely that people will attain a number of degrees before even starting work. Respond to this argument.

Keywords:

Qualifying words:

Action words:

Reworded question:

Try it yourself! (Answers)

Of all public transportation options, a metro is the most convenient way to get around a large city. Do you agree or disagree?

Keywords: public transportation, metro, large city

Qualifying words: most convenient

Action words: Do you agree or disagree?

Reworded question: Is a subway system the easiest way to get around a large city?

The world's wealthiest countries have increasingly been outsourcing labour-related jobs to cheaper alternatives in other nations. Write an essay supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour.

Keywords: wealthiest countries, outsourcing, labour-related jobs

Qualifying words: increasingly cheaper alternatives

Action words: Write an essay response supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour.

Reworded question: Argue that the migration of labour from wealthier nations to other countries is a phenomenon that should be encouraged.

Many people feel violent media encourages real-life violence among young people. What do you think causes young people to behave violently?

Keywords: violent media, real-life violence, young people

Qualifying words: many, encourages

Action words: What do you think causes young people to behave violently?

Reworded question: What incites violence among young people?

More than one university degree is required to get ahead in many professions today. In the future, it is likely that people will attain a number of degrees before even starting work. Respond to this argument.

Keywords: university degree, professions

Qualifying words: more than one, get ahead, a number of, before even starting

Action words: Respond to this argument.

Reworded question: Do you agree that people will need to get a number of degrees to be competitive in the workplace of the future?

Using your new understanding of *keywords*, *qualifying words* and *action words*, write your own IELTS Task 2 essay question. Then identify the *keywords*, *qualifying words*, and *action words* you included in the question. If needed, refer to the lexical tables earlier in this chapter for wording ideas. For feedback on your question, post your work to the ieltsnetwork.com forum.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Keywords:

Qualifying words:

Action words:

1.4



HE THESIS

Now that the question has been broken into *keywords*, *qualifying words* and *action words*, an aligned essay can be written. All IELTS essay questions require the candidates clearly state their position on the topic, and in the case of an argument essay, this declaration occurs in the first paragraph as a *thesis*. (Declaring a position in a discussion essay will be explained in section 2.7.)

An essay's thesis is only one sentence long, but it is the most important sentence in the entire argument essay. It is the sentence that establishes a direction for the essay and acts as the primary link between the essay and the Task 2 question. Thus, if it is not composed correctly, it will cause the entire essay to be off-topic to some degree. Despite the criticalness of its role, a thesis is very easy to write. In fact, the thesis can borrow words directly from the essay question.

To illustrate, in the example question from section 1.3, the thesis can only be one of two things:

I agree that technology will replace teachers in the classroom.

or

I disagree that technology will replace teachers in the classroom.

Note how closely these two theses resemble the *action words* of the essay question. Writing the thesis in this way ensures the examiner is aware of the relationship between the essay question and the essay response. In other areas of the Task 2 response, however, the candidate is best to vary their wording when possible.

Try it yourself!

Read each question and write a fitting thesis.

Of all public transportation options, a metro is the most convenient way to get around a large city. Do you agree or disagree?

Thesis:

The world's wealthiest countries have increasingly been outsourcing labour-related jobs to cheaper alternatives in other nations. Write an essay supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour.

Thesis:

Many people feel violent media encourages real-life violence among young people. What do you think causes young people to behave violently?

Thesis:

More than one university degree is required to get ahead in many professions today. In the future, it is likely that people will attain a number of degrees before even starting work. Respond to this argument.

Thesis:

Try it yourself! (Answers)

Of all public transportation options, a metro is the most convenient way to get around a large city. Do you agree or disagree?

Thesis: I agree that a subway system is the most convenient way to get around a large city.

The world's wealthiest countries have increasingly been outsourcing labour-related jobs to cheaper alternatives in other nations. Write an essay supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour.

Thesis: In this essay, I argue that the outsourcing of jobs to less wealthy countries is a phenomenon that should be encouraged.

Many people feel violent media encourages real-life violence among young people. What do you think causes young people to behave violently?

Thesis: I argue parental negligence and the declining rates of in-person communities worldwide are the main catalysts of youth violence.

More than one university degree is required to get ahead in many professions today. In the future, it is likely that people will attain a number of degrees before even starting work. Respond to this argument.

Thesis: I agree that in the future people will need to complete several degrees to ensure their workplace competitiveness.

2.1



OW TO WRITE AN INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

The introduction paragraph acts as a roadmap for the entire essay. In the case of an argument essay, it declares the topic, the writer's position on the topic, and the supporting points that will be used to uphold and prove this position. Thus, when an IELTS examiner reads the introduction to a essay, they should ***already know exactly what the rest of the essay will look like***.

Review the four sentences that appear in an argument essay's introduction paragraph:

- Background sentence
- Detailed background sentence
- Thesis
- Outline

To illustrate these sentences in action, this same essay question will be used:

> ***Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. In the not too distant future, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?***

The background sentence of the introduction paragraph declares something general about the essay question's topic. Typically, this sentence will paraphrase the message delivered by the *keywords* and *qualifying words*. For example:

> The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world.

Here, a general sentence has been written about the nature of one of the main *keywords* in the essay question: technology. The second sentence in the introduction

paragraph needs to narrow the focus of the essay further. In this instance, the candidate would connect the idea of increasing technological adoption with the classroom. For instance:

Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom.

Now that the background sentences are finished and the essay has been narrowed to the topics outlined in the essay question, it is time to compose a comprehensive thesis. As explained, the thesis is the most important sentence in the entire essay because it ***addresses the essay question directly***. In this instance, the candidate has been given the choice to support or refute a statement on technology's role in the future classroom. Choosing the position — support or refute — that is easiest to write enhances the candidate's chances of greater grammatical and lexical accuracy, overall coherence and cohesion, and increased achievement of task, and in effect helps establish a writing scenario within which the candidate is more likely to succeed. For candidates serious about maximising their band, the IELTS Writing exam is *not* the place to take chances on a straddled position that tries to concurrently agree and disagree.

To demonstrate how an effective thesis can simplify the writing process, review what the essay question is in essence asking: ***will technology someday take the place of a human teacher in the classroom?***

What would this mean?

…students would 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 unable to cater to a student's learning needs

…because a robotic teacher would not be capable of encouraging students as well as a human

…because a robotic teacher's classroom would be boring and difficult to learn from

Is it easier to agree or disagree with this statement?

…disagree!

With the easier position selected, the candidate can confidently write a fitting thesis:

> I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future.

Following this declaration of position, the candidate needs to state what points they will use for support. This is done in the fourth and final sentence in the introduction paragraph: *the outline sentence*.

The outline sentence declares two points that will be used to uphold the thesis. These points are expanded upon in the supporting paragraphs of the essay.

Supporting points should be selected based on how easily real-life examples can be brainstormed. Here are two supporting ideas from the above brainstorm session and a real-life example of each:

1. **A robotic teacher would be unable to cater to a student's learning needs. Example: A robotic teacher cannot recognise human physical cues.**

2. **A technology-driven teacher would have difficulty encouraging students. Example: Children learn better when emotionally connected to their teacher.**

The outline sentence is formed by grouping these points and declaring a progression for the essay:

> Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show this.

This marks the completion of the introduction paragraph. Here it is in its entirety:

> The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom. Despite this, I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future. Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show this.

As can be seen, anyone looking at this introduction paragraph knows exactly what will be examined later in the essay. The introduction paragraph introduces the candidate's topic in the background sentences, presents the candidate's argument in the thesis, and declares the supporting ideas in the outline sentence. To an examiner, an introduction like this clearly defines the candidate's position and plan for progression through the rest of the essay and establishes the link between the essay and the essay question.

Try it yourself!

Look at the essay questions below. If the question permits, brainstorm points that support and points that refute. Then choose to agree or disagree based on which essay would be easier to write. Finally, write the introduction paragraph for each essay.

> ***Of all public transportation options, a metro is the most convenient way to get around a large city. Do you agree or disagree?***

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The world's wealthiest countries have increasingly been outsourcing labour-related jobs to cheaper alternatives in other nations. Write an essay supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour.

Many people feel violent media encourages real-life violence among young people. What do you think causes young people to behave violently?

More than one university degree is required to get ahead in many professions today. In the future, it is likely that people will attain a number of degrees before even starting work. Respond to this argument.

Try it yourself! (Answers)

Of all public transportation options, a metro is the most convenient way to get around a large city. Do you agree or disagree?

Population dense cities around the world require developed transportation systems for public mobility. Underground rail has proved to be a very effective example of one such system. I agree that a metro is the most convenient way to get around a city. This will be shown by looking at a how a metro seamlessly blends into a city's infrastructure and allows the rider to avoid traffic.

The world's wealthiest countries have increasingly been outsourcing labour-related jobs to cheaper alternatives in other nations. Write an essay supporting the case for the outsourcing of labour.

The 20th century has seen a sharp increase in the number of jobs that have moved from wealthy countries to countries offering cheap labour. Although this is a subject that is contested by many, I feel that this trend has more benefits than drawbacks. The improved relations and economic ties that are created when jobs move from one country to another will be analysed to prove this thesis true.

Many people feel violent media encourages real-life violence among young people. What do you think causes young people to behave violently?

An unfortunate trend is the growth in violence among young people in many parts of the world. This phenomenon moves in tandem with a rise in violent media consumption. Although many feel there is an intrinsic link between the two, I argue parental negligence and the declining rates of in-person communities worldwide are the main catalysts of youth violence. This essay will examine the dangerous nature of these motivators.

More than one university degree is required to get ahead in many professions today. In the future, it is likely that people will attain a number of degrees before even starting work. Respond to this argument.

Trends associated with globalisation have led to levels of competition never before seen. To remain professionally relevant in this work climate, individuals worldwide are pushing themselves to attain an increasingly large amount of formal education. I agree that in the future people will need to complete several degrees to ensure their workplace competitiveness. This will be proved by looking at the professional landscape of my home country and the manner in which qualification bridging continues to grow skilled worker numbers worldwide.

2.2



Coherence and Cohesion

What does coherence mean?

Coherence is the ability of a written piece of work to be understood by the reader.

What does cohesion mean?

Cohesion is the manner in which a written piece of work links its ideas to create clear relationships and logical progressions between them.

The *Coherence and Cohesion* portion of the candidate's mark is a measure of how clearly an essay's ideas are communicated and how fluently these ideas work together. Coherence is most readily achieved by employing short, grammatically correct sentences that are concise and to the point. Cohesion can be achieved by using *linking words or phrases*, often called 'cohesive devices', to create relationships between the various sentences and paragraphs in the essay. Combining concise sentences with cohesive devices is a controlled way to produce more complex sentence types with accuracy. *Almost every sentence in an IELTS essay should have a linking word of some sort*. In fact, the only sentence that can omit linking words is the background sentence in the introduction paragraph, as there is no sentence preceding it that can be linked to!

The introduction paragraph written last chapter has several linking words in it. Here, they have been underlined:

> The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can <u>even</u> be seen in the classroom. <u>Despite</u> <u>this,</u> I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future. Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show <u>this.</u>

Note the manner in which these linking words help all sentences in the paragraph work as a team:

Even – The word 'even' evolves the ideas of the initial background sentence further. Here, it is being used to restrict the essay's scope. The essay is *not* referring to *all* technology; it is referring to technology types that appear in a classroom.

Despite this – This phrase is used to show concession. Although the essay acknowledges that technology is becoming more apparent in the classroom, it does not support the idea that this technology will overtake the classroom role of the teacher.

This – 'This' acts as a bridge between the outline sentences and the central argument of the essay. It refers to the thesis and clarifies that the supporting ideas of (1) *lack of educational accommodation* and (2) *the inability to motivate* will act as proof of this thesis.

For all remaining demonstrations encountered in this book, actively note the linking phrases used to create the relationships between sentences and paragraphs. For reference, here is a list of several cohesive devices and a demonstration of their use. Be sure to also note the corresponding punctuation:

To indicate sequence

Firstly, grade improvement is experienced when high school students get enough sleep every night.

Secondly, grade improvement is experienced when high school students get enough sleep every night.

Finally, grade improvement is experienced when high school students get enough sleep every night.

Lastly, grade improvement is experienced when high school students get enough sleep every night.

To cue evidence

For example, several independent studies reveal that high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

For instance, many high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

Take the example of high school students in America, who regularly experience

grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

Many high school students, **such as** those from America, experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

To show similarity

Likewise, many high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

Similarly, many high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

High school students in America **also** experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

In tandem with this are the experiences of many high school students in America, whose grades improve when practising this lifestyle.

Coupled with this are the experiences of many high school students in America, whose grades improve when practising this lifestyle.

To show contrast

On the other hand, many high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

However, many high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

Many high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle; **however,** this is not the case in Canada.

Many high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle, **but** this is not the case in Canada.

In contrast, many high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

Conversely, many high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

To extend or amplify

Further, several independent studies reveal that high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

Moreover, several independent studies reveal that high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

To add to this, several independent studies reveal that high school students in America experience grade improvement when practising this lifestyle.

To show result

Thus, the link between restful sleep and student performance can be seen.

Therefore, the link between restful sleep and student performance can be seen.

It is clear that there is a link between restful sleep and student performance.

Because of this, students are able to maximise their academic performance.

As a result, students are able to maximise their academic performance.

Consequently, students are able to maximise their academic performance.

To draw conclusion

In conclusion, restful sleep acts as a clear precursor to improved academic performance among high school aged students.

To summarise, restful sleep acts as a clear precursor to improved academic performance among high school aged students.

To reiterate, restful sleep acts as a clear precursor to improved academic performance among high school aged students.

2.3



OW TO WRITE SUPPORTING PARAGRAPHS

In IELTS Writing, supporting paragraphs exist to help prove the thesis using real and factual — or seemingly real and factual — information. As learned in section 1.2, supporting paragraphs are made up of four sentences:

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

In section 2.1, an introduction paragraph was written. Reread this paragraph, paying close attention to the outline sentence:

> The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom. Despite this, I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future. Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show this.

The outline sentence (underlined) declares the topics the candidate will use in their supporting paragraphs:

1 - the inability of a technology-driven teacher to cater to students

2 - the difficulty a machine would have motivating students

To demonstrate the validity of these points, the candidate needs to think of real-life examples that show each supporting point in action. Examples are most effective when they are tangible facts because this creates persuasion and makes the essay's argument difficult to counter. Good examples include references to companies,

products, well-known people, historical events, cultural traditions, and personal experiences. Bad examples are personal opinions, assumptions, and overly general references.

Below is a table that shows how the four sentences of the supporting paragraph work together. The candidate needs to assign at least one example to each supporting paragraph. Notice the position and delivery style of each example and how the discussion and conclusion areas link the example back to the central essay argument, thus reinforcing the writer's opinion:

	Supporting point 1	Supporting point 2
Topic	A technology-driven teacher would not be able to cater to the needs of a classroom of people.	A machine would be unable to motivate students.
Real-world example	The world's most advanced robots, such as Honda Asimov, cannot recognise human physical cues.	American scientific theories of education state children learn faster when they have an emotional attachment to their teacher.
Discussion of example	Until human physical cues are recognised, machines will have difficulty catering their teaching to a dynamic classroom.	Young children express emotion in response to human attention, not mechanical stimulation.
Logical conclusion	It will be a very long time before a machine can interpret student learning needs in a classroom setting.	Children would learn more slowly from automated instruction than from a human teacher.

Notice how the examples and their discussion give a persuasive voice to the conclusion being drawn. These references to real-world instances make the supporting points difficult to refute, and this boosts the overall strength of the essay and its ability to convince the reader of its thesis.

Now that examples have been decided upon, the process of writing the supporting paragraphs is simplified. The first sentence declares the topic of the paragraph, which should be a reflection of what was declared in the introduction paragraph's outline sentence:

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have difficulty interpreting the educational needs of a classroom of students.

As can be seen, this *topic sentence* very clearly states the point initially brought up in the introduction paragraph's outline sentence, and this establishes a clear connection between the essay's introduction and supporting paragraphs.

The second sentence ties in the example of Honda Asimov:

For example, Honda Asimov, one of the world's most advanced robots, has trouble distinguishing simple human emotions.

Note how the example directly supports the topic by presenting factual, real-life information. Because Honda Asimov is a real robot and because Honda Asimov truly cannot distinguish emotion, the claim that is being made in the paragraph is much harder to counter. Thus, the essay as a whole is stronger.

The third sentence in the supporting paragraph is the *discussion sentence*. This sentence clarifies the link that exists between the *example* sentence and the *topic sentence* and explains what meaning is derived from the example. It also moves the paragraph towards a concluding point:

If today's most advanced artificial intelligence cannot categorise these basic physical cues, it is difficult to believe that a robot could be capable of altering study plans and teaching styles in a dynamic classroom setting.

As is seen above, clarifying the paragraph's logical progression helps ensure the fundamental message of the supporting point is fully communicated.

The final sentence in the supporting paragraph is the *conclusion sentence*. This sentence is very important, as it has to link the entire argument presented in the supporting paragraph back to the *thesis*. In carrying out this job, the conclusion sentence acts as an key point of contact between the essay question and the essay response:

Thus, this makes it clear that a technology-driven teacher is not going to be operational anytime in the near future.

When grouped, the sentences of the supporting paragraph logically unite in a very persuasive way:

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have difficulty interpreting the educational needs of a classroom of students. For example, Honda Asimov, one of the world's most advanced robots, has trouble distinguishing simple human emotions. If today's most advanced artificial intelligence cannot categorise these basic physical cues, it is difficult to believe that a robot could be capable of altering study plans and teaching styles in a dynamic classroom setting. Thus, this makes it clear that a technology-driven teacher is not going to be operational anytime in the near future.

A quick dissection illustrates the persuasive nature and manner in which the paragraph connects to other parts of the essay. Firstly, the topic amplifies and expands upon what was declared in the introduction paragraph's outline sentence, a clear instance of cohesion at the essay level. Secondly, the argument is strengthened through the use and discussion of a tangible example, and this makes it difficult for the reader to refute the writer's point. The discussion and conclusion sentences expand upon and clarify the relevance of the supporting point and link it back to the central theme of the essay.

Try it yourself!

Now you are ready to try. Look at the steps that were taken to create the above 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 teacher would be less capable of encouraging young learners than a human teacher. Your supporting example is American scientific theories of education, which argue that children learn best when they have an emotional relationship with their teacher.

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

> *Secondly, a robotic teacher would not be able to establish the emotional connection needed to motivate students. The American scientific theory of education plays a good example here. This widely supported theory argues that young learners are most motivated when they share an emotional relationship with their instructor. As most would agree expecting children to form emotional ties to machinery is unrealistic, the argument that technology will replace the teacher in the classroom can be debunked.*

Both supporting paragraphs of the essay are now finished. When joined to the introduction, the composition reads:

The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom. Despite this, I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future. Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have difficulty interpreting the educational needs of a classroom of students. For example, Honda Asimov, one of the world's most advanced robots, has trouble distinguishing simple human emotions. If today's most advanced artificial intelligence cannot categorise these basic physical cues, it is difficult to believe that a robot could be capable of altering study plans and teaching styles in a dynamic classroom setting. Thus, this makes it clear that a technology-driven teacher is not going to be operational anytime in the near future.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would not be able to establish the emotional connection needed to motivate students. The American scientific theory of education plays a good example here. This widely supported theory argues that young learners are most motivated when they share an emotional relationship with their instructor. As most would agree expecting children to form emotional ties to machinery is unrealistic, the argument that technology will replace the teacher in the classroom can be debunked.

Now read the essay again and note the way the sentences and paragraphs use linking words to tie themselves together and build the overarching argument of the essay. Cohesion at the sentence level is highlighted. Cohesion at the essay level is underlined.

The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom. Despite this, I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future. Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have difficulty interpreting the educational needs of a classroom of students. For example, Honda Asimov, one of the world's most advanced robots, has trouble distinguishing simple human emotions. If today's most advanced artificial intelligence cannot categorize these basic physical cues, it is difficult to believe that a robot could be capable of altering study plans and teaching styles in a dynamic classroom setting. Thus, this makes it clear that a technology-driven teacher is not going to be operational anytime in the near future.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would not be able to establish the emotional connection needed to motivate students. The American scientific theory of education plays a good example here. This widely supported theory argues that young learners are most motivated when they share an emotional relationship with their instructor. As most would agree expecting children to form emotional ties to machinery is unrealistic, the argument that technology will replace the teacher in the classroom can be debunked.

Try it yourself!

Here is an essay with an introduction paragraph and conclusion paragraph but no supporting paragraphs. Read the essay question and write the two missing paragraphs.

In achieving personal happiness, our relationships with family, friends, and colleagues are more important than work and wealth. Do you agree or disagree with this?

The increasing pressures of today's money-driven world can often cause people to gravitate towards material items. However, true personal happiness is rarely achieved through professional endeavours or wealth. Although these things may be nice extras, I agree that healthy relationships with family, friends and colleagues are the true keys to personal happiness. This will be shown by analysing the often lonely lives of many wealthy celebrities as well as the advice of older people who speak from experience.

As seen above, professional success and wealth cannot buy true happiness and this is a realisation that all too often comes in old age. This essay has shown that the health of relationships with family, friends and colleagues is the genuine catalyst to lasting happiness. Thus, keeping in touch with people is much more than just a courtesy.

Try it yourself! (Answers)

In achieving personal happiness, our relationships with family, friends, and colleagues are more important than work and wealth. Do you agree or disagree with this?

The increasing pressures of today's money-driven world can often cause people to gravitate towards material items. However, true personal happiness is rarely achieved through professional endeavours or wealth. Although these things may be nice extras, I agree that healthy relationships with family, friends and colleagues are the true keys to personal happiness. This will be shown by analysing the often lonely lives of many wealthy celebrities as well as the advice of older people who speak from experience.

Firstly, the lives of wealthy celebrities often illustrate that money cannot buy happiness. For example, many tremendously wealthy pop icons, such as Robbie Williams and Kirsten Dunst, suffer from debilitating depression often linked to extraordinary lifestyles that make it difficult to maintain friendships. As such instances show, money cannot be labelled an infallible precursor to happiness. The manner in which it often isolates people suggests that human interaction in the form of family and friendships is much more likely than money to be at the foundation of lasting happiness in life.

The advice from many older people regularly reiterates this. For example, all four of my grandparents claim their relationships with family and friends are the experiences that brought them the greatest happiness in their lives. As this is a common viewpoint among the aged of all countries and cultures, and because the aged simply have more experience with life, such an opinion needs to be given precedence when discussing this topic. Thus, human relationships are much more likely to be precursors to personal happiness than money or professional pursuits.

As seen above, professional success and wealth cannot buy true happiness and this is a realisation that all too often comes in old age. This essay has shown that the health of relationships with family, friends and colleagues is the genuine catalyst to lasting happiness. Thus, keeping in touch with people is much more than just a courtesy.

2.4



OW TO WRITE A CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

The conclusion paragraph recapitulates the writer's main points and closes the argument essay. It is much easier to write than the introduction and supporting paragraphs because it is made up of information that has already been delivered earlier in the response. The conclusion paragraph has three sentences:

- Sentence 1 - Summary
- Sentence 2 - Restatement of thesis
- Sentence 3 - 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 'In summary' or 'To conclude'. The *restatement of thesis* simply repeats the thesis in different words, reinforcing the central argument of the essay. The final sentence can be written as a logical guess regarding what will happen or is hoped to happen to the essay subject in the future (a *predication*) or a statement of advice regarding what should be done about the essay subject (a *recommendation*).

The conclusion paragraph is sometimes confusing to candidates because it repeats items from earlier in the essay, a practice that in other areas of the essay would lead to penalty. It is important to remember that this area of the essay is not exercising *repetition* but *amplification* and is a closing style that creates essay unity and reinforces the response's connection to the essay question.

Now take another look at the entire structure of the essay. Note how the essay's introduction and conclusion paragraphs are similar. Also note the manner in which they work to frame and reinforce the 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 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph

- Sentence 1 - Topic
- 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

In preparation for the writing of a conclusion paragraph, reread the introduction and supporting paragraphs written prior:

The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom. Despite this, I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future. Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have difficulty interpreting the educational needs of a classroom of students. For example, Honda Asimov, one of the world's most advanced robots, has trouble distinguishing simple human emotions. If today's most advanced artificial intelligence cannot categorise these basic physical cues, it is difficult to believe that a robot could be capable of altering study plans and teaching styles in a dynamic classroom setting. Thus, this makes it clear that a technology-driven teacher is not going to be operational anytime in the near future.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would not be able to establish the emotional connection needed to motivate students. The American scientific theory of education plays a good example here. This widely supported theory argues that young learners are most motivated when they share an emotional relationship with their instructor. As most would agree expecting children to form emotional ties to machinery is unrealistic, the argument that technology will replace the teacher in the classroom can be debunked.

As stated before, the first sentence of the conclusion paragraph should summarise the topics discussed in the supporting paragraphs. These supporting topics are:

1 — a robotic teacher's inability to cater to student educational needs

2 — a robotic teacher's inability to motivate students

Grouped into a single sentence, these two ideas would read:

In summary, a robotic teacher would lack the classroom dynamism and emotional intelligence needed to be an effective instructor.

The second sentence must restate the thesis in new words. Here is the original thesis:

I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future.

...and here is that same thesis reworded:

Thus, it is clear that having a class run entirely by a machine is an idea that will not be realised anytime soon.

The last sentence can be written as a recommendation or prediction:

As this essay has shown, computer technology will not replace traditional human teachers in the foreseeable future.

The conclusion paragraph is now complete. Note how its sentences link to each other and to earlier parts of the essay:

In summary, a robotic teacher would lack the classroom dynamism and emotional intelligence needed to be an effective instructor. Thus, it is clear why having a class run entirely by a machine is an idea that will not be realised anytime soon. As this essay has shown, computer technology will not replace traditional human teachers in the foreseeable future.

The essay is now a complete and well-structured piece of writing. From start to finish it reads:

> The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom. Despite this, I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future. Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show this.
>
> Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have difficulty interpreting the educational needs of a classroom of students. For example, Honda Asimov, one of the world's most advanced robots, has trouble distinguishing simple human emotions. If today's most advanced artificial intelligence cannot categorise these basic physical cues, it is difficult to believe that a robot could be capable of altering study plans and teaching styles in a dynamic classroom setting. Thus, this makes it clear that a technology-driven teacher is not going to be operational anytime in the near future.
>
> Secondly, a robotic teacher would not be able to establish the emotional connection needed to motivate students. The American scientific theory of education plays a good example here. This widely supported theory argues that young learners are most motivated when they share an emotional relationship with their instructor. As most would agree expecting children to form emotional ties to machinery is unrealistic, the argument that technology will replace the teacher in the classroom can be debunked.
>
> In summary, a robotic teacher would lack the classroom dynamism and emotional intelligence needed to be an effective instructor. Thus, it is clear why having a class run entirely by a machine is an idea that will not be realised anytime soon. As this essay has shown, computer technology will not replace traditional human teachers in the foreseeable future.

Note how all paragraphs in the essay remain committed to the Task 2 question despite their different purposes. The introduction paragraph provides context and a plan for proving the essay's argument. The supporting paragraphs provide real-world evidence and draw logical conclusions that bolster the essay's position. The conclusion paragraph mirrors the introduction paragraph, establishing cohesion at the essay level. It also reiterates and amplifies of the essay's argument and address of the essay question.

Try it yourself!

Now try writing an essay from start to finish. Look to the above essay if you need some guidance.

Smart devices have put all of the world's information at our fingertips. The benefits of this development are obvious, but what are the drawbacks?

Try it yourself! (Answers)

Smart devices have put all of the world's information at our fingertips. The benefits of this development are obvious, but what are the drawbacks?

People today are capable of accessing the internet through their mobile smart device. This puts them in touch with an extremely large amount of information. Although this trend has many positive ramifications, such as interconnectivity between people and the spreading of understanding, it is not without drawbacks. To illustrate this, the effect smart devices have on their user's memory and privacy will be analysed.

For one, smart devices have caused people to rely less on their memories. For example, sites like Wikipedia make it easy for smartphone users to quickly access information on almost any topic. The problem with this convenience is that it encourages people to commit fewer and fewer things to memory, and this makes humanity's collective understanding of the world increasingly dependent on machinery. Thus, this is one of the main drawbacks to having unrestricted access to information through smart devices.

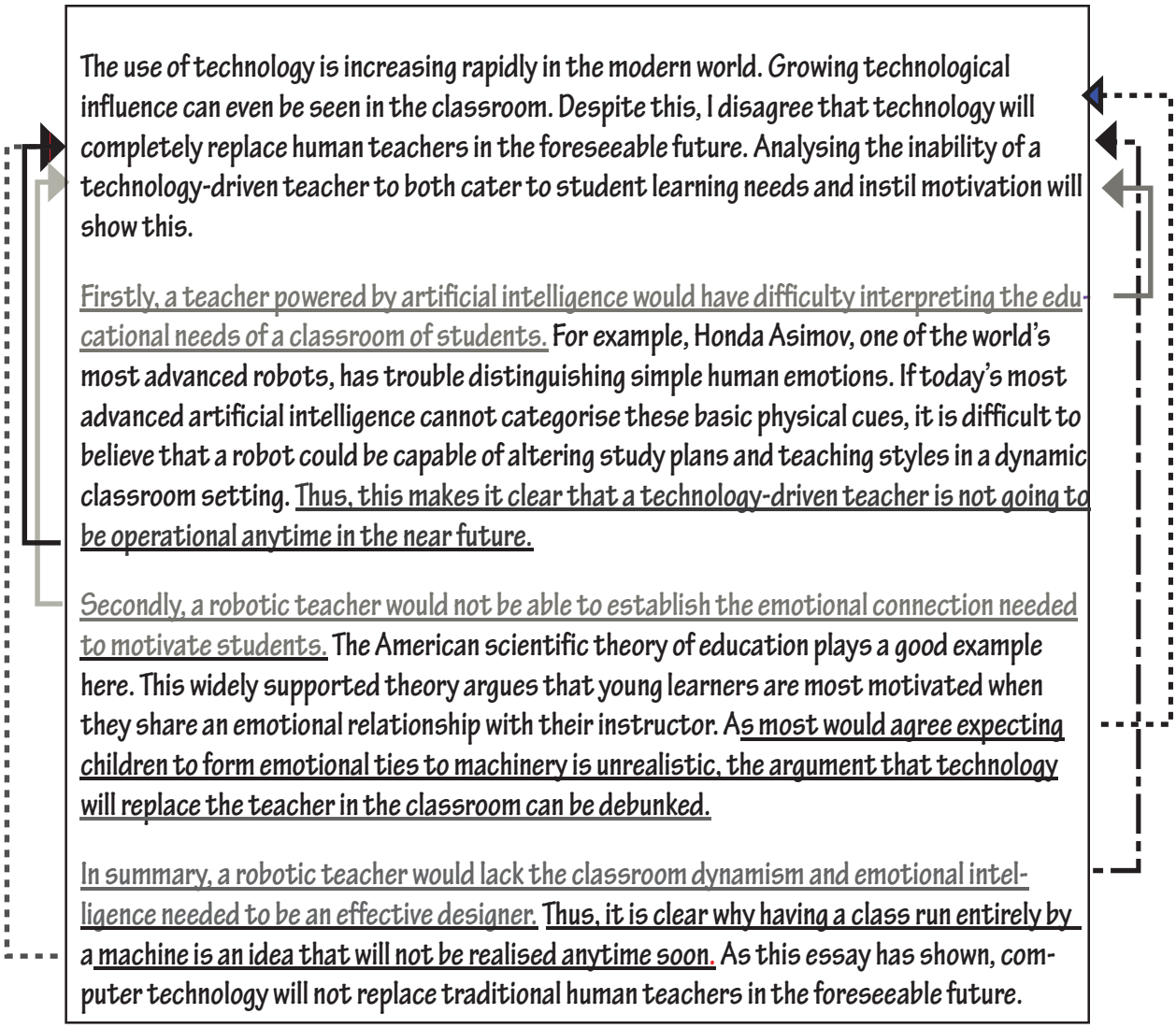
In addition to this, smart devices reduce people's privacy, which can lead to unwanted exposure to public scrutiny and ridicule. For instance, last year a child in America was unknowingly filmed by his classmate while performing an embarrassing dance routine. After the video was uploaded to the internet, this child suffered extreme teasing and ultimately developed anxiety issues. As this shows, the exchanging of information through smart devices is not always a positive thing.

As the above makes clear, smartphone use can weaken a user's memory and reduce their privacy, two unfortunate drawbacks to a tool that has otherwise been very positive for humanity. These drawbacks will likely remain ongoing obstacles into the foreseeable future.

2.5

COHESION AT THE ESSAY LEVEL

Writing cohesively means more than just linking neighbouring sentences. Take another look at the completed essay on technology in the classroom. In addition to having cohesion between sentences, the composition presents cohesion between all paragraphs:



The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom. Despite this, I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future. Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have difficulty interpreting the educational needs of a classroom of students. For example, Honda Asimov, one of the world's most advanced robots, has trouble distinguishing simple human emotions. If today's most advanced artificial intelligence cannot categorise these basic physical cues, it is difficult to believe that a robot could be capable of altering study plans and teaching styles in a dynamic classroom setting. Thus, this makes it clear that a technology-driven teacher is not going to be operational anytime in the near future.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would not be able to establish the emotional connection needed to motivate students. The American scientific theory of education plays a good example here. This widely supported theory argues that young learners are most motivated when they share an emotional relationship with their instructor. As most would agree expecting children to form emotional ties to machinery is unrealistic, the argument that technology will replace the teacher in the classroom can be debunked.

In summary, a robotic teacher would lack the classroom dynamism and emotional intelligence needed to be an effective designer. Thus, it is clear why having a class run entirely by a machine is an idea that will not be realised anytime soon. As this essay has shown, computer technology will not replace traditional human teachers in the foreseeable future.

In grey, the supporting paragraphs' topic sentences are shown linking back to the information presented in the introduction paragraph's outline sentence.
Ex: Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have difficulty interpreting the educational needs of a classroom of students

In the underlined sentences in paragraphs 2 and 3, the link between the supporting paragraph and the essay's thesis can be seen.

Ex: As most would agree expecting children to form emotional ties to machinery is unrealistic, the argument that technology will replace the teacher in the classroom can be debunked.

In dark grey (the first sentence of the conclusion), the summary sentence indicates a clear link back to both supporting para-graphs and the outline sentence in the introduction.

In the underlined sentence at the last paragraph, the restatement of thesis brings the essay to a close by reinforcing the argu-ment made in the thesis at the beginning of the essay.

The sentences throughout the entire essay work together as a team, allowing the essay to operate as one large, cohesive piece that presents a unified address to the essay question. This thoroughness maximises the essay's ability to explore the topic and fulfil the task.

2.6



HE DELICATE NATURE OF CONCESSION

When writing an argument essay, candidates often feel the need to concede some merit to an opposing point of view. For example, in the essay refuting technology's usefulness in the classroom, a conceding paragraph would acknowledge that there is indeed some benefit to the idea of computerised instruction. However, if not handled carefully, analysing or conceding merit to an opposing point of view can lead an essay to inadvertently argue against itself, a phenomenon that could have grave consequences for the Task Achievement portion of the mark. To illustrate this point, look at these two versions of a paragraph that concedes merit to robotic instruction:

Version 1

> A computerised teacher would not tire, and this endurance makes it the optimal choice for lesson exercises that require repetition. A primitive instance of this is exemplified by iPad apps that teach young children simple vocabulary in entertaining ways. Because this machinery-based lesson arrangement can carry on indefinitely, children can continue learning for much longer periods of time than realistically possible with a human teacher. Thus, technology-driven instructors are clearly better than human teachers.

Version 2

> However, a computerised teacher would not tire, and this endurance makes it the optimal choice for lesson exercises that require repetition. A primitive instance of this is exemplified by iPad apps that teach young children simple vocabulary in entertaining ways. Because this machinery-based lesson arrangement can carry on indefinitely, children can continue learning for much longer periods of time than realistically possible with a human teacher. As convincing as this point is, exercises requiring repetition are only a small part of the overall teaching process. Thus, technology cannot be expected to carry out all tasks of human teachers in the classroom.

Several structural choices in Version 1 cause some uncertainty about its conceding nature. Firstly, the paragraph does not frame itself with a cohesive device. Version 2, on the other hand, uses the word 'however' to clearly indicate to the reader that some form of cross examination is taking place. Version 2 also ensures the reader understands that the conceding point doesn't erode the essay's overarching position on the topic. This is executed in the discussion and concluding sentences, which reinforce the essay's central argument and preserve the overall flow of the writing. Version 1's conclusion is a confusing affront to the essay's thesis.

Because Version 2 frames the nature of its point and preserves the argument of the essay as a whole, it fits into the essay seamlessly:

The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom. Despite this, I disagree that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future. Analysing the inability of a technology-driven teacher to both cater to student learning needs and instil motivation will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have difficulty interpreting the educational needs of a classroom of students. For example, Honda Asimov, one of the world's most advanced robots, has trouble distinguishing simple human emotions. If today's most advanced artificial intelligence cannot categorise these basic physical cues, it is difficult to believe that a robot could be capable of altering study plans and teaching styles in a dynamic classroom setting. Thus, this makes it clear that a technology-driven teacher is not going to be operational anytime in the near future.

Secondly, a robotic teacher would not be able to establish the emotional connection needed to motivate students. The American scientific theory of education plays a good example here. This widely supported theory argues that young learners are most motivated when they share an emotional relationship with their instructor. As most would agree expecting children to form emotional ties to machinery is unrealistic, the argument that technology will replace the teacher in the classroom can be debunked.

However, a computerised teacher would not tire, and this endurance makes it the optimal choice for lesson exercises that require repetition. A primitive instance of this is exemplified by iPad apps that teach young children simple vocabulary in entertaining ways.

Because this machinery-based lesson arrangement can carry on indefinitely, children can continue learning for much longer periods of time than realistically possible with a human teacher. As convincing as this point is, exercises requiring repetition are only a small part of the overall teaching process. Thus, technology cannot be expected to carry out all tasks of human teachers in the classroom.

In summary, a robotic teacher would lack the classroom dynamism and emotional intelligence needed to be an effective instructor. Thus, it is clear why having a class run entirely by a machine is an idea that will not be realised anytime soon. As this essay has shown, computer technology will not replace traditional human teachers in the foreseeable future.

2.7



OW TO WRITE A DISCUSSION ESSAY

A common exam question type asks the candidate analyse, critique or discuss a topic, or to compare or contrast two topics. Such questions typically require partition in the response, and thus don't readily fit into the argument essay format. It is in these situations that a *discussion* essay structure is needed.

The first thing to understand is in what circumstances a discussion essay structure is required. Recall from section 1.3 that essay questions can be understood by identifying three things: *keywords*, *qualifying words* and *action words*. To identify what type of essay to write, however, the candidate needs only look at the *action words*. To illustrate, review the original model IELTS question from this book:

> ***Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. In the not too distant future, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?***

The *action words* here are instructing the candidate to choose a side: agree or disagree. Thus, the question is making it very clear that the candidate is to form an opinion and prove that opinion true, and the argument essay structure is a natural fit for this scenario.

Now look at this variation on the above question:

> ***Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. In the not too distant future, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyse both sides of this argument.***

Although the *keywords* and *qualifying words* are the same, the *action words* have changed. They are now instructing the candidate to look at both sides of the statement. Because an argument essay structure declares the writer's position at the beginning of the essay, this isn't a format welcoming to the balanced analysis of differing opinions and is thus an inappropriate structure here. The organising of

the candidate's essay thus needs to be carried out in a way that allows for objective discussion, a process possible using the *discussion* essay structure.

Discussion essay structure is in many ways the inverse of argument essay structure. To illustrate, look at the following table comparing the sentences of both essay types:

Argument Essay	***Discussion Essay***
Paragraph 1 - Introduction	Paragraph 1 - Introduction
Sentence 1 - Background statement	Sentence 1 - Background statement
Sentence 2 - Detailed background statement	Sentence 2 - Detailed background statement
Sentence 3 - Thesis	Sentence 3 - Statement of topics to be analysed
Sentence 4 - Outline sentence	Sentence 4 - Outline sentence
Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph	Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph
Sentence 1 - Topic	Sentence 1 – First topic
Sentence 2 - Example	Sentence 2 – Example
Sentence 3 - Discussion	Sentence 3 - Discussion
Sentence 4 - Conclusion	Sentence 4 - Conclusion
Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph	Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph
Sentence 1 - Topic	Sentence 1 - Second topic
Sentence 2 - Example	Sentence 2 - Example
Sentence 3 - Discussion	Sentence 3 - Discussion
Sentence 4 - Conclusion	Sentence 4 - Conclusion
Paragraph 4 - Conclusion	Paragraph 4 - Conclusion
Sentence 1 - Summary	Sentence 1 - Summary
Sentence 2 - Restatement of thesis	Sentence 2 - Statement of position
Sentence 3 - Prediction or recommendation	Sentence 3 - Prediction or recommendation

When looking at the two outlines, several similarities can be seen. For one, in their most basic form, both essays have the same number of sentences: fifteen. Many of the sentence types in the essays are also similar or exactly the same aside from one

striking difference: the discussion structure lacks a thesis! As learned in section 1.4, the thesis is the most important sentence in the essay, so how can an essay exist without one?

To answer this, a look into the purpose of the essay needs to be made. An argument essay's purpose is to state an opinion and prove it. However, a discussion essay's purpose is to reach a conclusion after analysing varying positions on a topic. Thus, where an argument essay maintains a subjective approach to the essay's topic, a discussion essay looks objectively at items that aren't necessarily the writer's opinion. Because the writer's full opinion isn't shared until the *statement of position* sentence in the concluding paragraph, the discussion essay structure can be seen as an inverted version of the argument essay.

To illustrate this in action, read this sample discussion essay written in response to the reworded Task 2 question on the subject of technology in the classroom. While reading, try to distinguish each of the fifteen sentences:

The use of technology is increasing rapidly in the modern world. Growing technological influence can even be seen in the classroom. The argument that technology will completely replace human teachers in the foreseeable future is a subject that is both supported and refuted by many. This essay will analyse this argument before declaring a position.

Firstly, when communicating simple concepts that can be taught through repetitive games, machines seem capable of matching or even surpassing the teaching abilities of human beings. For example, several tablet applications are starting to be used in classrooms because they are able to hold the attention of young children and teach them tremendous amounts of vocabulary. Thus, it is clear that for simple concepts that can be taught through repetition, robotic teachers are as effective as human teachers. However, whether this proves true for more complex classroom concepts or situations remains questionable.

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 could never provide. This evidence makes it thus doubtful that technology will ever completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

In summary, both sides of the argument regarding the possibility of a technologically driven classroom have strong support. However, because class content must extend beyond simple concepts that can be learned through repetition, it is clear that the idea of having a class run entirely by a machine remains unlikely. I thus feel the scenario of automated classroom instruction will not materialise anytime in the foreseeable future.

In this essay, evidence and discussion are given for both sides of the argument. It should be noted, however, that the writer does not disclose their full position on the subject until the statement of position sentence at the very end of the essay, which works to preserve the essay's objectiveness.

Try it yourself!

Try writing a discussion essay in response to this essay question:

Some believe the primary purpose of museums is to entertain people, while others believe their purpose is to educate. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Try it yourself! (Answers)

Some believe the primary purpose of museums is to entertain people, while others believe their purpose is to educate. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Museums fulfil different things for different people. On the one hand, many people feel a museum's primary purpose is to entertain. However, others feel they function to foster understanding. Both arguments will be analysed before a conclusion is declared.

Firstly, some argue a museum's main purpose is to amuse. For example, the Museum of Natural History in Ottawa limits descriptive placards and instead uses life-sized exhibits that allow visitors to role play historical moments. Although this approach is stimulating and helps visitors better envision life at certain points in time, it does little to impart a full understanding of the broader historical themes at play. Thus, the merits of this opinion are hard to support.

An alternative position argues that the primary purpose of museums is to educate. For example, the British Museum in London heavily placards its exhibits to provide its visitors with the tools needed to be informed about what is on display. Although perhaps not as visually stimulating, patrons leave this museum with a much richer understanding of historical topics and the underlying trends that were at work during certain periods of time, an approach that offers perspective on modern day life and humanity as a whole. Thus, the heightened benefits of museums that focus on educating can clearly be seen.

After looking at these different points of view, I feel that museums better serve the public when they are organised to educate as opposed to entertain. Thus, I hope that the museums of the future are arranged primarily for this purpose.

3.1



DVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE QUESTIONS

A common IELTS Task 2 question requires a look at the advantages and disadvantages of a topic. A fitting response structure requires accurate interpretation of the *action words* of the question. To illustrate, here are some example *action words* that commonly accompany advantage and disadvantage type questions:

1. Analyse the advantages and disadvantages of this and form an opinion.

or

2. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this topic?

or

3. Do you feel this topic has more advantages than disadvantages?

All three of the above samples state that an examination of the advantages and disadvantages needs to take place in the candidate's essay. However, they qualify this examination differently.

In the first example, the word order instructs the candidate to analyse both the advantages and disadvantages of a topic before sharing an opinion. Naturally, this would call for a discussion style of essay. The candidate would use one of their supporting paragraphs to analyse the advantages and the other supporting paragraph to analyse the disadvantages. A final opinion would be declared in the conclusion paragraph.

The second and third versions are very similar to the first in that both supporting paragraphs would look at the advantages and disadvantages in turn, but here the candidate could comfortably share their opinion as a thesis at the beginning of the essay or as a statement of position at the end of the essay. Thus, these question structures allow for either essay style.

To illustrate how to respond to these sorts of questions, look at this mock IELTS question and answer:

The advent of the internet has made it possible for people to work from home. Write an essay looking at the advantages and disadvantages of this professional arrangement. Share personal examples in your essay.

The internet has revolutionised the world in many different ways. Among these, it has made it possible for people to work from home. This essay will analyse the advantages and disadvantages that arise when a person lives and works in the same place. Following this look, a reasoned conclusion will be shared.

On the one hand, working from home gives people the flexibility to set their own hours, which can allow for the arranging of a schedule that maximises a person's productivity. For example, a friend of mine freelances as a programmer from home and has discovered he is most productive when he works late at night. As such a schedule would not be possible at a normal 9 to 5 desk job, the positive effects his home office arrangement has on his productivity can be seen. Examples like this clearly show the advantages that can derive from working from home.

However, working remotely like this can often be the cause of mental anguish. For instance, I recall once collaborating with an online team from the comforts of my apartment. Although this arrangement allowed me to make my own schedule, it also meant that I had to constantly be on call, as my co-workers contacted me day and night with their work-related problems. Thus, some jobs carried out from home may make it difficult for a person to detach personal time from professional commitments.

The above look illustrates that certain jobs and certain people may be more fitted for the home office arrangement than others. The disadvantages revealed by the above discussion resonate most with me, and I thus prefer to engage my professional endeavours outside my home. Prospective remote workers should carefully weigh their options before making a decision.

Notice the manner in which this essay's structure is framed by the Task 2 question's *action words*. The discussion essay structure allows the advantages and disadvantages to be analysed and discussed before concluded upon.

Try it yourself!

The following is a modified version of the above essay question. Although its wording makes an argument or discussion essay style possible, try responding using the argument structure as an exercise. You may use ideas from the above essay if you wish:

The advent of the internet has made it possible for people to work from home. Do you feel this working arrangement has more advantages or disadvantages? Share personal examples in your essay.

Try it yourself! (Answers)

The advent of the internet has made it possible for people to work from home. Do you feel this working arrangement has more advantages or disadvantages? Share personal examples in your essay.

The internet has revolutionised the world in many different ways. One opportunity it has opened is the possibility for people to work from home. Despite the many advantages that derive from this arrangement, I feel that working from home is predominantly disadvantageous to the professional. This will be shown by looking at how the home sets professionals up to be both distracted and unable to detach themselves from work.

For one, although working from home may be a more cost effective and independent way to work, most people are likely to get distracted under this working arrangement. For example, a former manager of mine once delegated a major writing project to me and instructed me to complete it at home over the course of a month. When I went to engage the project, I found it difficult to stay focused while in an environment I normally used for relaxing, and as a result the quality of my work suffered. My experience clearly shows that for people similar to myself, working from home is disadvantageous to productivity.

In addition to this, the stay at home worker often finds it challenging to distance themselves from their work, and this can be mentally exhausting. For instance, a colleague of mine started his own business from home. Within the first few months, he was receiving telephone calls, emails and faxes at all times of the day and night. In the end, he felt forced to migrate this professional pursuit to a rented office apartment simply because it was taking over his life. As this story illustrates, the disadvantages of a home based job are numerous.

To conclude, despite the advantages of lower overhead and independence, working from home has many more drawbacks than favourable points. I thus hope that professionals everywhere think carefully before settling on this working arrangement.

Note the manner in which this approach makes use of a thesis and then goes on to prove this thesis in the supporting paragraphs. The supporting paragraphs offer some concession when they mention the cost effectiveness and professional independence that come as a result of working from home, a trait that helps balance the response and ensure both sides are included.

3.2



AUSE AND EFFECT/PROBLEM AND SOLUTION QUESTIONS

Some IELTS Task 2 questions will request the candidate outline the causes and effects of a certain subject. In most cases, the cause and effect essay question is responded to using an argument essay structure. This essay structure allows the candidate to use the introduction paragraph to declare what they believe to be the causes and effects and expand upon this position in the supporting paragraphs. Typically, the causes and effects are grouped into separate supporting paragraphs:

The world's air pollution levels are rising year on year. What are the most pressing causes and effects of this disturbing trend?

Increasing levels of airborne pollutants have proved to be a major obstacle for humanity in the 21st century. This trend is predominantly caused by consumption patterns associated with rising global affluence, namely the increasing demand growing economies have for fossil fuels. These triggers and the effects rising rates of atmospheric pollution have on the planet will be examined in this essay.

Most experts agree that airborne pollution is caused by the burning of fossil fuels, and that growing economies around the world make it possible for increasingly large numbers of people to contribute to current global pollution levels. For example, the affluence of more than two billion people between India and China has been rising for decades, and with this has come a spike in the number of pollution causing vehicles on the planet. As this phenomenon compounds with the tremendous amount of pollution already coming out of many western countries, a recipe for unshrinking levels of air pollution can be seen. Thus, demand for petrol vehicles among developing economies and resource wastage among developed economies can be concluded as today's greatest causes of airborne pollutants.

Although damage caused by air pollution ramifies itself in many distressing ways, I feel the impact it has on human health is a top concern. For instance, it is estimated that a larger percentage of children have asthma today than ever before in human history. To make matters worse, scientists are now finding air pollution can cause abnormal foodstuffs growth among farming populations the world over, and consumption of these foods has been linked to cancer. Because these problems will have an impact on generations to come, it is clear why human health concerns are the most pressing effects of airborne pollutants.

Following this look, unfortunate growth trends in countries around the world are at the root of swelling numbers of asthma and cancer sufferers. These are considered to be the most significant causes and effects of the planet's air pollution levels. Thus, controlling byproducts of human activity has to become central to humanity's collective strategy for the 21st century.

Although it is possible to share both a cause and its resulting effect in a single supporting paragraph, this should be done with care as such a structure is more complicated and could possibly lead the candidate to grammatical or lexical inaccuracy. Here is a reworded version of the above essay to demonstrate how to include both a cause and its effect in the same supporting paragraph. Notice the comparative language that helps explain to the reader which solution is considered best:

The world's air pollution levels are rising year on year. What are the most pressing causes and effects of this disturbing trend?

Increasing levels of airborne pollutants have proved to be a major obstacle for humanity in the 21st century. This trend has several major causes, but the world's increasing demand for coal-based energy and fossil fuels are thought to be the main precursors to larger human problems. These triggers and the effects rising rates of atmospheric pollution have on the planet will be examined in this essay.

Most experts agree that a very large amount of airborne pollution is caused by cities that require coal for energy, a problem that is swelling exponentially on account of several rapidly growing economies. For example, the affluence of more than two billion people between India and China has been rising for decades, and with this

has understandably come an increasing demand for energy. One of the most pressing effects of this is the atmospheric eyesore it causes, as cities like Mumbai and Beijing very rarely report 100% visibility in their downtown cores. Thus, it is clear that coal-based energy sources are a major contributor to the problem of airborne pollution.

Although not quite as corrosive, another major cause of airborne pollution is the burning of fossil fuels, an ongoing problem for many western countries. Long-term exposure to motor vehicle pollution, for example, has been linked to increased levels of respiratory problems among children in the United States. To make matters worse, scientists are now finding air pollution can cause abnormal foodstuffs growth among farming populations the world over, and consumption of these foods has been linked to cancer. Because the effects of such pollutants impact the health of generations to come, it is clear that the burning of fossil fuels is right to be considered a very dangerous cause of airborne impurities.

Following this look, unfortunate energy choices in countries around the world are at the root of swelling numbers of asthma and cancer sufferers. These are considered to be the most significant causes and effects of the planet's air pollution levels. Thus, controlling byproducts of human activity has to become central to humanity's collective strategy for the 21st century.

A similar question type is one that asks the candidate to propose solutions to a problem. If the question is a straightforward request for solution ideas, an argument essay structure can be used:

The world's air pollution levels are rising year on year. What should humanity do to counter this problem?

Increasing levels of airborne pollutants have proved to be a major obstacle for humanity in the 21st century. To counter this problem, efforts should focus on the two most major causes of airborne pollutants: coal-based energy and the burning of fossil fuels. This essay will examine the plausibility of addressing this problem through alternative municipal energy sources and traffic regulations.

Firstly, cities that power themselves with coal could shift to more environmentally friendly energy sources like nuclear. Similar shifts have successfully occurred in cities like Shanghai. Although this move would involve several years of reconnaissance work to ensure safety, the results are exponentially cleaner than coal-based energy. If all major cities were to shift away from coal in this way, the world's air would be much cleaner.

A second approach could involve a change to municipal traffic regulations. For example, some metropolitan cities have imposed carpool lanes to help encourage people to commute together to work. This approach has proved its effectiveness in London, Toronto and New York City, and thus would be a plausible approach to pollution issues in other large cities.

As the above examination has made clear, alternative energy sources and evolved traffic regulations would be effective counters to the world's current airborne pollution problem. I hope these approaches are put into action soon.

Try it yourself!

Using the above essay as a guide, try writing a response to this question:

All over the world, the number of overweight people is growing. What do you feel are the main causes of this? What are the effects?

Try it yourself! (Answers)

All over the world, the number of overweight people is growing. What do you feel are the main causes of this? What are the effects?

Global obesity rates have been swelling for several decades. This is a trend that continues to have devastating effects on populations everywhere. Although often debated, I feel the food a person eats and the lifestyle they live are the base precursors to this problem. In this essay, a look at these causes and their effects will be made.

Firstly, diet and lifestyle are the two most major catalysts of obesity. This is clearly evidenced by countries experiencing rapid economic change. For example, in China, growing affluence has led people to consume more fast food and live more sedentary lifestyles. This trend moves in tandem with a steady growth in the number of overweight people. Thus, as this makes clear, changing dietary practices and levels of activity are at the root of weight problems.

The major effects of this trend are entirely negative. As seen in the United States, growing obesity rates lead to growing rates of life-threatening health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. For example, Americans under 30 years of age are expected to have shorter lifespans than their parents, a biological phenomenon never experienced before in America. Thus, it is clear that these effects need to be countered to enhance the quality of life for future generations.

Following this look at the causes and effects of obesity, I feel that education is the single most important address to this problem. Thus, to change this disturbing global trend, I hope schools everywhere encourage healthy eating habits in children to help establish better health for the generation to come.

3.3



OUBLE ACTION QUESTIONS

In double action questions, the *action words* require the candidate respond in more than one way. Because of this, the candidate may need to tailor the essay structures taught in this book to ensure the response fulfils the Task 2 question.

Typically, double action questions will ask the candidate to (1) declare an opinion and (2) expand on that opinion in some specified way. This declaration of opinion can be done in either the introduction paragraph (if an argument essay structure is used) or the conclusion paragraph (if a discussion essay structure is used). To illustrate this, refer to the following task:

In order to improve a country's education system, high school students should be encouraged to publicly critique their teachers online. Do you agree with this? What are some other ways high school education could be improved?

The above question has two sets of *action words*. They are:

1. Do you agree with this?

and

2. What are some other ways high school education could be improved?

Set 1 is asking for the candidate's position on the subject, and this can be answered in a single sentence.

The *'what are some other ways high school education could be improved?'* question requires a more in-depth response. In this particular instance, the candidate is being asked to expand upon their opinion in a non-discursive way, so an argument essay structure is valid. Were the question to request the comparison of education systems, a discussion structure would be more appropriate.

In the following example essay, underlined text has been used to indicate where

the essay addresses question 1 from the task. Grey text indicates where the essay responds to question 2:

In order to improve a country's education system, high school students should be encouraged to publicly critique their teachers online. Do you agree with this? What are some other ways high school education could be improved?

Arguments over how to improve a country's education system have been going on for a very long time. Often different strategies work for different countries. However, allowing high school students to openly critique their instructors online is a strategy that I feel does not improve the quality of high school instruction in any country. Alternative school scheduling and teacher monitoring through video are much better approaches and will be analysed for viability in this essay.

Firstly, modified school scheduling improves education in a way that openly critiquing teachers does not. For example, many Scandinavian school boards run education systems that take short, periodic week-long breaks throughout the academic year instead of one larger two-month break at summertime. Overall, students have just as much holiday time as their peers in traditional holiday arrangements, but there is not such a long, education-deterring break at summer, and this allows students to mentally retain more of their studies. This arrangement is clearly a more plausible alternative to arguments supporting the open criticism of teachers on the internet.

In addition to this, schools should consider videotaping classes to both monitor teacher performance and student conduct. I once taught at a school with this arrangement and found it made it much easier for students' parents to stay attune to both their children's lessons and conduct during class time. Such a system would also ensure all critiquing of the teacher is carried out by adults and not teenagers, a vetting process that would likely produce more insightful criticism. Thus, the plausibility of this alternative is clear.

It can be concluded that both a paced academic schedule and class transparency would more effectively improve high school education than the proposed online criticism of teachers. I thus hope these changes gain support in the foreseeable future.

As can be seen, both of the tasks are addressed in the essay, albeit with some overlap at certain times. The first question is responded to in the thesis. It is then amplified in select areas of each supporting paragraph and in the *restatement of thesis* in the concluding paragraph. The second question is answered in the analysis carried out across the two supporting paragraphs.

A variation of the problem and solution essay question from section 6.2 is one that requires the candidate both (1) examine the problems that result from a certain topic and (2) suggest solutions. For example:

> ***What problems derive from airborne pollution? Suggest solutions to these problems in your response.***

These kinds of essay questions are very similar to those asking for cause and effect and are thus thus typically best responded to using an argument essay structure. In the following example, notice how similar the response structure is to the cause and effect essays from 3.2:

> Increasing levels of airborne pollutants have proved to be a major obstacle for humanity in the 21st century. This trend has tarnished the image of many cities around the world and is at the root of several health issues. The nature of these problems will be examined in this essay. Measures to counter these problems, such as cleaner energy sources and alternative traffic regulations, will also be examined.
>
> One of the most pressing effects of airborne pollution is the atmospheric eyesore it causes. Cities like Mumbai and Beijing are a good example of this, as they very rarely report 100% visibility in their downtown cores due to pollution. A possible solution to this problem would be for these cities to make the transition to nuclear power, as Shanghai has recently done. The improved cleanliness of Shanghai's air acts as evidence that cleaner energy does make a difference.
>
> Many health problems also derive from airborne pollution. Long-term exposure to motor vehicle exhaust, for example, has been linked to increased levels of respiratory problems among children in the United States. This problem could be realistically addressed via a change to municipal traffic regulations. For example, some metropolitan cities have imposed carpool lanes to help encourage people to commute together to work. This approach has proved its effectiveness in London, Toronto and

New York City, and thus would be a plausible approach to pollution issues in other large cities.

As the above examination has made clear, alternative energy sources and evolved traffic regulations would be effective counters to the problems that derive from airborne pollution. I hope these approaches are put into action soon.

The most difficult double action question form asks the candidate to make two independent arguments. The candidate typically will use an argument essay structure and address the two arguments in separate supporting paragraphs. A general framing of the response structure is declared in the introduction paragraph. In the below example, note the manner in which each supporting paragraph focuses on a specific question:

What are the benefits of genetically modified food? Are there any risks associated with these food items?

The abilities of bioscience increase with each passing year. It is a field that has revolutionised the way people produce and consume food. The manner in which it has improved human lifestyles the world over, and the risks associated with its science, will be examined in this essay.

On the one hand, the science behind genetically modified food has allowed societies to produce bountiful crop yields despite territorial constraints. Take the instance of genetically modified rice in China. In the mid-twentieth century, the scientist Yuan Longping developed a new kind of rice that produced tremendously larger harvests than traditional rice crops. This discovery was hugely helpful in tackling diseases due to malnourishment. Examples such as this reveal the tremendous benefits that societies experience when they embrace the science behind genetically modified food.

Despite such advantages, there are certain risks that should be kept in mind when experimenting with the genetics of food. For example, roughly forty years ago, Nestle baby formula sold to mothers in several African countries led to the death of many infants. Because these mothers did not have access to the quality of water

needed to mix the formula properly, these babies died needlessly, as they would have otherwise been fine had they been fed natural breast milk. With horrible stories such as this, it is clear that real risks are present when it comes to the consumption of genetically modified foods.

Although genetically modified food has a mixed history, I feel humanity's understanding of the science behind these foods should help curb future problems. Thus, I support and encourage the development and consumption of food enhanced through technology and expect these items to make up increasingly large percentages of diets around the world.

Try it yourself!

Try responding to this double action question:

The world is heavily dependent on oil for energy. Do you think a future resource will take oil's place? Why do you think this?

Try it yourself! (Answers)

The world is heavily dependent on oil for energy. Do you think a future resource will take oil's place? Why do you think this?

Most would agree that oil will not remain the world's principal energy source indefinitely. With major breakthroughs in humanity's ability to harvest power from the sun, I argue that solar power will one day become a cheaper and healthier alternative to petrol. This will be shown viable by looking at the falling price of solar energy per watt against the price of oil and the tremendous improvements to solar technology that have been made over the past few years.

Firstly, the amount of energy produced by oil is almost equal to that produced by solar wafers. For example, a recent study published in Scientific America magazine predicted that the rising price of oil energy and the falling price of solar energy would meet in 2020. What this means is that from 2020 onwards, it would be more economical for a person to fuel their car using solar energy than it would using petrol. As economic forces are so fundamental to the day-to-day choices of the masses, it is clear that solar energy will take the place of oil as humanity's next major energy resource.

In addition to this, as solar technology develops it is becoming a much more refined energy producer. For instance, traditional solar panels were large, square boards that had to be facing the sun directly to harvest energy. Today, solar collectors come in all shapes and can be contoured to fit a range of product designs, from the rounded exterior of a car to the back of an iPhone. Usage trends such as these are

yet another reason why solar energy is fit to take over oil as the world's top energy source.

After looking at both its increasingly competitive price and versatility, it is clear that solar power will come to fulfil humanity's energy needs in place of oil. For the sake of the world's wellbeing, I hope this transfer happens soon.



REQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I read this book but I still got band 6 in IELTS Writing. What am I doing wrong?

If you have read and implemented the lessons in this book and are still receiving band 6 on your exam, it is likely that your grammar and/or lexical resources need improvement. Having a tutor periodically review and clean up your writing is essential. You should also be reading lots of sample band 9 essays and making careful note of the manner in which these essays are structured and worded. Keep a detailed language journal to help you track and review your progress. Of course, ensuring a strong Task 1 performance is also critical. See Ryan's Academic and General Task 1 books for tips on this part of the exam (http://www.ieltsielts.com).

The examples in this book are often very specific. How can I produce such specific examples in my exam when I don't have access to external resources like the internet?

Your examiner is not going to fact check your essay, so making up examples is fine so long as they are believable.

Are there writing exercises that will help me learn to produce essays similar to those in this book?

To train yourself to write effectively, you need to go through the motions of actually producing accurate work. This means repeatedly copying out model band 9 essays, such as those in this book, word for word. Doing this over and over again will push you to adopt certain wording patterns and sentence structures into your own writing style. Training in this way will give you confidence because you know these structures are accurate.

Receiving periodic feedback from a professional that knows the IELTS well is also a good idea and will ensure your progress is in line with IELTS success. If you do not have access to a person like this, post your writing samples to ieltsnetwork.com for free community feedback or enrol in Ryan's online writing course.

Should I include concession in my argument essay?

Addressing a viewpoint that opposes the argument essay's position can help increase the depth of a Task 2 response. However, this cross-examination can be considered optional if not explicitly asked for by the essay question. For Task 2 questions that narrow the essay's scope to the candidate's position on a topic and nothing more, a thorough response can be written without examining alternative viewpoints.

Can I score band 9 if my essay is only 250 words?

Yes. Many candidates make the mistake of thinking that essays have to be long to be awarded band 9. If you fulfil all sections of the Task 2 marking rubric at a band 9 level, and you write a response of 250 words or more in length, your essay will receive band 9. For the public version of the Task 2 band descriptors chart, visit the **British Council's website.**

Can I write Task 1 and 2 in reverse order?

Yes. However, this strategy should be exercised only if it has proved to enhance performance on practice exams. Your approach to IELTS Writing should be established before you get into the exam room.

Can I use personal pronouns in my essay?

This is again a matter of style. Overuse of personal pronouns in your essay will make your writing sound too informal, and this will cause the tone of your essay to suffer. It is best to avoid using personal pronouns outside of the areas where you share an opinion, such as the thesis or statement of position.

Should I indent the paragraphs in my essay?

Indenting is optional on the IELTS exam. Candidates should, however, skip lines between paragraphs to clearly indicate where one paragraph ends and another begins.

Can I use contractions in my essay?

Although not a directly penalised practice, you should avoid contractions whenever possible to help maximise the formal tone of your writing.

Some people recommend writing in all capital letters on the IELTS Writing exam. Is this an effective testing strategy?

The **IELTS Information for Candidates booklet** states that writing in all capital letters is permitted, but this approach is not recommended. Writing in all caps causes the candidate to forfeit an opportunity to demonstrate their full range of language understanding to the examiner.

Some of the example essays in this book do not contain 15 sentences. Why is this?

Sentences can sometimes be combined to improve the essay's readability. For example, some of the model essays in this book join the thesis and outline sentences of the introduction paragraph or the discussion and conclusion sentences of the supporting paragraphs. Whether combined or not, these sentences still fulfil their role as defined in section 1.2 of this book.

Should I write my response in pen or pencil?

The **IELTS Information for Candidates booklet** states that IELTS Writing may be completed in either pen or pencil.

Will I lose marks if I scratch out sentences or large chunks of my essay?

No, you will not. However, try to be as neat as possible to avoid confusion. The examiner will do what they can to overlook any scratched out text.

Some Task 2 questions use 'do you agree or disagree' while others use 'to what extent do you agree or disagree'. Is there a difference between these action word combinations?

Despite the mild wording difference, both questions permit the candidate to entirely agree or disagree with the topic, which is the response approach recommended by this book. Thus, the thesis used to respond to either combination would be the same.



REVIEW

What are the three areas you should identify when interpreting IELTS essay questions?

_____

_____

_____

How many paragraphs should your IELTS Task 2 response be?

_____

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

_____

_____

_____

Name one way argument essays and discussions essay 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 2 – _____
- Sentence 3 – _____
- Sentence 4 – Conclusion

Paragraph 3 – Second supporting paragraph

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

Paragraph 4 – Conclusion

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

Write an essay in response to this essay question:

Describe some of the problems over-reliance on cars can cause and suggest a possible solution.



REVIEW (ANSWERS)

What are the three areas you should identify when interpreting IELTS essay questions?

Keywords

Qualifying words

Action words

How many paragraphs should your IELTS Task 2 response be?

Four or five

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

> ***The thesis is the most important sentence in an argument essay. It acts as a direct response to the essay question and presents the writer's opinion, which is then sustained through the rest of the essay.***

Name one way argument essays and discussions essay are different.

> ***Argument essays present the writer's opinion in the introduction paragraph as a thesis. Discussion essays present the writer's opinion in the conclusion paragraph as a the statement of position.***
>
> ***OR***
>
> ***Argument essays state and prove an argument. Discussion essays analyse multiple points of view before reaching a conclusion.***

What is cohesion?

> ***Cohesion is the linking of ideas. In an essay, it occurs at the sentence, paragraph and essay level.***

Fill in the missing information in this argument essay outline:

Paragraph 1 – Introduction

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

Paragraph 2 – First supporting paragraph

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

Paragraph 3 – Second supporting paragraph

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

Paragraph 4 – Conclusion

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

Write an essay in response to this essay question:

Describe some of the problems over-reliance on cars can cause and suggest a possible solution.

Humanity's reliance on motorised vehicles has reached levels never seen before in history. With the growth of economies around the world, these numbers are only going to continue to swell. I argue that pollution and the draining of world resources are the most serious problems caused by this trend. Carpooling will be suggested as an effective response to these challenges.

Firstly, pollution and the reduction of natural resources are major problems caused by humanity's over-reliance on cars. For example, the world's collective car exhaust has now dissolved the ozone and raised temperatures so much that certain island nations like Kiribati are at risk of vanishing. In addition to this, a statistic was recently released stating that there simply is not enough steel in the world to meet the demand for cars in China and India. As these examples show, humanity's demand for motorised vehicles needs to be curbed or it will have extreme repercussions on both pollution and natural resource levels.

A possible solution to the above is carpooling. In select metropolitan cities, for example, reserved lanes make the practice of carpooling attractive, and this has had substantial effects on the levels of exhaust pumped into the atmosphere every day. For example, it is estimated that car exhaust fumes are almost 10% lower today than 5 years ago in countries that promote carpooling like the UK and Canada. As this shows, carpooling could be a plausible solution to humanity's overuse of motorised vehicles.

Following this look at the challenges of motorised vehicle demand, the urgency of this situation is apparent. It is clear that something has to be done in order to reduce impact of petrol-dependent transportation. I thus hope solutions such as carpooling lanes are put into practice in big cities the world over.