IDEAS FOR IELTS WRITING TASK 2 With Band 9 Sample Essays

1. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘traffic’ topic

Today I’d like to show you a good essay by one of my students. This is the essay question: Traffic congestion is becoming a huge problem for many major cities. Suggest some measures that could be taken to reduce traffic in big cities. I gave the student’s essay a band 7, mainly because it contains some really good topic vocabulary. Open the file below to see the full essay, grammar corrections, and my comments.

Hopefully, you can see that the student has followed my advice. He focuses on answering the question, there is a clear structure, and there is enough ‘band 7’ vocabulary.

2. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘vegetarianism’ topic

Today I asked my students about the vegetarianism topic. They found it quite difficult to give both sides of the argument. It’s important to be able to discuss both sides of an issue, even if there are points that you don’t agree with. Here is a summary of the arguments in favor of a vegetarian diet, according to the

- A vegetarian diet is healthier.
- Eating a hamburger a day can increase your risk of dying by a third.
- Raising animals in factory farm conditions is cruel.
- Meat production causes more emissions than transportation.
- Beef production uses 100 times the amount of water that vegetable production requires.
- A vegetarian diet is cheaper.

So, basically, he is saying that a vegetarian diet is healthier, kinder to animals, better for the environment and cheaper.

Now you need to think about the opposite argument. Feel free to discuss your ideas in the “comments” area.
3. IELTS Writing Task 2: public/private healthcare

A recent IELTS Writing Task 2 question was about the advantages and disadvantages of private healthcare.

**State Health Systems: Advantages**
- Good healthcare should be available to everyone for free.
- State healthcare is paid by the government using money from taxes.
- Everyone has access to the same quality of care and treatment.
- Private healthcare is unfair because only wealthy people can afford it.
- The National Health Service in the UK provides free healthcare for every resident. (use this as an example)

**Private Healthcare: Advantages**
- State hospitals are often very large and difficult to run.
- Private hospitals have shorter waiting lists for operations and appointments.
- Patients can benefit from faster treatment.
- Many people prefer to pay for more personal service.
- Patients have their own room and more comfortable facilities.

**Note:**
You can use the advantages of state healthcare when discussing the disadvantages of private healthcare.

4. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘children’ topic

What problems do children face in today’s world? What should we do to address or solve these problems?
- The lack of closeness in families can have a negative effect on children.
- Many parents have no idea how their children spend their time.
- Friends, television and the Internet have become the main influences on children’s behavior.
- Teenagers are influenced by peer pressure.
- Juvenile delinquency is on the increase.
- Parents should be more involved with their children’s upbringing.
- Young people need positive role models.

Can you think of any more problems that children face, or suggest other solutions? Is it the responsibility of parents, schools or governments to
tackle these problems?

5. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘immigration’ topic

What are the benefits and drawbacks of immigration or multi-cultural societies?

Here is a paragraph giving some of the economic benefits of immigration:

From an economic perspective, immigration can be extremely positive. Many immigrants have skills that are needed in the country they move to. For example, countries sometimes lack key workers like doctors and nurses, and immigration is therefore encouraged. Immigrants who find work contribute to the economy of their new country with the skills they bring and the taxes they pay. At the same time, many immigrants send money to help family members in their home country, therefore helping to boost that economy too. Can you think of any social benefits of immigration? Are there any economic or social disadvantages?

6. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘genetic engineering’ topic

Would you be able to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of genetic engineering?

- Genetic engineering is the practice of manipulating the genes of an organism.
- It is used to produce crops that are more resistant to insects and diseases.
- Some genetically modified crops grow more quickly.
- Some drugs and vaccines are produced by genetic engineering.
- It may become possible to change a person’s genetic characteristics.
- Scientists may use genetic engineering to cure diseases.
- Inherited illnesses would no longer exist.
- Genes could be changed before a baby is born.
- It could also be possible to clone human organs.
- We could have replacement body parts.
- Humans could live longer, healthier lives.

As you can see, I’ve only listed the advantages. Can you think of any disadvantages?
7. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘parents and children’ topic

Many people believe that parents are not as close to their children as they used to be. Suggest some reasons why this could be true.

Here is an example paragraph about the above topic:
Parents and their children seem to be less close nowadays. Perhaps the main reason for this is that both parents often work full-time and therefore spend less time with their children. Whereas women traditionally stayed at home to cook, clean and look after children, many mothers now choose to work or are forced to do so. This means that children may be left alone, or with nannies or babysitters. Busy parents have less contact with their children and less energy to enjoy family activities. Many families no longer eat meals together, and children are given the freedom to go out with friends, watch television or chat on the Internet for hours.

Please note:
A full IELTS question would also ask you to suggest how families could become closer.

8. IELTS Writing Task 2: studying abroad

More and more students are choosing to study at colleges and universities in a foreign country. Do the benefits of studying abroad outweigh the drawbacks?

Benefits of studying abroad:
• Many students travel abroad to study at a prestigious university.
• The best universities employ lecturers who are experts in their fields.
• Qualifications gained abroad can open doors to better job opportunities.
• Living in a foreign country can broaden students’ horizons.
• Overseas students are exposed to different cultures and customs.
• They can immerse themselves in a language.

Drawbacks of studying abroad:
• Living away from home can be challenging.
• Students have problems with paperwork such as visa applications.
• The language barrier can cause difficulties.
• Students have to find accommodation and pay bills.
• Many students feel homesick and miss their families.
• Some students experience culture shock.
Which of the words or phrases above do you think would be considered band 7 or higher?

9. IELTS Writing Task 2: crime topic

Here is a “problem/solution” question, with some ideas for an essay below:
Many criminals re-offend after they have been punished. Why do some people continue to commit crimes after they have been punished, and what measures can be taken to tackle this problem?

Causes of crime and re-offending:
• The main causes of crime are poverty, unemployment and lack of education.
• People who commit crimes often have no other way of making a living.
• The prison system can make the situation worse.
• Offenders mix with other criminals who can be a negative influence.
• A criminal record makes finding a job more difficult.
• Many prisoners re-offend when they are released.

Possible measures to reduce crime and re-offending:
• Prisons should provide education or vocational training.
• Rehabilitation programs prepare prisoners for release into society.
• Community service is another way to reform offenders.
• It makes offenders useful in their local communities.
• They might be required to talk to school groups or clean public areas.
• Offenders also need help when looking for accommodation and work.

10. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘zoo’ topic

Some people believe that it is wrong to keep animals in zoos, while others think that zoos are both entertaining and ecologically important. Discuss both views.

Here are some (band 7 or higher) vocabulary ideas. I’ve organized the vocabulary according to different perspectives.

Positives of keeping animals in zoos:
1. Environmental perspective: Zoos play an important role in wildlife conservation.
   They help to protect endangered species. They allow scientists to study animal behavior.
2. Economic perspective: Zoos employ large numbers of people. They provide job opportunities and income for the local area. The money raised can be used for conservation projects.
3. Personal perspective: Zoos are interesting, educational and fun. They make
a great day out for families. Children learn to appreciate wildlife and nature.

**Negatives of zoos:**

1. Environmental perspective: Zoos are artificial environments. Animals lose their instinct to hunt for food. It would be better to save endangered species by protecting their natural habitats.

2. Moral perspective: Keeping animals in cages is unethical. We have no right to use animals for entertainment. Zoos exhibit animals with the aim of making a profit. Thinking about topics from different perspectives is a useful technique. It helps you to generate a variety of interesting ideas.

**11. IELTS Writing Task 2: education / practical skills**

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

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

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

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

I would write that it is true that children learn academic subjects at school, but not many practical skills. However, I would then disagree that schools should teach skills like bank account management and car maintenance.

2. **First supporting paragraph**

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

3. **Second supporting paragraph**

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

4. **Conclusion**

Repeat the idea that schools are already doing a good job teaching the traditional academic subjects. If they start to teach practical skills, the study of important academic subjects will suffer.
12. IELTS Writing Task 2: globalization

Here is an essay question on the topic of globalization:
It has been said that the world is becoming a global village in which there
are no boundaries to trade and communication. Do the benefits of
globalization outweigh the drawbacks?

Positives of globalization:
• Business is becoming increasingly international.
• A global economy means free trade between countries.
• This can strengthen political relationships.
• Globalization can also create opportunities for employment.
• It encourages investment in less developed countries.
• It could reduce poverty in the developing world.

Negatives of globalization:
• Globalization can also lead to unemployment and exploitation.
• Companies move to countries where labor is cheap.
• This creates redundancies or job losses.
• Some companies exploit their employees in developing countries.
• Salaries are low and working conditions are often poor.
• Global trade also creates excessive waste and pollution.

Note:
The American English spelling is ‘globalization’. You can use either spelling
in the IELTS test.

13. IELTS Writing Task 2: advertising topic

Advertising is a very common topic in both IELTS writing and speaking tests.

Positives of advertising:
• Companies need to tell customers about their products and services.
• Advertisements inform us about the choices we have.
• The advertising industry employs many people.
• Advertisements are often funny, artistic or thought-provoking.

Negatives of advertising:
• Advertisers aim to convince us that buying things leads to happiness.
• We are persuaded to follow the latest trends and fashions.
• Children can be easily influenced by advertisements.
• They put pressure on their parents by pestering or nagging.

Opinions:
• Advertising should be regulated by governments.
Advertisements that target children should be banned.
Packaging for junk food should display clear health warnings.
Overall, advertising is necessary but it needs to be controlled.

14. IELTS Writing Task 2: tourism

Do the benefits of tourism outweigh the drawbacks?
Here are some ideas. I’ve organized the vocabulary according to different perspectives (different ways of looking at this issue).

Positives of tourism:
1. Personal perspective: Tourism is a popular leisure activity. Tourists can relax, have fun, ‘recharge their batteries’, experience different customs and cultures (sight-seeing, sunbathing, visiting monuments, tasting new cuisine). Travel opens our minds. It can broaden our horizons.

2. Economic perspective: The tourism industry is vital for some countries. People rely on tourism for their income. Tourism attracts investment from governments and companies. It creates employment due to demand for goods and services (hotels, entertainment, etc.). It helps to improve the standard of living.

Negatives of tourism:
1. Environmental perspective: Tourism can have a negative impact on the environment. Excessive building (roads, hotels, etc.) destroys natural habitats and spoils the landscape. Tourism creates pollution and waste. It puts pressure on local resources such as food, water, and energy.

2. Economic perspective: Tourism may cause a rise in the cost of living. Prices of goods and services go up. Tourists buy second homes. All of this affects local people.

3. Cultural perspective: Local traditions may be lost. Traditional jobs and skills die out (e.g. farming, fishing). Local people are forced to work in the tourist industry. Thinking about topics from different perspectives can help you to generate better ideas. This technique isn’t perfect for every topic, but it can be really useful.

15. IELTS Writing Task 2: what is happiness?

Many students find the following question difficult (Cambridge IELTS 4, page 55):
Happiness is considered very important in life. Why is it difficult to define?
What factors are important in achieving happiness?
• Happiness means different things to different people.
• It can be described as a feeling of pleasure or enjoyment.
• People enjoy spending time with family and friends.
• Hobbies, sports, and games can be a source of fun and enjoyment.
• Some people see money as a source of happiness.
• Other people define happiness as something deeper.
• They need to feel that they are doing something useful with their lives.
• Some people get a sense of achievement from their work.
• Others find happiness in bringing up their children.

Try expanding on this idea to write a full essay. Remember to use examples from your experience; this is the best way to develop an idea.

16. IELTS Writing Task 2: global language argument

The speaker in yesterday’s video gave the positives of English as a global second language.

Here is a paragraph with arguments against this view.

Negatives of English as a global language:
The expansion of English has also been criticized. Some people worry that if one language, like English, becomes dominant, other languages may disappear. Languages spoken by small communities could become extinct as people learn English in order to find work. This would obviously have a negative effect on local cultures, customs, and traditions because the new dominant language would bring its own culture with it. For example, the expansion of English has happened alongside the increasing popularity of American culture. The American film, music, and fashion industries are as dominant as global American companies and products, such as Microsoft or the iPod. Some people call this ‘cultural imperialism’, meaning that one culture has power over others.

Try to analyze this paragraph:
Is there a topic sentence? What reasons and examples are given? What linking expressions are used? What ‘band 7 vocabulary’ is used? Can you find some conditional sentences?

17. IELTS Writing Task 2: technology

Here is a question that a student asked me about:
Some people believe that the range of technology available to individuals today is increasing the gap between rich people and poor people, while others
say that technology has the opposite effect. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

**I’d write a 4-paragraph essay:**
1. Introduction: introduce the topic and give your view
2. One view
3. The other view (that you agree with)
4. Conclusion: repeat your view

**Some ideas:**
The technology could increase the gap between rich and poor. Rich people have smartphones, laptops, wireless broadband Internet, etc. People in developed countries can now work from home or from anywhere in the world. They can do their shopping online and have things delivered to their homes. Technology improves their quality of life.

**On the other hand,** many people in poorer countries, who did not have normal telephones, now have mobile phones. Also, the Internet is spreading to all parts of the world. In the past, only people in developed countries had access to world-class libraries, but now the Internet gives everyone access to the same information. This will lead to greater equality.

**18. IELTS Writing Task 2: city problems**
More and more people are migrating to cities in search of a better life, but city life can be extremely difficult. Explain some of the difficulties of living in a city. How can governments make urban life better for everyone?

**Here are some band 7 vocabulary ideas for describing city problems:**
- Life in cities has its drawbacks.
- The cost of living is higher than in rural areas.
- Housing is usually much more expensive.
- Homelessness and poverty are common in cities.
- There is a gap between the rich and the poor.
- Life in cities can be extremely stressful.
- There are problems like traffic congestion and crime.
- Cities lack a sense of community.
- People do not even know their neighbors.
- Cities are sometimes described as “concrete jungles”.

Can you suggest any solutions to these problems? Watch yesterday’s video for some ideas.
20. IELTS Writing Task 2: governments

A lot of IELTS Writing questions ask you to give opinions about what governments should do in relation to an issue. Governments can have an influence on almost everything: environment, crime, television, advertising, work etc.

As part of your IELTS preparation, you should think about what governments can do in relation to IELTS topics.

• Governments provide public services like healthcare and education.
• They introduce new laws.
• They raise money by taxing working people.
• They can spend money on campaigns to educate people.
• They can raise people’s awareness of issues.
• They can create new jobs.
• They can provide resources for schools, hospitals, etc.
• They can support people who are living in poverty or unable to work.

So, if the question asks you to suggest what governments should do to reduce obesity, you could write this:

“In my opinion, governments should spend money on campaigns to educate people about the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet. Perhaps they should also introduce new laws to ban the advertising of junk food to children.” Think about some other IELTS topics. What do you think governments should do?

21. IELTS Writing Task 2: health topic

Despite huge improvements in healthcare, the overall standard of physical health in many developed countries is now falling. What could be the reason for this trend, and what can be done to reverse it?

Here is a paragraph about the causes of poor health:

Lifestyle is a major cause of poor health in developed countries. Most people now travel by car rather than walking, and machines now perform many traditional manual jobs. As a result, people tend to work in offices where little physical activity is required. At home, people are also less active; most adults relax by watching television, while children play video games rather than doing outdoor sports. Technology has, therefore, made our lives more comfortable but perhaps less healthy.

Can you suggest any solutions to these lifestyle problems?
22. IELTS Writing Task 2: government spending

As yesterday’s listening exercise was about space programs, let’s look at the following writing question:
The money spent by governments on space programs would be better spent on vital public services such as schools and hospitals. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Planning your answer:
1. First, you need to decide what your opinion is. Will you agree, disagree, or try to present a balanced opinion? Which would be easier?
2. Then you need to decide how to organize the essay. How many paragraphs will you write, and what will each paragraph be about?
3. Finally, you need to plan some ideas (good vocabulary) to support your opinion. Feel free to discuss your ideas in the “comments” area below. I’m afraid I can’t check essays, but I’ll be happy to make general comments about your ideas.

23. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘bottled water’ topic

Water is a natural resource that should always be free. Governments should ban the sale of bottled water.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Here are some opinions that you could use:

• Some people believe that bottled water is healthier than tap water.
• They also argue that it tastes better.
• Other people believe that we should consume less bottled water.
• Plastic water bottles add to litter and waste problems.
• Companies should not be able to make a profit from a natural resource.
• There is no difference in quality between bottled and tap water.
• Governments should ensure that everyone has access to clean tap water.

24. IELTS Writing Task 2: money and consumerism

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

Many people say that we now live in ‘consumer societies’ where money and
possessions are given too much importance. Others believe that consumer culture has played a vital role in improving our lives.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

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

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

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

25. IELTS Writing Task 2: fixed punishments

Some people believe that there should be fixed punishments for each type of crime. Others, however, argue that the circumstances of an individual crime, and the motivation for committing it, should always be taken into account when deciding on the punishment. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Here is the suggested essay outline:

1. Introduction: topic + response
People have different views about whether punishments for crimes should be fixed. Although there are some advantages of fixed punishments, I believe that it is better to judge each crime individually.

2. Benefits of fixed punishments
There are some good arguments for having one set of punishment for each crime.
IDEAS: easy, fair justice system; everyone is aware of the punishment for each crime; fixed punishments could deter criminals.

3. Benefits of not having fixed punishments
However, I would argue that the circumstances of a crime and the criminal’s motivation should have an influence on the punishment.
IDEAS: the judge can decide the best response; a more humane system; example: stealing to feed a family compared to stealing for profit.

4. Conclusion: repeat your response
In conclusion, despite the advantages of fixed punishments, it seems to me that each crime should be judged taking both the circumstances and motivation into account.

26. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘online shopping’ topic

This was a recent IELTS exam question:
Online shopping is increasing dramatically. How could this trend affect our environment and the kinds of jobs required?

Plan your essay with a 4-paragraph structure:
1. Introduction: topic + response (2 sentences are enough)
   Introduce the topic of ‘online shopping becoming more popular’. Then write that it will have a significant impact on the environment and on jobs.
2. Paragraph about the environment
   Write about simple ideas e.g. people will drive less, so there will be less pollution, less destruction from the building of new roads, but perhaps more packaging.
3. Paragraph about jobs
   Simple ideas e.g. many shop workers will lose their jobs, unemployment may rise, but there will be more skilled jobs in IT (computer programmers, web designers).
4. Conclusion: repeat your response
   Overall opinion: online shopping may have a negative effect on employment, but it might be a good thing for the environment.

27. IELTS Writing Task 2: using the ebook

Some ideas about the benefits of mobile phones:
• The mobile phone is the most popular gadget in today’s world.
• We can stay in touch with family, friends, and colleagues wherever we are.
• Users can send text messages, surf the Internet, take photos and listen to music.
• Mobiles have also become fashion accessories.
• Mobile phones have revolutionized the way we communicate.

By linking these ideas (and adding a few things) I can write a paragraph:
The mobile phone has become the most popular gadget in today’s world. The reason for this is that it is portable and versatile. Mobile phones are now carried at all times by most people, allowing us to stay in touch with
family, friends, and colleagues wherever we are. Furthermore, they now have many more functions than a standard telephone; mobile phone users can send text messages, surf the Internet, take photos and listen to music, as well as making calls. Mobiles have become fashion accessories, and they have revolutionized the way we communicate.

28. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘marriages’ topic

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

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

Note:
Please don’t send me full essays. I can’t check them or give you a score.

29. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘road safety’ topic

Road safety could be the topic of a “problem/solution” essay:
Despite improvements in vehicle technology, there are still large numbers of road accidents. Explain some of the causes of these accidents, and suggest some measures that could be taken to address the problem.

Causes:
• Driving while tired or drunk is extremely dangerous.
• Mobile phones can be a dangerous distraction for drivers.
• They draw the driver’s attention away from the road.

Solutions:
• The use of phones while driving has been banned in many countries.
• Punishments are becoming stricter.
• Television campaigns are used to remind people to drive safely.
• Speed cameras have become more common.

30. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘academic
ability’ topic

Some people think schools should group pupils according to their academic ability, but others believe pupils with different abilities should be educated together.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Here are some “band 7” (or higher) ideas:

For grouping by ability:
• Teachers can work at the right speed for their students.
• Teachers can plan more suitable lessons.
• High-level groups may progress faster.
• Lower level groups can benefit from a slower pace.

Against grouping by ability:
• Grouping by ability may have a negative impact on students.
• Children do not want to be seen as less intelligent than others.
• Being in a lower level group could damage their self-esteem.
• Mixed ability classes encourage children of all abilities to cooperate.

31. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘robots’ topic

Some people believe that robots will play an important role in future societies, while others argue that robots might have negative effects on society.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Today my students planned an essay for this topic. The photo below shows the ideas they had in the lesson:

32. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘women and work’ topic

Women should have an equal role alongside men in both police and armed forces. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Here is my plan for a 4-paragraph essay:

1. Introduction: topic + response
   - Introduce the topic e.g. “Increasing numbers of women are choosing to.”
   - Respond to the question e.g. “I completely agree that women should be able.”

2. The first reason why I agree: equal opportunities

Explain why women should have the same right as men to choose their
profession. People should be chosen for jobs according to their skills, qualifications, character, etc.

3. The second reason why I agree: women’s capabilities
I would disagree with the view that women are less able than men to do certain jobs. Also, I would argue that policewomen, for example, may be better at controlling a situation by communicating more effectively. Police and military work requires more than just physical strength. Teamwork, leadership, and communication can be much more important.

4. Conclusion: one sentence

33. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘minority languages’ essay
‘Band 9’ sample essay

Several languages are in danger of extinction because they are spoken by very small numbers of people. Some people say that governments should spend public money on saving these languages, while others believe that would be a waste of money.

Discuss both these views and give your opinion.

It is true that some minority languages may disappear in the near future. Although it can be argued that governments could save money by allowing this to happen, I believe that these languages should be protected and preserved.

There are several reasons why saving minority languages could be seen as a waste of money.

Firstly, if a language is only spoken by a small number of people, expensive education programs will be needed to make sure that more people learn it, and the state will have to pay for facilities, teachers and marketing. This money might be better spent on other public services. Secondly, it would be much cheaper and more efficient for countries to have just one language. Governments could cut all kinds of costs related to communicating with each minority group.

Despite the above arguments, I believe that governments should try to preserve languages that are less widely spoken. A language is much more than simply a means of communication; it has a vital connection with the cultural identity of the people who speak it. If a language disappears, a whole way of life will disappear with it, and we will lose the rich cultural diversity that makes societies more interesting. By spending money to protect minority
languages, governments can also preserve traditions, customs and behaviors that are part of a country’s history.

In conclusion, it may save money in the short term if we allow minority languages to disappear, but in the long term, this would have an extremely negative impact on our cultural heritage.

(258 words)

34. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘dependence’ question

The following question was used in several countries last Saturday. I’ve listed some ideas below.

Some people think that in the modern world we have become more dependent on each other, while others think that people are now more independent. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

First view: we have become more dependent
• Life is more difficult and expensive, and we are less self-sufficient
• Young people rely on their parents for longer
• Unemployed people receive state benefits
• Our jobs are much more specialized, and we need to work in teams

Second view: we are more independent
• We rely on machines more than we depend on each other
• The Internet allows us to solve problems without needing help
• Families are more dispersed, and therefore provide less support
• Education gives us the freedom to make our own choices

By linking these points together and supporting them with examples, you could easily write two good paragraphs.

35. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘job satisfaction’ topic

As most people spend a major part of their adult life at work, job satisfaction is an important element of individual well-being.

What factors contribute to job satisfaction?
How realistic is the expectation of job satisfaction for all workers?

The following paragraph answers the second part of the question (How realistic..) It is difficult to imagine a world in which everyone is truly satisfied with their job. Most people work in order to earn a salary, and they would probably not choose to spend eight or more hours each day doing their jobs if they did not need the money. The need to earn money to pay
mortgages, bills, and everyday living costs is of much greater concern than job satisfaction. In fact, I would argue that the majority of people dislike their jobs and are unhappy about their salaries, working hours, workloads, or their bosses.

(95 words)

Note:
What “band 7 vocabulary” can you find in the paragraph above?

36. IELTS Writing Task 2: sample discussion essay

Here’s an example of how to write a 4-paragraph essay for “discuss and give your opinion” questions. Notice that I give my opinion in 3 places (introduction, paragraph 3, conclusion). Some people believe that studying at university or college is the best route to a successful career, while others believe that it is better to get a job straight after school.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.
When they finish school, teenagers face the dilemma of whether to get a job or continue their education. While there are some benefits to getting a job straight after school, I would argue that it is better to go to college or university.

The option to start work straight after school is attractive for several reasons. Many young people want to start earning money as soon as possible. In this way, they can become independent, and they will be able to afford their own house or start a family. In terms of their career, young people who decide to find work, rather than continue their studies, may progress more quickly. They will have the chance to gain real experience and learn practical skills related to their chosen profession. This may lead to promotions and a successful career.

On the other hand, I believe that it is more beneficial for students to continue their studies. Firstly, academic qualifications are required in many professions. For example, it is impossible to become a doctor, teacher or lawyer without having the relevant degree. As a result, university graduates have access to more and better job opportunities, and they tend to earn higher salaries than those with fewer qualifications. Secondly, the job market is becoming increasingly competitive, and sometimes there are hundreds of applicants for one position in a company. Young people who do not have qualifications from a university or college will not be able to compete.
For the reasons mentioned above, it seems to me that students are more likely to be successful in their careers if they continue their studies beyond school level.

(271 words, band 9)

37. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘museums’ essay

Some people think that museums should be enjoyable places to entertain people, while others believe that the purpose of museums is to educate. Discuss both views and give you own opinion.

People have different views about the role and function of museums. In my opinion, museums can and should be both entertaining and educational.

On the one hand, it can be argued that the main role of a museum is to entertain. Museums are tourist attractions, and their aim is to exhibit a collection of interesting objects that many people will want to see. The average visitor may become bored if he or she has to read or listen to too much educational content, so museums often put more of an emphasis on enjoyment rather than learning. This type of museum is designed to be visually spectacular and may have interactive activities or even games as part of its exhibitions.

On the other hand, some people argue that museums should focus on education. The aim of any exhibition should be to teach visitors something that they did not previously know. Usually, this means that the history behind the museum’s exhibits needs to be explained, and this can be done in various ways. Some museums employ professional guides to talk to their visitors, while other museums offer headsets so that visitors can listen to detailed commentary about the exhibition. In this way, museums can play an important role in teaching people about history, culture, science and many other aspects of life.

In conclusion, it seems to me that a good museum should be able to offer an interesting, enjoyable and educational experience so that people can have fun and learn something at the same time.

(253 words, band 9)

38. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘sports salaries’ topic

As I’ve said before, you can’t get a high score for IELTS writing task 2 if
Some people believe that the salaries paid to professional sportspeople are too high, while others argue that sports salaries are fair. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

**View 1: sports salaries are too high**
- Sports professionals earn too much money.
- They do not provide a vital service.
- Football players earn enormous salaries by simply kicking a ball.
- We could all live happily without professional football.
- We should value professionals such as nurses and teachers more highly.

**View 2: sports salaries are fair**
- It is fair that the best sportspeople earn a lot of money.
- Sport is a multi-million-pound industry.
- There is a large audience of sports fans who are willing to pay.
- Televised games or events attract many viewers.
- Being a top sportsperson requires hours of practice.

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**39. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘helping poor countries’ topic**

This was the IELTS writing task 2 question on 28th May:
The money given to help poor countries does not solve the problem of poverty, so rich countries should give other types of help instead.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree?**

1. **Introduction:** introduce the topic of helping poor countries, and agree that giving money is not the best way to help.
2. A paragraph explaining why giving money is a bad idea.
3. A paragraph explaining why other types of help are better.
4. Conclusion: repeat the argument (investing is better than giving).

**We discussed some ideas and wrote paragraph 2 together:**

In my opinion, it is a bad idea to simply give financial aid to governments of poor countries. If rich countries do this, there is a risk that the money will not go to the people who need it most. Governments may misuse the money they are given because they do not have the resources or the know-how to tackle the causes of poverty. In some cases, corrupt politicians have become rich while their citizens continue to suffer. For these reasons, it is important for developed countries to find ways to invest in developing nations, instead of
40. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘gender and university’ topic

Universities should accept equal numbers of male and female students in every subject. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

I did a lesson about this question with my students. Here are our ideas:

1. Introduction: We decided to completely disagree with the question statement. You don’t need to explain both sides of the argument. Just give your opinion in the introduction, then support it in the main body paragraphs.

2. Paragraph 2: One reason why we decided to disagree is that it would not be practical or realistic to have exactly the same number of males and females on every course. Some courses have mainly male applicants, while others are more popular with females.

3. Paragraph 3: Another reason we disagreed is that it would not be fair to base admission to courses on gender. Universities should select candidates based on their qualifications, skills, experience, etc.

4. Conclusion: Repeat the idea that selecting according to gender is not the best way to ensure equal opportunities for men and women at university. I’ll put a full example essay on the site next week. You are welcome to share your own ideas, but I’m afraid I can’t give feedback, scores or corrections.

41. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘gender and university’ essay

Universities should accept equal numbers of male and female students in every subject. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

In my opinion, men and women should have the same educational opportunities. However, I do not agree with the idea of accepting equal proportions of each gender in every university subject.

Having the same number of men and women on all degree courses is simply unrealistic. Student numbers on any course depend on the applications that the institution receives. If a university decided to fill courses with equal numbers of males and females, it would need enough applicants of each gender. In reality, many courses are more popular with one gender than the other, and it would not be practical to aim for equal proportions. For example, nursing courses tend to attract more female applicants, and it would be difficult to
fill these courses if fifty percent of the places needed to go to males.

Apart from the practical concerns expressed above, I also believe that it would be unfair to base admission to university courses on gender. Universities should continue to select the best candidates for each course according to their qualifications. In this way, both men and women have the same opportunities, and applicants know that they will be successful if they work hard to achieve good grades at school. If a female student is the best candidate for a place on a course, it would be wrong to reject her in favor of a male student with lower grades or fewer qualifications.

In conclusion, the selection of university students should be based on merit, and it would be both impractical and unfair to change to a selection procedure based on gender.

(265 words, band 9)

42. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘technology’ topic

This was a recent IELTS exam question:
Early technological developments helped ordinary people and changed their lives more than recent developments.
To what extent do you agree or disagree?

1. Introduction: we disagree because we think that early and recent technologies have had an equally significant impact on our lives.

2. Paragraph about how early technologies helped people.

3. Paragraph about how recent technologies help people.

4. Conclusion: repeat the significance of both.

43. IELTS Writing Task 2: the ‘2 part’ question

The following question confuses many students because it doesn’t seem to be one of the 3 normal types (opinion, discussion, problem/solution). Happiness is considered very important in life.

Why is it difficult to define?

What factors are important in achieving happiness?

I call this a “2 part” question, and it’s easier than you think. Just answer the first question in paragraph 2, and the second question in paragraph 3:

1. Introduction – the topic + simple answer to both questions
2. **Paragraph** – explain why happiness is difficult to define. Some ideas:
   Explain that happiness means different things to different people; the same situation can make one person happy but another person sad/bored etc. Give examples of what makes different people happy (money, success, family, friends, hobbies). Give an example from your experience e.g. a hobby that makes you happy but that your friend hates.

3. **Paragraph** – give your opinions about how to achieve happiness. Some ideas:
   Try to organize your ideas logically – you could begin with humans’ basic needs (in order to be happy we need to be healthy and have somewhere to live, food to eat, etc.) then talk about the importance of family and friends. You could then write about career, money, success, status, etc. – maybe you could explain that these things mean nothing if we do not have family and friends to share our experiences with. Give an example from your own life – what will make you happier than you are now?

4. **Conclusion** – repeat/summarize the main ideas

**44. IELTS Writing Task 2: recent question**

This was the IELTS writing task 2 question two weeks ago in the UK: It is right that university graduates should earn more money than less well educated people, but they should pay the full cost of their education.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

1) **Introduction:** introduce the topic and respond to both parts of the question. We decided to agree that graduates deserve good salaries, but we disagree with the idea that they should pay the full cost of their degree courses.

2) **A paragraph** explaining why graduates should earn good salaries: they have invested time and effort into gaining their qualifications; they have knowledge, skills, and training required for important jobs; they are an asset to society.

3) **A paragraph** explaining why graduates should not have to pay the full cost of education: this will be too expensive and will deter many young people from going to university; students will have huge debts; graduates contribute by paying taxes when they work.

4) **Conclusion:** repeat the two main ideas.

**45. IELTS Writing Task 2: the**
globalization of culture

This was a recent exam question:
Differences between countries become less evident each year. Nowadays, all over the world, people share the same fashions, advertising, brands, eating habits, and TV channels.
Do the disadvantages of this trend outweigh the advantages?

Here’s an outline for a 4-paragraph essay:
Introduction
It is true that many aspects of culture are becoming increasingly similar throughout the world. Although this trend has some benefits, I would argue that there are more drawbacks.

The first sentence of paragraph 2
On the one hand, the globalization of fashion, brands, eating habits and other areas of culture has some benefits. (Explain the benefits)

The first sentence of paragraph 3
On the other hand, I believe that the disadvantages of cultural globalization are even more significant. (Explain the disadvantages)

Conclusion
In conclusion, it seems to me that the drawbacks of globalization, in terms of cultural habits such as the clothes we wear or the foods we eat, do outweigh the benefits.

46. IELTS Writing Task 2: advertising

‘Advertising’ has been the topic of IELTS writing task 2 several times this year. It’s a popular topic, so you need some ideas and opinions about it.

Here are some opinions about advertising.
• Advertising should be ______.
• Advertising _____ children should be controlled or even banned.
• Unhealthy foods should not be marketed _____ attracts children.
• Products that can be a risk to health should _____ warnings.
• However, advertising is necessary in free _____ economies.
• It creates _____ products.
• Governments should only _____ false information or products that are harmful.

Fill the gaps with these words/phrases:
market, in a way that, regulated, display, censor, demand for, aimed at

Note:
‘Advertising’ is uncountable (you can’t say “an advertising” or
advertisings”). ‘Advertising’ is the name of the industry, activity or profession (like ‘marketing’). ‘An advertisement’ (or ‘advertisements’) is what you see on TV, in the street, in newspapers etc.

47. IELTS Writing Task 2: method

I’ve noticed that the more essay practice I do with my students, the more defined my writing method becomes. For example, I now know that my 250-word essays usually contain 13 to 15 sentences: 2 for the introduction, 5 to 6 for each main paragraph and 1 sentence for the conclusion. It takes me 10 minutes to write a good plan, 5 minutes to write an introduction, I have 2 main ways of writing main paragraphs etc. etc. The question is: Do you have a clearly defined method? Do you repeatedly practice writing essays in the same way? If you don’t have a method, it’s just “hit and hope”.

48. IELTS Writing Task 2: problem and solution

Behavior in schools is getting worse. Explain the causes and effects of this problem, and suggest some possible solutions.

Here are some ideas for two main body paragraphs: Causes of bad behavior in schools:
1. bad behavior/ lack of discipline
2. large classes / difficult to teach
3. disruptive students/family background
4. parents / lenient / spoil

Possible solutions:
1. schools / clear rules
2. teachers / punish disruptive students
3. parents / support / school rules
4. parents / take responsibility/children’s behavior

A good way to practice your writing is to try making full sentences with these ideas e.g. One reason for bad behavior is the lack of discipline in many schools.

49. IELTS Writing Task 2: problem and solution (obesity)

Childhood obesity is becoming a serious problem in many countries. Explain the main causes and effects of this problem, and suggest some possible
50. IELTS Writing Task 2: higher education

Some people believe that studying at university or college is the best route to a successful career, while others believe that it is better to get a job straight after school. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Here’s my full introduction and conclusion, as well as some ideas for the main body paragraphs:

Introduction
When they finish school, teenagers face the dilemma of whether to get a job or continue their education. While there are some benefits to getting a job straight after school, I would argue that it is better to go to college or university.

Paragraph 1: benefits of getting a job
The option to start work straight after school is attractive for several reasons. (IDEAS: start earning money, become independent, gain experience, learn skills, get promotions, settle down earlier, afford a house, have a family)

Paragraph 2: benefits of higher education (my opinion)
On the other hand, I believe that it is more beneficial for students to continue their studies. (IDEAS: some jobs require academic qualifications, better job opportunities, higher salaries, the job market is very competitive, gain knowledge, become a useful member of society)

Conclusion
For the reasons mentioned above, it seems to me that students are more likely to be successful in their lives if they continue their studies beyond school level.

51. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘equality’ topic

Here’s full (band 9) essay for last week’s question.
In recent years, there has been growing interest in the relationship between equality and personal achievement. Some people believe that individuals can achieve more in egalitarian societies. Others believe that high levels of personal achievement are possible only if individuals are free to succeed or fail according to their individual merits.
What is your view of the relationship between equality and personal success?

In my opinion, an egalitarian society is one in which everyone has the same rights and the same opportunities. I completely agree that people can achieve more in this kind of society. Education is an important factor with regard to personal success in life.

I believe that all children should have access to free schooling, and higher education should be either free or affordable for all those who chose to pursue a university degree. In a society without free schooling or affordable higher education, only children and young adults from wealthier families would have access to the best learning opportunities, and they would, therefore, be better prepared for the job market. This kind of inequality would ensure the success of some but harm the prospects of others.

I would argue that equal rights and opportunities are not in conflict with people’s freedom to succeed or fail. In other words, equality does not mean that people lose their motivation to succeed, or that they are not allowed to fail. On the contrary, I believe that most people would feel more motivated to work hard and reach their potential if they thought that they lived in a fair society. Those who did not make the same effort would know that they had wasted their opportunity. Inequality, on the other hand, would be more likely to demotivate people because they would know that the odds of success were stacked in favor of those from privileged backgrounds.

In conclusion, it seems to me that there is a positive relationship between equality and personal success.

(260 words)

Note:

I’m not sure that this was a ‘real’ IELTS question (maybe the student who sent it to me remembered it wrongly) because it is a bit confusing: it seems strange to me to imply that “egalitarian/equality” is the opposite of “free to succeed or fail”. Anyway, I hope you still find the essay useful.

52. IELTS Writing Task 2: who should we help?

We cannot help everyone in the world that needs help, so we should only be concerned with our own communities and countries.

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

Let’s plan an essay for this question.

1. Introduction – I don’t think there is a “middle” opinion for this
question. You either agree that we should only be worried about our own communities and countries, or you think that we should also help those outside our own countries. The best response might be to disagree – then you can say that we should try to help everyone.

2. Paragraph 2 – I agree that it is important to help our neighbors and fellow citizens.
   (Explain this idea)

3. Paragraph 3 – At the same time, I believe that we have an obligation to help those who live beyond our national borders. (Explain)

4. Conclusion – Repeat the idea that we can help people both at home and abroad.

53. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘help’ essay

We cannot help everyone in the world that needs help, so we should only be concerned with our own communities and countries.

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

Some people believe that we should not help people in other countries as long as there are problems in our own society. I disagree with this view because I believe that we should try to help as many people as possible.

On the one hand, I accept that it is important to help our neighbors and fellow citizens. In most communities, there are people who are impoverished or disadvantaged in some way. It is possible to find homeless people, for example, in even the wealthiest of cities, and for those who are concerned about this problem, there are usually opportunities to volunteer time or give money to support these people. In the UK, people can help in a variety of ways, from donating clothing to serving free food in a soup kitchen. As the problems are on our doorstep, and there are obvious ways to help, I can understand why some people feel that we should prioritize local charity.

At the same time, I believe that we have an obligation to help those who live beyond our national borders. In some countries, the problems that people face are much more serious than those in our own communities, and it is often even easier to help. For example, when children are dying from curable diseases in African countries, governments and individuals in richer countries can save lives simply by paying for vaccines that already exist. A small donation to an international charity might have a much greater impact than helping in our local area.

In conclusion, it is true that we cannot help everyone, but in my opinion, national boundaries should not stop us from helping those who are in need.
54. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘global warming’ topic

If the question asks you to explain a problem related to the environment, you could write about global warming.

Here is a paragraph explaining the problem (causes) of global warming:
Perhaps the most serious problem facing the environment is global warming. Gases such as carbon dioxide trap heat from the sun within the earth’s atmosphere, and this causes global temperatures to rise. This process is known as the greenhouse effect, and human activity is a major factor in the rise of the greenhouse gases which cause it. For example, factories and vehicles produce emissions and exhaust fumes. As many developing countries are becoming industrialized, emissions from factories are expected to increase. Furthermore, the number of cars on our streets is growing all the time, and cheap air travel is making flying accessible to more and more people. Consequently, the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere shows no signs of decreasing.

55. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘nuclear power’ topic

Following on from yesterday’s listening lesson, here is a paragraph explaining some of the benefits of nuclear power:
There are several benefits to building more nuclear power stations. Firstly, nuclear power is a relatively sustainable energy source, meaning that it can be used to produce electricity without wasting limited natural resources like coal, oil or gas. Secondly, nuclear power stations are cleaner than fossil fuel power stations and could help to reduce carbon emissions that cause global warming. With improvements in nuclear technology, the risks of accidents are being reduced. As a result, many countries are now considering nuclear power as a solution to high oil and gas prices, increasing demand for electricity, and worries about pollution and climate change.

Read, analyze and use the paragraph:
• How many sentences are there, and what does each sentence do?
• Note the main ideas and collocations (e.g. sustainable energy source).
• Try to rewrite the paragraph using only your notes.
56. IELTS Writing Task 2: using the word “I”

Here is a question that a lot of students ask:
Is it acceptable to use “I” or “my” in IELTS writing?
As an ex-examiner, my advice is that you should use phrases like “I believe” or “in my opinion” when the question asks for your opinion e.g To what extent do you agree or disagree?
Some teachers tell students not to use “I” in academic essays, but this advice is really for university academic writing, not IELTS.

57. IELTS Writing Task 2: full essay

Here are some points to notice:
• There is a clear 4-paragraph structure, and the essay is easy to read because the ideas are developed in a logical way.
• The introduction is short, but it covers everything that the question asks you about.
• The main paragraphs make up around 70% of the essay. These paragraphs are the key to a high score.
• The conclusion is very short, and simply summarises what I had already written. Never put any new ideas in the conclusion.
• I focus on expressing my ideas well, using a range of relevant words and phrases. I’m not thinking about ‘complex grammar’ or linking phrases.

58. IELTS Writing Task 2: books, radio, TV

Here are my ‘main body’ paragraphs for last week’s question. Notice that it’s possible to put advantages and disadvantages together in the same paragraph. Also, you need to be careful not to write too much!

Advantages/disadvantages of books:
The main advantage of books is that they are usually considered to be reliable sources of information. People tend to refer to books when they want to research a subject in depth, and for this reason, they continue to play an important role in education. On the other hand, books quickly go out of date, and therefore they are not the best medium for communicating news stories.

Advantages / disadvantages of radio:
Radio is a much more effective medium than books for the communication of up-to-date information. We can listen to news broadcasts about events as they
happen, and a key benefit of radio is that we can listen to it while doing other activities, such as driving or working. The main drawback of radio, when compared to books or television, is that there is no visual element; we cannot see what the broadcaster is describing.

Advantages/disadvantages of TV, and my opinion:
In my opinion, television is the most effective of these three media because it brings us closer to reality than a book or radio program ever can. For example, we can watch events as they take place on the other side of the world, or we can see the body language of a politician who is being interviewed. The disadvantages of television are that programs tend to be short and interrupted by advertisements, meaning that information is presented in limited depth.

59. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘art and science’ topic
These days people pay more attention to artists (writers, painters and so on) and give less importance to science and technology.
To what extent do you agree or disagree?
This seems to me to be a perfect question for a “balanced opinion” answer (i.e. both art and science are given equal importance). However, notice that you need to disagree with the question statement in order to give this balanced response.
Here’s my recommended 4-paragraph essay plan:
1. Introduction: we could accept that artists are popular nowadays, but disagree that science and technology are treated as less important.
2. Main paragraph about the popularity of artists. I’d use examples as the basis for this paragraph. If you don’t know any writers or painters, you can talk about actors and musicians.
3. Main paragraph about the importance of science and technology. I’d write about the popularity of mobile phones, computers, and tablets. Maybe I’d use Steve Jobs or Bill Gates as examples of people who are famous for the technologies they created.
4. Conclusion: paraphrase the argument that you presented in the introduction.

60. IELTS Writing Task 2: ‘technology’
Nowadays the way many people interact with each other has changed because of technology.

In what ways has technology affected the types of relationships that people make?

Has this been a positive or negative development?

It is true that new technologies have had an influence on communication between people. Technology has affected relationships in various ways, and in my opinion, there are both positive and negative effects.

Technology has had an impact on relationships in business, education and social life. Firstly, telephones and the Internet allow business people in different countries to interact without ever meeting each other. Secondly, services like Skype create new possibilities for relationships between students and teachers. For example, a student can now take video lessons with a teacher in a different city or country. Finally, many people use social networks, like Facebook, to make new friends and find people who share common interests, and they interact through their computers rather than face to face.

On the one hand, these developments can be extremely positive. Cooperation between people in different countries was much more difficult when communication was limited to written letters or telegrams. Nowadays, interactions by email, phone or video are almost as good as face-to-face meetings, and many of us benefit from these interactions, either in work or social contexts. On the other hand, the availability of new communication technologies can also have the result of isolating people and discouraging real interaction. For example, many young people choose to make friends online rather than mixing with their peers in the real world, and these ‘virtual’ relationships are a poor substitute for real friendships.

In conclusion, technology has certainly revolutionized communication between people, but not all of the outcomes of this revolution have been positive.

(257 words, band 9)