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### Opinion essay: agree or disagree.

**In relation to the options mentioned above, there are 5 structure templates that could be used for ‘agree & disagree’ essays:**

**Template 1.***Totally agree*

§1 Introduction: Paraphrase the Task + My opinion: I agree that… (2 sentences)

§2 The first reason why I agree + Explanation + Example

§3 The second reason why I agree + Explanation + Example OR Result

§4 Conclusion: Sum up the reasons + My opinion: I agree… (Paraphrase the introduction) (2 sentences)

**Template 2***Somewhat agree (balanced essay)*

§1 Introduction: Paraphrase the Task + My opinion: I agree that… (2 sentences)

§2 The first reason why I agree + Explanation + Example

§3 The second reason why I agree + Explanation + Example OR Result

§4 On the other hand, + why do people disagree? + Explanation + Example

§5 Conclusion: Sum up the reasons + My opinion: I agree… (Paraphrase the introduction) (2 sentences)

**Template 3***Equally agree or disagree*

§1 Introduction: Paraphrase the Task + My balanced opinion: I accept that… but I disagree that… (2 sentences)

§2 What I agree with + The reason(s) why I agree + Explanation + Example

§3 What I disagree with + The reason(s) why I disagree + Explanation + Example or Result

§4 Conclusion: Sum up the reasons + My opinion: why I agree and disagree (2-3 sentences)

**Template 4***Totally disagree*

§1 Introduction: Paraphrase the Task + My opinion: I disagree that… (2 sentences)

§2 The first reason why I disagree + Explanation + Example

§3 The second reason why I disagree + Explanation + Example OR Result

§4 Conclusion: sum up the reasons + My opinion: I disagree… (Paraphrase the introduction) (2 sentences)

**Template 5***Somewhat disagree (balanced essay)*

§1 Introduction: Paraphrase the Task + My opinion: I disagree that…

§2 The first reason why I disagree + Explanation + Example

§3 The second reason why I disagree + Explanation + Example OR Result

§4 On the other hand, + why do people agree? + Explanation + Example

§5 Conclusion: sum up the reasons + My opinion: I disagree… (Paraphrase the introduction) (2 sentences)

**These are the crucial mistakes that candidates make when composing IELTS essays:**

* **Rushing to start the task without properly reading the question**. Doing this means that the final essay is very likely to be off topic, which not only lowers the score for Task response but also affects Cohesion and coherence assessing component because the essay doesn’t make sense to the reader who is looking for a response to the question. A common example of this is with a question like ‘to what extent do you agree or disagree.’ This requires YOUR opinion, and therefore saying things like ‘some people believe that…’ is off topic, unless you state whether you agree with them or not.
* **Task not properly analysed**. For example,

**Topic***: Some people believe that the fast pace and stress of modern life is having a negative effect on families*.

Whenever you see the word ‘**and**’ in the topic you must address both parts of the question.

Should you cover exclusively ‘fast pace’ in your essay and miss to address ‘stresses’, you are very likely to lose marks for not addressing ALL the parts of the topic and this is for not satisfying demands for Task response.

* **Key words of the task not rephrased in the planning stage and then in the introduction**.

You need to rephrase the keywords that are given in the topic for two reasons. The main reason is if you don’t, the examiner will put brackets around the words you have copied from the task and these words will not be included in your word count. This may lead to your essay being under length. As well as this, you should rephrase the keywords to show your talent with vocabulary.

* **Frequency of errors is also an issue**. Proofreading is indispensable to spot errors in word choice, spelling or word formation. The most common errors are singular/plural forms, s-endings in verbs, articles.

**Ex. 2 WRITING AN INTRODUCTION**

**TIP 1:**There are a number of ways to write an introduction for an essay like this. However, all introductions should clarify what the question is asking you to discuss and should explain how you should plan to answer it. As with all IELTS Writing introductions, you will score higher if you paraphrase the question in your own words**.**

**TIP 2:**Do not try to be creative here, as you will not be rewarded for this, and you risk lowering your score for Task response if you misstate the topic**.**

**For example, the topic is: *Computers are being used more and more in education and some say there will soon be no role for the teacher in education*.**

**GOOD REPHRASE:***Some people believe technology may be used to replace teachers in the future*.

**BAD REPHRASE**: *Due to the rising prevalence of advanced technology computers are becoming more useful*. This misstates the topic because it is not about whether computers are useful, it is about whether they will replace teachers.

**TOO LONG REPHRASE**: *Since the dawn of time, mankind has been finding ways to improve their lives. More recently, education has emerged as a very important aspect of human life. Therefore, it is worthwhile to consider whether technology offers any advantages in the classroom and whether it is more useful than the people who have trained for many years as academic experts*. TOO LONG! It is like a history lesson, and this also makes the topic a little unclear. If the writing is less clear, then coherence is lowered. The key point here is that long introductions do more harm than good. In addition, it is better to spend more time on the body of the essay, in order to show your ability to develop your main ideas which increase your score for Task response.

**TIP 3:**Given that you have already rephrased the keywords of the topic in the planning stage, this step should be relatively easy. When you do write this sentence, in addition to rephrasing words also try to rearrange the order of words in the sentence. This may necessitate changing some of the word forms. For instance, you might have to change nouns into verbs. This shows the examiner your ability to use language flexibility and can increase your score for Vocabulary and grammar.

**How to structure a paragraph**

Before writing any sort of essay, you should plan what you will write. However, this doesn’t merely extend to paragraph topics; you should make notes on what each paragraph includes and look at how you will structure the paragraph internally. This will stop you from breaking the cardinal rule of paragraphing – one paragraph, one idea.

Like an essay, a paragraph needs a beginning, middle, and end. More specifically, it needs:

\* a topic sentence – a very general sentence which explains the main idea of the paragraph;

\* a supporting sentence – any number of sentences which provide details or examples to support or explain the main idea;

\* a concluding sentence – one final sentence to summarise and, possibly, further connect the topic and supporting sentences.

**Topic sentence**

This sentence is usually the first in a paragraph and it will present the main idea in general or vague terms. It could be as simple as:

\* *A lot of people enjoy classical music*.

It should not contain any specific information, and rather than a definite number you might want to say words like ‘several’ or ‘many’.

**Supporting sentence**

This is the meat of the paragraph, and it provides all the necessary detail to support the idea expressed in the topic sentence. These will include evidence, explanation, or examples. They may involve facts, figures, or other particular details. They may tell a story, connect ideas, or express degrees of importance.

An example, carrying on from the previously stated classical music topic sentence, could be:

\* *In fact, songs classified as ‘classical music’ were downloaded over twenty million times on Spotify last month.*

**Concluding sentence**

In this final sentence, you need to restate the main idea without repeating any part of the paragraph. You will want to allude to or reference ideas from the supporting sentences, while paraphrasing your topic sentence.

An example, continuing from the previous ones:

\*  *It is clear, then, that classical music enjoys a high degree of popularity*.

**Planning**

When planning an IELTS essay (or any other kind of essay) you should plan out each paragraph in advance so that you know what you need to say and avoid going off-topic. Let’s say we have a Task 2 question about conversation, and we decide to talk about tigers. Our plan for one body paragraph might simply look like this:

* Main idea: *tigers are endangered because of people*
* Support: 3 examples:

     \* agriculture

     \* Chinese medicine

     \* logging

This would give us a paragraph that look like this:

*Although they are beloved by many, tigers face many dangers that are driving them to extinction. All across Asia, their natural environment is being destroyed by the expansion of agriculture, as the human population continues to grow. They are also being hunted and sold for Chinese medicine. Logging is another big problem, as we cut down the forests where they use to live. For these reasons, it is clear that humans are causing tigers to become increasingly endangered.*

It’s not bad that in IELTS a candidate should strive for the best score possible, and so they should try to give a more developed paragraph on this topic. We could easily expand this further to make a more complex paragraph.

To begin with, we would write a plan like this:

* Agriculture

   \* why expanding

    \* how damaging

    \* example

* Chinese medicine

     \* why used

     \* how damaging

     \* details

* Logging

    \* why it happens

    \* how damaging

    \* example

This would give us a longer, more in-depth paragraph:

*Although they are beloved by many, tigers face many dangers that are driving them to extinction. All across Asia, their natural environment is being destroyed by the expansion of agriculture, as the human population continues to grow. As jungles are cut down for farmland, tigers lose their home and often starve to death. In China, over the past 40 years, 99% of the tiger’s forest habitat has been destroyed for this reason. They are also being hunted and sold for Chinese medicine. Poachers kill tigers and sell their body parts on the black market, where the wealthy Chinese will pay vast sums of money for them. This multi-million-dollar trade has decimated the tiger population of Southeast Asia. Logging is another big problem, as we cut down the forests where they used to live. This pushes tigers into conflict with human settlements as resources become scarce. When this happens, the tiger is usually killed. For these reasons, it is clear that humans are causing tigers to become increasingly endangered.*

 In the above paragraph, all the supporting sentences build upon the topic sentence, and the concluding sentence refers to the supporting sentences and topic sentence without repeating anything. This is called unity, and it is extremely important.

**Note**: If you feel your paragraph will grow too long, you should reduce the number of points in your argument. It is better to expand upon one or two points than end up listing without development. The worst thing, however, would be to run out of time while writing.

**These are common mistakes to avoid**:

**Unclear opinion**

In the example below, the candidate fails to fully make clear their opinion in the introduction. The examiner can only guess that the candidate agrees and has no idea of the extent to which they agree. In this case, this is not a good introduction, and this has a negative effect on Task response and Cohesion and coherence.

***Task question***: *Television has brought great changes to the way many children spend their leisure time. Many people believe these changes have been beneficial. To what extent do you agree or disagree*?

**The candidate writes**:

*Nowadays, children spend a lot of time watching television. It seems that there is a wide variety of television shows and many channels*.

**Contradicting your opinion**

The example below shows how an opinion can easily be contradicted in the conclusion of an essay. The writer contradicts the opinion stated in the introduction that they somewhat disagree with the notion of the widespread use of technology, by stating in the conclusion that technology needs to be learnt:

**Task question**: *Today, more and more young children have electronic gadgets such as computers and mobile phones. Some people say that this is a positive development. Do you agree or disagree*?

**The candidate writes a contradicting opinion**:

*In summary, although it is necessary for children to learn to use these devices at a young age, I somewhat disagree that the widespread use of computers among children is a positive development*.

* **Focus on analysing task questions**

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

To demonstrate these three properties in action, 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 can be included in your written response. In this example essay question, ‘technology’ and ‘education’ are the two controlling keywords. Thus, only topics related to ‘technology’ and ‘education’ can be included in our essay. The direction of our writing has been set.

*Qualifying words* are the words in the question which show the student how the various ideas relate together. They are often the words that present opinion. Here, we see the phrase ‘increasingly prevalent’. What does this tell us about technology? We see ‘completely replace’. What does ‘completely replace’ tell us about the relationship between technology and the classroom? How are these qualifying words shaping the question?

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| contrast | despite this, while, whereas, however, on the other hand, differs from, in contrast to, unlike, although |
| compare | in the same vein, likewise, similarly, this mirrors, just as, has in common, moves in tandem, parallels, alike, like, reflects, almost the same |
| support | desirable, beneficial, advantageous, positive |
| refute | undesirable, unbeneficial, disadvantageous, negative |
| fast increase | climbed, increased rapidly, fast growth, spiked |
| slow increase | gradual, climbed steadily |
| no change | steady, stable, unchanging |
| slow decrease | gradual, declined modestly |
| fast decrease | dropped, fell |
| sudden change up/down | spiked, dived, nose-dived |
| unstable figures | volatile, rapid changes, unstable, unpredictable |
| figures that are similar or the same | in tandem, similar, mirror each other, in parallel |
| maximum | peak, highest |
| minimum | bottomed-out, trough |
| unexpected results | bizarre, strange, against expectations |
| expected results | normal, as expected |
| concurrent | while, during, at the same time, at this time, also |
| degree | completely, somewhat |

*Action words* are the words that elicit response from the student. In the above example question, our action words are ‘do you agree or disagree with this statement’, as it is this phrase that is calling the student to do something.

Here are some additional IELTS action words and what they are requesting from the student:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Asking the student to support | Support this statement…  Back this statement…  Prove this statement… |
| Asking the student to refute | Refute this statement…  Disprove this statement…  Show this statement to be untrue… |
| Asking the student to support or refute | Do you agree or disagree…  Where do you stand…  Take a stand…  How do you see the situation…  Come to a reasoned conclusion…. |
| Asking the student to compare | Contrast these two ideas…  Compare these issues…  Discuss these ideas… |
| Asking the student to analyse | Present a discussion on this issue…  Discuss this topic…  Analyse this topic… |

On the exam, a misinterpreted question can instantly cause a student’s writing to drop several bands. To avoid this, the student should mentally reword the question to ensure they thoroughly understand it.

**A fitting reword of the above essay question could be**:

*Do you agree or disagree that in the near future the role of teachers will be taken by technology?*

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

Now that we are able to digest our question into keywords, qualifying words and action words, we are ready to prepare our response. Every Task 2 response requires one sentence that explicitly addresses the action words. This sentence is referred to as a *thesis*.

An essay’s thesis is only one sentence long, but it is the most important sentence in the entire essay. It is the sentence that connects the essay to the essay question, and if it is not composed correctly, it will cause the entire essay to be off-topic. Despite the critical nature of its role, a thesis is very easy to write. In fact, the thesis often borrows words directly from the essay question.

In our example, the thesis is likely to be one of two things:

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

or

*It is disagreed that technology will replace teachers in the classroom.*

Please note how closely this sentence resembles the action words of the essay question. This is an effective strategy to follow in that it ensures the examiner will clearly see the link between your essay question and your essay. In other areas of your essay, however, try to vary your vocabulary as much as you can.

### Discuss both views and express your opinion

**Essay type: GIVING OPPOSING VIEWS AND YOUR OWN OPINION**

For this kind of essay, you need to discuss two positions on a question and then give your own. Your own opinion can be to take one side or the other, to partly agree with one or both, or even to disagree with both positions and offer an alternative view. The key is to make sure that your opinion is clear and, as with all Task 2 essays, support your arguments with examples, reasons, explanations, etc.

**Task example:**Some people believe that a person’s culture is defined by their country of origin (opinion A), while others believe that has only a minor influence (opinion B). Discuss both these views and give your opinion. Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ESSAY STRUCTURE** | |
| **If you share one of the viewpoints:**  §1. **Introduction**: Paraphrase the task + my opinion: which view do I support? (2 sentences)  §2 **The first view** (why do people think so?) + Explanation + Example  §3 **The second view** (why do people think so?) + Explanation + Example OR Result  §4 **Conclusion**: sum up the two views + my opinion: the view I support (2-4 sentences) | **If you tend to support both viewpoints (balanced essay)**  **Task**: Some people think that parents should teach children how to be good members of society. Others, however, believe that school is the place to teach this. *Discuss both views and give your own opinion*.  §1 I**ntroduction**: People hold different views about whether parents or schools should bear the responsibility of helping children to become good citizens. In my view, this responsibility should be shared. (Paraphrase the task + my opinion, 2 sentences)  §2 **The first view** (why do people think so?) On the one hand, parents certainly have a vital role to play in the upbringing of their children. + Explanation + Example.  §3 **The second view** (why do people think so?) On the other hand, schoolteachers may contribute almost as much as parents to the development of a child. + Explanation + Example or Result  §4 **In conclusion,** both parents and schools should work together to ensure that young people become polite and productive members of society. (My opinion: I support both views + why, 2-4 Sentences). |

**Paragraph structure in the main body:**

**Main idea**

**+**

**Explanation (this means that…; this is because…; in other words…)**

**+**

**Example (for example, for instance, such as)**

### ‘Do advantages outweigh disadvantages’/or ‘What are the advantages and disadvantages…?’

Some experts believe that it is better for children to begin learning a foreign language at primary school rather than secondary school. Do the advantages of this outweigh the disadvantages? Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience. Write at least 250 words.

**We start with the essay structure:**

1. If you think the advantages dominate:

§1 Introduction: Paraphrase the task + my opinion: more benefits (2 SENTENCES)

§2 The first advantage + Explanation + Example

§3 The second advantage + Explanation + Example OR result

§4 One drawback: On the other hand,…+ Explanation + Example OR result

§5 Conclusion: sum up the benefits + My opinion: more benefits (2 SENTENCES)

 2.  If you think the disadvantages dominate:

§1 Introduction: Paraphrase the task + my opinion: more drawbacks (2 SENTENCES)

§2 The first disadvantage + Explanation + Example

§3 The second disadvantage + Explanation + Example OR result

§4 One benefit: On the other hand,…+ Explanation + Example OR result

§5 Conclusion: sum up + My opinion: more drawbacks (2 SENTENCES)

3. If in your view, the advantages and the disadvantages are equally relevant

 §1 Introduction: Paraphrase the task + my opinion: there are benefits and drawbacks (2 SENTENCES)

§2 The first advantage + Explanation + Example. Moreover, + the second benefit + Explanation + Example. In addition, the third benefit + Explanation + Example.

§3 The first disadvantage + Explanation + Example. Furthermore, + the second drawback + Explanation + Example OR result. The third negative side + Explanation + Example OR result.

§4 Conclusion: Sum up + My opinion: benefits and drawbacks (2 SENTENCES)

**TIP:** Whatever essay type you are required to produce, it’s crucial that you start the planning process by brainstorming ideas. Make a list of things you can talk about and then prioritise them in order of importance. Decide which to include and not to include, and then decide what would a logical sequence be for presenting these ideas.

1. One problem with ... is...

One problem with increased life expectancy is an ageing population that puts a strain on health care services.

2. The main advantage of... is ...

3. The principal issue with ... is ...

4. One obvious negative effect of... is ...

5. Another disadvantage of... is...

6. Overall, the benefits of... outweigh the drawbacks because ...

*In many cities the use of video cameras in public places is being increased in order to reduce crime, but some people believe that these measures restrict our individual freedom. Do the benefits of increased security outweigh the drawbacks?*

It is true that video surveillance has become commonplace in many cities in recent years. While I understand that critics may see this as an invasion of privacy, I believe that the benefits do outweigh the drawbacks.

There are two main reasons why people might disapprove of the use of video cameras in public places. The first objection is that these cameras invade our privacy, in the sense that we are constantly being watched by the authorities or by private security firms. Many people find this intrusive and feel that the recording of their movements is a form of state control that curtails their individual freedom. The second argument against the proliferation of CCTV cameras is that they are being used as an alternative to police officers patrolling the streets. If this is indeed happening, then it is unlikely that members of the public will feel safer.

In spite of the drawbacks mentioned above, I believe that the use of video cameras to monitor public areas is a positive measure. The key objective of video surveillance is to deter criminals and to prevent crime. For example, petty criminals like shoplifters and pickpockets are less likely to operate in parts of cities where they know that they are being watched. At the same time, when crimes are committed, the police can use video evidence to catch and prosecute offenders. Therefore, in my view, video cameras offer valuable support to police officers, and they make cities safer for inhabitants, workers and visitors alike.

In conclusion, it seems to me that we gain more than we lose from the enhanced security that CCTV cameras bring to our cities. They help to prevent crimes and make the environment safer to the citizens.

### Two-question (mixed) essay.

**Two-question essay** tests your ability to discuss two aspects of an issue. You must answer BOTH questions well. Therefore, you should respond to each question equally.

**TIP**: For this essay task, it is important to be concise. Limit yourself to two, possibly three, main ideas for each paragraph and develop them properly.

A universally correct algorithm of writing such an essay doesn’t exist. Various approaches exist, and which one to use depends on the task context. You will explore one of them as a safe choice.

**Sample question**

*Some people think that in the future lots of changes will occur that will improve our society. Do you agree or disagree? What kind of changes will occur*?

**1. Task analysis**:

It is important to realise that every task contains a topic and a question. You must fully address both the topic and the question. An analysis of the topic and question is provided below:

**Topic**: *Some people think that in future lots of changes will occur that will improve our society*.

**Question 1**: Do you agree or disagree?

**Question 2**: What kind of changes will occur?

**Planning the essay**:

1. Underline key vocabulary in the topic and write words with the same or related meaning.

Some people think that in the future lots of changes will occur that will improve our society.

*in the years to come  developments are going to happen    make life better*

**2. Decide what kind of response is needed**:

Do you agree or disagree? = *Say whether you agree or disagree*

What kind of changes will occur? = *State what changes might happen*

3. **Brainstorm key points for the answer**.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Question one: agree the changes will be positive** | **Question two: changes that will occur** |
| Life is becoming more convenient [technology leads to convenience] | More time-saving technology, such as robots to do our housework |
| Better entertainment | New technologies to enhance our entertainment. For instance, 3D television will soon become commonplace in our living rooms |

**4. Decide on the structure of the essay**

This essay can always be structured the same based on the two questions that are asked:

**Introduction** = rephrase the topic and introduce both questions

**Question 1+Question 2**  - write exactly two main points to support your response

**Conclusion**=summarise your main points about each question.

5. **Steps in writing your essay**

Once you have written a solid plan for your essay, you can begin the task of actually writing the essay. Having a good plan will speed up this process and ensure that you are consistent with your opinion throughout the essay. What it means is that the introduction will fit the body of the essay, and the conclusion will summarise the points from the body of the essay. If you achieve this high level of fit, you are likely to score well for task response and cohesion and coherence.

**INTRODUCTION**

**1. Paraphrase the question**

Given that your essay already rephrased the keywords of the topic this step should be relatively easy. When you do write this sentence, in addition to rephrasing words also try to rearrange the order of words in the sentence. This may necessitate changing some of the word forms. For instance, you might have to change nouns into verbs. This shows the examiner your ability to use language flexibly and can increase your score for vocabulary and grammar.

Some people think that in the future lots of changes will occur that will improve our society

*in the years to come  developments are taken place  make life better*

**As a result of developments that are taking place, many people believe that life will become better.**

It is important to make it clear what the essay is about because it makes it clear to the examiner that you understand that there are two questions. Also, when the examiner reads the body of your essay, they already have an overall idea of what your essay is about, and in the likely event that you have errors with vocabulary and grammar they may be less serious because the examiner will have more of a context in order to guess the meaning of what you are trying to express. You can simply state what the essay is about using a phrase like:

*This essay discusses*,…

**…**and then add on a rephrase of the two questions:

*This essay discusses the reasons why the changes that are coming are positive and suggests what kind of changes will occur*.

**Body**

After you have written the introduction, you will need exactly two body paragraphs. You should have a paragraph for each of the questions. A good paragraph should only have one main idea. The main idea for each paragraph is the question you are responding to. You should then have exactly two main points to support each question. This ensures that you get the right balance for the essay. What it means is that you should say about the same amount for each of the questions. You should not focus on one of the questions more than the other. You can then support each of these main points by explaining it or giving an example to illustrate it. In order to keep the size of your essay manageable, you might choose to have a major and minor point in each paragraph. The major point may use three sentences and the minor point, two sentences. For instance, you might use this structure:

**Sent 1**topic sentence: make it clear which question you are discussing

**Sent 2**introduce the main point

**Sent 3**explain the main point

**Sent 4**give an example to illustrate the main point

**Sent 5**minor point

**Sent 6**explain or give an example to illustrate the minor point

**3 Write a topic sentence for each body paragraph**

Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence. For this type of essay, the topic sentence should clearly identify which of the questions is being responded to:

*The changes that are coming are positive for two main reasons* [responds to causes]

**4 Write supporting sentences for the topic sentences**

You can think of the topic sentence you have just written as being the introduction for the paragraph. It introduces the question you are responding to, which forms the key point for the paragraph. Having a clear key point for the paragraph makes it easy for the examiner to understand what you are saying in the paragraph. In addition, of the key point of paragraph is clear any errors with vocabulary and grammar will be less likely to prevent communication. This is because the examiner will have more of a context to guess any parts that are unclear. After you have written the topic sentence, you should support it by developing the key point. ***There are three ways to develop your key point***:

- *explanation,*

*- example,*

*- adding details*.

**Explanation:***The main reason is that they will make our lives more convenient*.

**Adding details**: *We are likely to have more free time as a result of technology taking over many of our everyday tasks.*

**Example**: *For example, we may have robots capable of doing many household chores*.

**5 Conclusion**

You only need to do two things in the final paragraph of this type of essay and they are always the same. First you need to signal that this is the concluding paragraph and second you should summarise your main points for each question:

*In conclusion, the future looks promising because we will have technologies takeover many of life’s mundane tasks and we’ll have better forms of entertainment. The most likely changes appear to be technologies to save us time and also enhance our leisure time.*

**Ex. 3. Have a look at the model answer. Check if the text contains answers on both questions.**

*As a result of the developments that are taking place, many people believe that life will become better. This essay discusses the reasons why the changes that are coming are positive, and also suggests what kind of changes will occur.*

*The changes that are coming are positive for two main reasons. The main reason it that they will make our lives more convenient. We are likely to have more free time as a result of technologies taking over many of our everyday tasks. For example, we may have robots capable of doing many household chores, and this will enable us to have more free time for enjoyment and relaxation. Another factor is that our recreational time will be enhanced by new technologies that make our entertainment more fun. If we enjoy ourselves more, we will be happier and more relaxed.*

*There are two main types of developments that are likely to occur. The first of these is time-saving technologies. Future enhancements of robotics are likely to lead to more household tasks being performed by machines. As well as this, the entertainment industry looks likely to soon make enhancements to our recreational experiences by making new technologies available. A good example of this is 3D television, which will make watching movies more fun.*

*In conclusion, the future looks promising because we will have technologies takeover many of life’s mundane tasks and we’ll have better forms of entertainment. The most likely changes appear to be technologies to save us time and enhance our leisure time.*

[256 words]

**To sum it up:**

It is difficult to build a standardized template for the two-question essay because a wide variety of questions can be asked. Still, you can keep in mind a general template**:**

**Introduction**

Rephrase the topic

*this essay discusses*… [question 1] + [question 2]

**Body**

Question 1 [try to write two main points to respond to this question]

Question 2 [try to write two main points to respond to this question]

**Conclusion**

In conclusion,

[summarise the two main points about question 1]

[summarise the two main points about question 2]

**!Common mistakes!**:

**NOT RESPONDING FULLY TO BOTH QUESTIONS**

Task response requires that you:

- at least: address all the parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others;

- at maximum: fully address all parts of the task.

Should you aim at a higher score, try to fully address the task.

**NOT INTRODUCING BOTH QUESTIONS IN THE INTRODUCTION**

As mentioned above, it is vital that your essay focuses on both questions. It is misleading to only introduce one of the questions in the introduction.

### Positive or Negative Development.

This essay type is similar to the one we have previously studied: To what extent do you agree or disagree?

There could be three plans to follow while answering such questions:

1. **If you think the statement reflects positive development then write:**

§1 Introduction (2 SENTENCES): Paraphrase the task + my opinion: positive development

§2 Why is it positive? + Explanation + Example

§3 Why is it positive? + Explanation + Example OR Result

§4 On the other hand, + Why is it negative? + Explanation + Example OR Result (\*)

§5 Conclusion: sum up + My opinion: positive development (2 SENTENCES)

2. **If you think the statement reflects negative development, write**:

§1 Introduction (2 SENTENCES): Paraphrase the task + my opinion: negative development

§2 Why is it negative? + Explanation + Example

§3 Why is it negative? + Explanation + Example OR Result

§4 On the other hand, + Why is it positive? + Explanation + Example OR Result (\*)

§5 Conclusion: sum up + My opinion: negative development (2 SENTENCES)

(\*) §4 is not obligatory, you can omit it. However, your essay will be more impressive, if you include it, as it will ensure the essay is well-balanced.

3. **If you find both positive and negative features in the statement**:

§1 Introduction (2 SENTENCES): Paraphrase the task + my opinion: both positive and negative development

§2 Why is it negative? + Explanation + Example. *In addition*,… + another reason why it is a negative development + Explanation + Example. (You can write another reason why it is a negative development with an explanation only)

§3 Why is it positive? + Explanation + Example OR Result. *Furthermore*,… + another reason why it is a positive development + Explanation + Example. (You can write another reason why it is a positive development with an explanation only)

§4 Conclusion: paraphrase the introduction stating your opinion again (2 SENTENCES)

**TIP**: You may encounter a ***Positive and negative essay*** as an independent task or as a part of a **Two-question essay** like the one below:

**Ex 4**. **Study the essay question and a candidate’s essay. Then discuss questions 1-4 with your partner**

Exam task: *Social media has completely changed the way family and friends communicate with each other. What are the reasons for this? Is this a positive or negative development*?

Social media was introduced to the internet around twenty years ago. It has since gone from strength to strength. Many people initially dismissed social media as a passing fashion. They believed that it would never replace face-to-face communication. There are many downsides to this development, but I believe that overall it has had a positive effect on our lives.

One of the main reasons why social media websites are so popular is that they are a very convenient way of contacting friends and family. At the touch of a button, it is possible to communicate with somebody you are close to on the other side of the world. In the past, people were able to speak to each other on the telephone, but they had to make sure that they were both at home to make or answer the call at an agreed time. Furthermore, if someone is a fan of a certain actor or singer, they can easily message that person and tell them so. In return, the fans can get updates on the films or songs the actors or singers are planning to release next, so this is a huge change from the way this communication happened in the past.

In my opinion the increasing popularity of social media is a positive development. It allows everyone to stay in touch constantly, even though it is not in person. For example, if a young person decides to stay out late, they can just phone their parents and let them know. In the past, they would have needed to find a telephone box, and to have the correct change to be able to make a call, and this may have caused their parents to worry.

In conclusion, social media has a number of negative sides, but overall, it is a positive development. I would recommend that everyone has at least one account that they use every day.

### Problems and Solutions essay VS Reasons and Solutions essay

**75 minutes**

These two types of essays are quite tricky and first thing we should answer the question:

**What is the difference between a Causes/Solutions and a Problems/Solutions essay?**

At first sight, these two essays sound virtually the same. There is an essential nuance, though. The former centers around causes, the latter focuses on problems.

It is very important to spend a couple of minutes analysing the task question lest you don’t lose marks in Task Response as a result of missing the main idea of the task question.

**Compare the two tasks:**

**Task 1**

An increasing number of professionals, such as doctors and teachers, are leaving their own poorer countries to work in developed countries. What problems does this cause? What solutions can you suggest?

**Task 2**

An increasing number of professionals, such as doctors and teachers, are leaving their own poorer countries to work in developed countries. What are the causes of this problems? What solutions can you suggest?

As you can see, the first essay is asking: **What problems does this cause?** The word ‘**this**’ refers to the issue of ‘***professionals leaving their own poorer countries to work in developed countries***’. So, you speculate about: the problems that occur as a result of these professionals (doctors, teachers, etc.) leaving their own developing countries. You then have to write about: possible solutions to this issue of these professionals wanting to leave their own countries.

In the second essay, the instruction demands comments on the point: **What are the causes of this problem?** The word ‘**this**’ again refers to the issue of ***‘professionals leaving their own poorer countries to work in developed countries***’ so it’s the same issue as in the essay 1. However, you have to write about why this problem exists in the first place. In the essay, you do not need to focus on what happens when these professionals leave their countries, instead, you will write about what is causing this issue to occur. The solutions paragraph will be the same as the first essay, addressing ways to solve the cause of the problem.

**As it is in the nature of the IELTS exam to paraphrase instructions, for causes/solutions essay you may come across the following variations:**

* What are the reasons for this happening?
* Why is this happening?
* What is the cause of this issue?

**Ex 1.** **Match these introductions to the appropriate task questions above.**

* *A growing number of qualified personnel, such as doctors and teachers from developing countries, are migrating to work in more developed countries. This is the result of low salaries and a lack of career advancement opportunities. To tackle the issue, their governments should offer greater financial rewards and more chances of promotion.*
* *A growing number of qualified personnel, such as doctors and teachers from developing countries, are migrating to work in more developed countries. Due to this, highly qualified professionals are in short supply, which negatively affects education and health services. To tackle the issue, their governments should offer greater financial rewards to entice people.*

***As usual, let’s start with these essay structures:***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Problems-Solutions Essay**  **Task example:**People who live in large cities face a range of problems in their daily life. What are the main problems people face and how can these problems be tackled? | **Reasons and Solutions Essay**  **Task example:**Housing and accommodation has become a major problem in many countries around the world. What are some of the main factors that have contributed to this problem? What can be done to help reduce the number of homeless people? |
| You can choose to cover either 2 problems and 2 solutions, or 3 problems and 3 solutions.    **§1 Introduction** - 2 sentences  Paraphrase the task: write the same idea as in the task in your own words, paraphrase what you can.  **§2** One of the biggest **problems** facing people who /.../ is the /.../ + explanation + example. To solve this problem, the /.../ could /.../ which would /.../ (do what? - result of this solution).  **§3** Another **issue** is /.../ + explanation + example. This problem could be addressed by /.../ which would /.../ (do what? - result of this solution).  **§4** Finally, another **problem** is the /.../ + explanation + example. The way forward should be to /.../. This would /.../ (do what?).  **§5** **Conclusion.**2 sentences. Paraphrase your introduction.    **N.B.** It is reasonable to put one problem and its solution in one paragraph. If you put problems in one paragraph and then turn to solutions in a separate paragraph, it is possible you miss to cover all the problems in this ‘solutions paragraph’ and as a result you will partially address the task. It will be necessary to re-read everything you have written to make sure all the points are mentioned. | You can choose to cover either 2 reasons and 2 solutions, or 3 reasons and 3 solutions.    **§1 Introduction** 2 sentences. Paraphrase the task.  **§2**One of the main **causes** of the problem is that /.../ - the main idea + explanation + example. The solution is for the (who?) to (do what?), which would (do what/result in what?).  **§3** Another **reason** is that /.../ + explanation + example OR result. To tackle this issue, /.../ (who?) should /.../ in order to /.../  **§4** The third **cause** of the problem is that /.../ + explanation + example OR result. The way forward could be to /.../. This would /.../ (do what?).  **§5** **Conclusion** 2 sentences. Paraphrase your introduction: In conclusion, /.../ due to such reasons as /.../ and /.../ (the reasons you’ve mentioned above). The main responsibility for solving the problem lies with /.../ (who?).    As an option you can use a slightly altered structure:  **§1 Introduction** 2 sentences. Paraphrase the task.  **§2**The **main cause** of the problem + explanation + example. Another**reason** + explanation + result. (You can even mention the third reason or stop, having mentioned only two in this paragraph).  **§3**This paragraph contains two (or three) solutions.  **§4** **Conclusion**. 2 sentences. Paraphrase your introduction: In conclusion, /.../ (the problem) due to such reasons as /.../ and /.../ (the reasons you’ve mentioned above). The main responsibility for solving the problem lies with /.../ (who?). |

***TIP: Common topics for Problems and solutions essays***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *•  junk food and obesity*  *•  crime*  *• water shortages*  *• environmental problems* | *• problems in cites (e.g., transport, overcrowding)*  *• problems in schools*  *• stress in modern life* |

**Return back to the task and read a model essay below**:

*These days, in many countries, fewer and fewer people want to become teachers, particularly in secondary schools. What are the reasons for this, and how could the problem be solved?*

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

*Write at least 250 words.*

**Model essay**:

A generation ago, teaching in a high school was considered an extremely well-respected and popular Job. And in some countries, this is still true. However, in many parts of the work, there has been a sharp drop in the number of young people who want to become high-school teachers. This essay will look at the reasons for this and propose some solutions.

One of the main causes of the problem is that teachers’ salaries are lower than many other jobs. Teachers’ pay has not kept pace with that of other professions, such as law or medicine. In the UK, for example, a doctor with five years’ experience will earn far more than a teacher with the same experience. The solution is for the government to raise teachers’ pay significantly, which would attract more people into the profession.

Another problem is that many children do not behave well in class. That is to say, teachers often have to deal with pupils who disobey them, which often causes them to give up teaching. This tends to put off potential teachers as well. To tackle this issue, parents must give their children a sense of respect for teachers, in order to make children behave better in class.

A third cause of the problem is that teachers often have too much work to do. Most teachers are snowed under with marking and paperwork, which means that they have to stay late at school and work at home in the evening. As a result, many teachers are tired and stressed, and their job has a negative effect on their family life. The way forward could be to cut teachers’ hours, and to take on more teaching assistants, which would make teaching an easier job.

To sum up, teaching has become a much less popular job in many countries, due to reasons such as salary, working hours and pupils’ behaviour. This is a serious problem and unless we can get more talented young people to become teachers, the education of our children will suffer. My view is that the main responsibility for solving the problem lies with parents and the government.

**Ex. 8** **Grammar and vocabulary for conclusions**

Conclusion 1: To sum up, in my view, the shortage of teachers in secondary schools is a serious problem, and unless we can attract more talented young people into this kind of teaching, our children’s education will start to suffer. Governments must take steps to deal with the problem as soon as possible.

Conclusion 2: All in all, there is no doubt that obesity is an increasingly worrying issue, affecting both children and adults. As I see it, governments, parents, and schools all have a role to play in tackling the problem. Action must be taken urgently; otherwise, our societies will face even greater health problems in the future.

**Find synonyms for the phrases below:**

1. in conclusion (two phrases);

2. in my opinion (two phrases);

3. start to solve the problem;

4. It is clear that …;

5. a problem which is more and more serious;

6. Governments, parents, and schools should all do something;

7. We must act quickly.

**Rephrase these sentences using *unless*or *otherwise* as shown in brackets**:

1. If governments don’t spend money on improving public transport in big cities, traffic congestion will only get worse and worse. (unless)->*Unless governments*….

2. We must recycle more. If not, the amount of rubbish we throw away will get out of control. (otherwise)

3. If nothing is done to crack down on people who drop litter in the streets, our urban environment will continue to be dirty and full of rubbish. (unless)