

The Independent Learner's Guide to English Writing

# THE WRITE IDEA

SERIES

Topic Idea Banks for IELTS or TOEFL Writing & Speaking

Vol. 4

**GOVERNMENT & LAW**



VOCABULARY | SUBTOPICS | EXAMPLES | QUESTIONS | ESSAYS

in collaboration with



\$12.00 (USD)

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## Introduction

The key to persuading readers not only to read an essay from start to finish, but to engage with the content is to provide them with concrete and effective ideas that support a strong thesis. This expression of ideas, moreover, must be presented in a clear, concise, and convincing manner.

The aim of this book is to help writers express strong arguments, solutions, explanations, descriptions, and so on in a timed situation (i.e., test) by offering a range of ideas about a topic. By working with keywords, questions, examples and essays, test takers will be prepared for any question on a topic that appears on a writing test. For those taking a speaking test, these ideas, vocabulary, and questions can also be used to present verbal description, arguments and more.

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## HOW TO USE THIS E-BOOK

There are no shortcuts to learning; everyone needs to actively engage the language, be active in one's practice on a daily basis, and to work hard to achieve high scores on language tests. This applies especially to the idea bank. The idea bank is something that you need to constantly build up, add to, go back to, and practice using.

Here are the key steps to getting the most benefit from The Write Idea:

1. Look over the collected keywords. You will know many of these already, but there will also be many new words for you to learn. Label them as follows:

- 1) words you already know
- 2) words you have seen or heard before and can probably guess in context
- 3) words that are completely new to you

Look up new words in the dictionary and create sentences using them. Become comfortable and confident in using these words. (Start with the #2 words, then move on to the #3 words)

There are also sets of synonyms and expressions for you to use to improve your lexical range, as certain words and expressions will often repeat themselves. For example, instead of using the word *government* several times, you can use *politicians*, *authorities*, or *elected officials*. Instead of *commit a crime*, you can use *break the law*, *rob*, *murder*, or other verbs and expressions. Study these as well.

You can categorize the keywords according to your own groupings. You can, and should, add other words to these lists.

Go over these lists regularly. Try also connecting words to specific topics or questions to see how they might be used to create supporting arguments. Don't forget to try to use these keywords in different parts of speech (convert nouns to verbs, adjectives to adverbs, etc.).

2. Read over the questions to make sure you understand exactly what is being asked, i.e., what is the focus of the question? What are you being asked to do (give an opinion, answer yes or no, offer solutions, etc.)? Most importantly, become familiar with the question types.

Try underlining key words in the questions to make sure you have the right focus, and then list some of the vocabulary you studied that could be useful in answering the question.

3. Create a plan for a full essay for every question. Answer the following questions:

- What is the general topic?
- What is the specific question, issue, debate, etc.?
- What is your opinion, thesis?
- Provide a general outline of how you will present your arguments/ideas.

Practice until you can create a plan for any question within 3–4 minutes.

4. Look at the subtopics and the points associated with each. Try to create a variety of questions about these specific areas, then create a plan to answer them. Think of other subtopics that might come up.
5. Look over the examples and study their structures and general functionality. Connect these to the questions to which they may be applicable.  
  
Add your own examples, from your own experiences and knowledge (your own personal examples will likely be easier to recall on test day).
6. Practice writing full, timed essays every other day.
7. Look over the sample essays. These include high-end vocabulary, varied sentence structures, transitions and linking devices, and other important elements necessary for high scores on exam writing sections.

**Remember: To pass the test, you must work hard. There are no shortcuts.**

## KEYWORDS

The following groups of words are meant to help you create mental pictures of ideas associated with Government & Law. By no means should you try to memorize all the words below; however, these words will help you tap into a large pool of ideas related to all aspects of these general topics. Your own experiences as a member of society will certainly provide you with material with which to write a few essays, yet there are many aspects of these fields that you may have never considered and that may have never been a part of your personal experience. For example: a government's role beyond setting a budget or making laws, or a police officer's role beyond enforcing traffic laws or driving a cruiser.

Moreover, strong essays use a variety of words. By immersing yourself in these keywords, you can increase your vocabulary range and thereby your score on language tests that specifically evaluate this aspect of your language ability.

### PART 1: GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

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#### Parts of Government

Executive  
military  
regulatory  
Parliament  
committee  
security apparatus  
other:

Judicial  
Congress  
intelligence agencies  
parties  
international bodies /  
organization

Legislative  
Senate  
law enforcement  
House (upper/lower)  
assembly

#### Departments and Ministries

Health  
Foreign affairs  
Defense  
State (diplomacy)  
Economic Affairs  
other:

Immigration  
Agriculture  
Environment  
Natural Resources  
Infrastructure

Labour  
Transportation  
Trade  
Energy  
Education

## People

technocrat	diplomat
President	silent majority
Prime Minister	illegal alien
aide	constituent
citizen	migrant
politician	radical
lawmaker	regent
arbitrator	delegate
council	proponent
lobbyist	advocate
cabinet	backer
supporter	asylum seeker
undersecretary	creed
elites	regime
economist	shadow cabinet
candidate	despot
independent	body politic
patriot	bailiff
adversary	elected official
deputy	vice-
chancellor	aristocracy
mayor	advisor
head of state	extremist
incumbent	civil servant
pundit	deputy
nominee	adversary
speaker	ally
activist	nationalist
the authorities	liberal
surrogate	conservative
challenger	refugee
delegate	defector
Ambassador	protestor
Elected Representative	visionary
revolutionary	appointee
heir(ess)	opposition / opponent
customs agent	-class (middle/lower/upper)
other:	Commander-in-Chief (U.S. President)

## Forms of Government

central	local	Republic
federal	state	minority / majority
dictatorship	provincial	coalition
authoritarian	municipal	prefectural
utilitarian	constitutional	feudal
oligarchy	tribal	district
kleptocracy	theocracy	successive
autocratic	patriarchy	alliance
fascist	matriarchy	centrist
communist	plutocracy	democracy
capitalist	monarchy / kingdom	caretaker
Federation	meritocracy	colonial
sovereign	constitutional	occupying
elected	technocratic	self-appointed
autonomous territory/region		
other:		

## Theory and Concepts

freedom	justice	bipartisanship
human rights	principle	sovereignty
ideology	relevance	autonomy
conservatism	nepotism	dogma
liberalism	revolution	xenophobia
progressive	society	loyalty
green	stability	narrative
left-wing	vision	superpower
right-wing	bias	cold war
populism	dissent	hot war
utopia	ethics	trade war
dystopia	heritage	attrition
reform	legacy	allegiance
liberty	values	integrity
hegemony	moral	state/nation building
supremacy	diplomacy	political correctness
dominion	resistance	
other:		



## Elections and Politics

defeat	by-election	faction
victory	caucus	protocol
bully pulpit	constituency	exile
convention	dark horse	manifesto
platform	midterm	mainstream
primary	propaganda	hypocrisy
run-off	gamesmanship	retroactive
swing vote	demographics	shortcoming
canvass	race	anonymity
cycle	primary	disgraced
exit poll	popular vote	violation
term limit	landslide	challenge
reelection	focus group	catalyst
slogan	misinformation	network
unopposed	straw poll	office
ticket	rhetoric	optics
absentee voting	political suicide	grassroots
solicitation	transition	frontrunner
campaign	turnout	favourite
lame duck	seat	mandate
debate	scandal	recount
electorate	doublespeak	demonstration
referendum	attack ad	protest vote
coalition	commission	public opinion
ballot box	fake news	poll booth/station
disenfranchisement	slander	impasse
other:		

## Economics

corruption	equity	balanced budget
resources	budget	fundraising
industrial	social security	quote
default	low income	spending
austerity	welfare	revenues
deficit	benefits	poverty
surplus	trade agreement	asset
borrowing	employment insurance	liability
bailout	employment rate	supply & demand
subsidy	pension	balance sheet
other:		

## Law

policy	issues	rule of law
stopgap measure	code	declaration
constitution	formal complaint	petition
control	initiative	infallible
legal / illegal	revision	inalienable
statute	proposal	amendment
bylaw	privilege	ratify
rules	assent	unanimous
act	concession	unilateral
bill	consensus	bi/trilateral
sanctions	Bill of Rights	privacy
other:		

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## Government's Social Responsibilities & Issues

social safety net	tactic
protection	strategy
sustainability	reconciliation
transparency	precedent
amnesty	intervention
infrastructure	damage control
cybersecurity	visa
oversight	privilege
public services	inner-city
accountability	urban
security	suburbs
integrity	rural
gender gap	domestic policy
surveillance	congestion
bureaucracy	standing army
press freedom	statistics
commitment	census
proactive	foreign policy
borders	equality
conflict management	affordable housing
awareness campaign	state-of-emergency
separation of powers	
other:	

## PART 2: CRIME & PUNISHMENT .....

### Punishment

fine	lashes	lax
harsh	bail	forfeit
penalty	criminal record	vigilante justice
citation	custody	vengeance
parole	revenge	house arrest
life sentence	escape	jail / prison
death row	cell	chastise
lethal injection	reprimand	debar (lawyer)
electric chair	retribution	revoke license
hanging	rehabilitation	slap on the wrist
leniency	incarceration	deterrence
severity	corporal punishment	minimum/maximum security
community service		
other:		

### People

judge	hooligan	bailiff
attorney	offender	inmate
lawyer	traitor	criminal
barrister	organized crime	officer
jury	witness	agent
thief	defendant	paralegal
perpetrator	serial killer	crime boss
hostage	repeat offender	investigator
police force	criminologist	bounty hunter
negotiator	warden	mafia (mob)
assailant	guard	ringleader
convict	detective	gang member
accomplice	Police Chief	litigator
victim	casualty	vigilante
assassin	arsonist	murderer
sociopath	forgery	vandal
rapist	burglar	hacker
con artist	Attorney General	poacher
Supreme Court	young offender	secret service
other:	juvenile delinquent	undercover agent

## Types of Crime

murder	child abuse
burglary	sex crime
theft	hijacking
armed robbery	poaching
rape	homicide
arson	terrorism
fraud	conspiracy
white-collar	manslaughter
blue-collar	forgery
vandalism	hit-and-run
treason	libel
blackmail	defamation
drunk driving	looting
genocide	hacking
identity theft	involuntary
extortion	accidental
bribery	crime of passion
mugging	concealed weapon
kidnapping	misdemeanor
pickpocket	sedition
shoplifting	cybercrime
smuggling	suicide
break-and-enter	felony
trespassing	aid and abet
hate crime	phone/online scam
corruption	copycat
abduction	war crime
lethal	espionage
(non) violent	fatal
traumatic	human trafficking
(aggravated) assault	first/second degree
domestic disturbance	unintentional
possession (drugs, weapons)	impulsive
domestic abuse/violence	desperation
other:	

## Court Process

detention	innocence	due process
evidence	court(room)	perjury
appeal	prosecution	contempt
trial	hearsay	verdict
confession	proof	case
pardon	circumstantial evidence	make a case
plea bargain	extenuating evidence	criminal procedure
guilt	innocent until proven guilty	defense
other:		

## Crime Scene / Police Work

forensics	cruiser	pursuit
Miranda Rights	squad car	radar
ransom	handcuffs	enforcement
manhunt	fingerprints	precinct
checkpoint	intruder	standoff
re-enactment	alarm	negotiation
roadblock	pistol	seal
inspection	circumstances	
other:		

## Idiomatic Language (idioms, phrasal verbs, expressions, collocations)

Note: these idioms can be used (sparingly) in formal academic writing for the IELTS, TOEFL, or other English language exams. However, be sure to use them correctly and in the appropriate context, or not at all. They can also be used in speaking test and informal letters of the IELTS General test.

call the shots	armed and dangerous
pull strings	divide and conquer
an eye for an eye	on the loose
draw a line in the sand	have the upper hand
force someone's hand	level playing field
deal with a heavy hand	sweep under the rug
hold the reins	break into
might is right	gang violence
paper tiger	backup
seal of approval	friends in high places
wag the dog	honeymoon period
kick the can down the road	soft coup
pass the buck	man on the street
toe the party line	ivory tower
political hot potato	short-/long-term
checks and balances	reach across the aisle
knock on doors	rule with an iron fist
jump on the bandwagon	coup-d'état
bring something to the table	be on the brink of
carrot and stick approach	on the sidelines
Big Brother	left/right-of-center
on the loose	left/right-leaning
old boy's network	do time (slang)
fall in line	in cold blood
on the front/back burner	set/cross a red line
photo-op	throw the book at someone
red tape	have something on someone
witch hunt	building highways to nowhere
smoke and mirrors	
other:	

## Collocations

pass/introduce legislation	peer pressure	carry weight
take measures/action	street crime	at large
short-term results	take sides	city hall
in the long-run	raise / lower taxes	cast a ballot
peaceful protests	provide funding (fund, v.)	effect change
commit a crime	take action	status quo
scene of the crime	give-and-take	regime change
be found guilty / innocent	social insurance	present evidence
police brutality	pass judgement	peacetime efforts
sentence to ...	collect / gather evidence	bring in/implement laws
make one's case	vote for / against	
other:		

## Acronyms

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)	FSB (Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti)
IMF (International Monetary Fund)	APB (all-points bulletin)
WTO (World Trade Organization)	GDP (Gross Domestic Product)
NGO (Non-Governmental Organization)	GNP (Gross National Product)
NPO (Non-Profit Organization)	MP (Member of Parliament)
GOP (Grand Ole Party— Republican Party)	DUI (driving under the influence)
SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics)	PAC (political action committee)
FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)	UN (United Nations)
CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)	WHO (World Health Organization)
MI5/6 (Military Intelligence section 5/6)	ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)
KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti)	APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation)
NAFTA (North American Free Trade Organization—now called the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, USMCA)	
other:	



## Verbs

rebel	aid	accuse
dissolve	enact	allege
stump	adopt	blame
convene	impose	investigate
back	provide	conduct
endorse	maintain	commit
petition	fund	commute
rescind	lobby	sue
commute	engage	steal
abdicate	sway	rob
forecast	legitimize	embezzle
advocate	support	suspend
shuffle	oppose	torture
solicit	abuse	arrest
veto	campaign	slander
spin	institute	imprison
struggle	invoke	revoke
vote	sanction	levy
amend	implement	filibuster
negotiate	threat	resign
debate	abolish	appropriate
survey	restrict	attempt
deliberate	bar	abuse
manage	license	lynch
politicize	collaborate	threaten
govern	predict	indict
mediate	project	rest
polarize	promise	convince
unite	ban	persuade
divide	run	leak
donate	dissolve	incarcerate
redistrict	register	mandate
regulate	sentence	prohibit
safeguard	convict	participate
obey	recruit	deter
rebuke	inspect	traumatize
disregard		
other:		

## COMMON TERMS & ALTERNATIVES

If you can avoid repeating words in an essay, do so. The following words are some of the most commonly used in essays on Government & Law. You should not have to use the word “government” ten times in your essay. In fact, this will weaken your writing as there are other words that work just as well and can be applied in different contexts.

In the examples below, the underlined, *italicized*, or **bolded** words can be replaced with the words/expressions beneath them.

Note: You may have to make adjustments for syntax. Make sure you know which words are appropriate for which context.

### Government

Many people believe that *a government's primary duty* is to look after the security and well-being of its citizens.

*the authorities' chief responsibility*

*the main role of those in power*

*their leaders' job*

*elected officials' principal mandate*

*politicians' fundamental task*

*their elected representatives' prime focus [ought to be]*

*the nation's decision makers' main role*

### Citizens & Society

The nature of a democracy is such that all citizens have to be actively involved, meaning that they must fulfil their civic duty by voting, paying taxes, and being engaged in *society*.

the public

*in their communities*

the electorate

*[with] their peer groups*

the citizenry

*in their neighbourhoods*

the population

*in local activities*

the people

## Country

Patriotism generally suggests a love of one's *country*, while nationalism involves more of a political loyalty.

<i>nation</i>	<i>national culture</i>
<i>land</i>	<i>society</i>
<i>state</i>	<i>place and people</i>
<i>homeland</i>	

It is not uncommon for people in economically struggling countries to consider *moving to another country* to build a better life.

*moving abroad*  
*going overseas*  
*emigrating*  
*resettling in a new host country*  
*quitting their land for a new home*

## Vote

A central feature of a democratic society is the people's fundamental right to *vote for* their leaders.

<i>elect</i>	<i>pick</i>
<i>choose</i>	<i>determine</i>
<i>select</i>	<i>support</i>
<i>cast a ballot for</i>	

## Change

If the citizens of a country want *to change it*, they must participate in the democratic process.

<i>bring about change</i>	<i>transform it</i>
<i>effect change</i>	<i>shape it</i>
<i>make a difference</i>	<i>help it evolve</i>
<i>alter the status quo</i>	<i>alter it</i>

## The Media

In most Western nations, *the media* has great power in shaping public opinion.

<i>the press</i>	<i>news networks</i>
<i>journalists</i>	<i>newspapers</i>
<i>reporters</i>	<i>the fourth estate</i>

## Criminal and Criminal Action

Although every *criminal* must pay a price for the harm he or she has caused others and society at large, not all *criminals* are bad people.

*felon(s)*  
*convict(s)*  
*outlaw(s)*  
*law-breaker(s); (one)/those who break(s) the law*  
*criminal offender(s)*  
*perpetrator(s) (of a crime)*

Anyone who *perpetrates* a violent crime against others should be put in jail.

<i>commits</i>	<u>sentenced to prison</u>
<i>is involved in</i>	<u>incarcerated</u>
<i>engages in</i>	<u>imprisoned</u>
	<u>sent to jail/prison</u>

## Law Enforcement

**Police officers** are not only responsible for investigating major crimes, they also need to prevent minor *violations of the law* and hand out punishments as needed.

<b>Law enforcement officials</b>	<i>misdemeanors</i>	<u>administer fines, penalties, discipline</u>
<b>Officers of the law</b>	<i>infractions</i>	<u>fine</u>
<b>Detectives</b>	<i>offenses</i>	<u>penalize</u>
<b>Marshals</b>	<i>transgressions</i>	<u>discipline</u>
<b>Deputies</b>	<i>unlawful acts</i>	<u>chastise</u>
<b>Sheriffs</b>	<i>misdeeds</i>	<u>rebuke</u>
<b>Policemen/women</b>	<i>breaches of the law</i>	
	<i>crimes, offences, felonies</i>	

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

## GOVERNMENT & LAW SUBTOPICS

Government & Law are very broad fields. They involve much more than politicians and lawyers, jail cells and court rooms. The following subtopics present varied aspects of the above topics that are often overlooked. By familiarizing yourself with these ideas, you should be prepared to view Government & Law from a wide perspective and write about any topic that concerns it.

### Immigration

*Positives:* larger workforce; willing to take on low-wage jobs; add to cultural diversity (multiculturalism, cultural mosaic); more consumers add to economic growth; asylum seekers and refugees can find safety, stability, humanitarian help; second and third generations contribute greatly to society; good international reputation to host country

*Negatives:* competition for jobs; introduce foreign ideas and values; xenophobia, may lead to racism, nationalism, populism, violence; security concerns; overcrowded cities, traffic; rising housing costs (competition for affordable housing); need to focus on own citizens' needs; can be a financial burden for taxpayers

*domestic vs. foreign workers:* many citizens of Western countries do not take on low-wage jobs, or “demeaning” labour (jobs like garbage collector, dishwasher, etc., which have low status image)—immigrants tend to fill these positions; language concerns—certain sectors become populated by certain nationalities, making it difficult for others to join (a *de facto* union); locals resent foreigners, leading to social disharmony

### Monitoring (CCTV, registry, census, etc.)

*pros:* ensure safety; prevent crime; maintain accurate statistics that can help politicians have a better sense of the public's demands and make policies that help the greatest number; protect against scams; protect children; increase responsibility and accountability; promote transparency (no secrets)

*cons:* people will fear what they (themselves) think; less inclination to do things that society might look down on; people won't trust each other; paralysis of action; no privacy; reduce individuality; make everyone the same — no creativity, imagination, innovation (cookie-cutter thinking); very expensive for taxpayers; gives the monitors too much power (works against democracy); easy to manipulate public opinion; turns people into product (big data)

## Government Control vs. Individual Freedoms

control: what we eat and drink (no sugary drinks, high fats, etc.), what we consume on television, what activities we do (i.e., dangerous ones (motorcycle riding, skydiving, etc.)), what we believe (religion), hobbies and habits (e.g., smoking), who we marry, who we interact with, what groups we join, where we live, what jobs we take

*positives*: make sure we don't harm ourselves or those around us; establish tolerance, or at least security; regulate industries so that they do not exploit the consumer; lower crime rate; fair distribution of goods, jobs, wealth, etc.

*negatives*: take away individual responsibility; limited imagination, curiosity, drive; enslavement; the majority decides for the minority; higher suicide rate; laziness, lack of motivation to strive higher

freedom (choice): how to use our time, money, energies, talents/abilities, affections; can explore and innovate; mental exercise (have to think for ourselves); respect others as would want their respect; have to earn what we get, build appreciation; instills a sense of competition, necessitates cooperation; take responsibility for our thoughts and actions; build skills (decision making, time management, critical thinking); invent, innovate, challenge old and outdated ideas

## Examples of areas in which the government may mandate behaviour

forced retirement savings: some people are not good at saving money for later years; government can use pension plan contributions to invest and build income for citizens to use in old age; poor elderly people relying on government support are a burden on young taxpayers; adults should be responsible for themselves, not treated as children

minimum age requirements: government must set minimum ages to drink alcohol, smoke, drive, vote, join the military, get married, buy property, start a business, etc. to protect inexperienced/uneducated, immature, and/or desperate young people; parents should decide if their child is mature enough to handle these things; age does not determine ability or readiness for any of these actions; can potentially limit intelligent, advanced young people; can help/harm the economy; smart young people will find ways around the restrictions, while less educated/smart young people will be protected from themselves

minimum wage: *pros*: ensure workers are not exploited; ensure a level playing field, giving everyone an equal chance to get started; ensure men and women get equal pay for equal work; can set at a level attractive enough to get citizens to take certain jobs rather than recruit foreign workers; can make a living wage; *cons*: too much regulation limits free market economics; companies cannot afford the payroll; higher costs for companies means higher prices for consumers; reduces competitiveness; less incentive for workers to work harder to advance; more part-timers; reduced benefits to counter higher payroll

national service: *military*: mandatory service (draft) provides a cohesive bond to citizens; creates unity; helps young people mature and gain discipline; provides national security; potential to learn marketable skills (tech, leadership, etc.); disrupts academic/career path for duration of service; potential for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder); *civic* (volunteer work for those who cannot serve in the military): provides work experience, skills training, networking; connection to national interest; disrupts academic career path

## Leaders

(elites, professional politicians vs. average Joe vs. technocrats)

elites— *positives*: usually higher education; business knowledge (help economy); larger network; often speak more than one language, can interact with foreign leaders; good negotiators; *negatives*: ivory tower (can't relate to, disconnected from 'man on the street'); superiority complex; desensitized; know how to lie, manipulate; self-interested, power hungry, greedy

average Joe: *positives*: real-world experience; aware of social ills; closer to community; not "tainted" by politics; willing to learn and adapt; can communicate directly with electorate; *negatives*: inexperienced in political "games"; needs time and a learning curve to adjust to new reality; may have limited knowledge of world affairs, negotiating skills, global business

technocrats: *positives*: experts in various fields; generally, these are bureaucrats and scientists, not political players; efficient management of various departments using technology; *negatives*: hard for population to relate to; need to be assigned rather than elected; less open to change; less flexible; lack people skills

## Media Censorship

*for*: prevent hate speech; minimize fake news; eliminate criminal activities online; protect children from viewing violence or other harmful material; do not glorify or sensationalize criminals; remove bias; can promote gender equality; present a better view of a nation to the outside world

*against*: reduces freedom of speech; less variety of content, bland expression; limit the potential of certain members of society (artists, political activists, concerned citizens, etc.); gives government too much control, power over people's thoughts; cannot be a check on those in power; builds mistrust; destroys culture



## Globalization

*pros*: increases economic activity; reduces barriers to trade, thereby increasing production and creating jobs; lower costs for products, which then become more accessible to more global consumers; economic ties help all countries increase wealth; more movement of technological innovation; build a global community that can act together to combat global problems and crises such as climate change

*cons*: loss of cultural identity, diversification of ideas and innovation; exploitation of poorer nations and their labour forces; increase in consumption of consumer goods and natural resources, as well as increased pollution; certain countries have more control over others (modern colonialism); if one country struggles, others are affected; shared risk

## Budget Spending

A government's revenue comes mainly from collecting taxes. As such, citizens are concerned about how this money is spent and what is prioritized. The following areas are a government's main expenditures of tax revenues:

education: schools; extracurricular programs; teacher training; materials; equipment; subsidies for lower income families; primary, secondary, tertiary education; teacher's colleges; core curriculum; exchange programs; facilities (library, athletic, etc.)

health: hospitals; clinics; trained doctors, nurses, technicians, paramedics; medical equipment; R&D; prescription drugs; elderly care; nursing homes; hospices; disease prevention; education; awareness campaigns; outreach (to schools, community centers, etc.); border quarantine

economy: job creation; GDP and GNP; foreign investment; interest rates; gold reserves; exploitation of natural resources; trade; tariffs; competitiveness; tax collection; pensions; employment insurance; social welfare; banking sector oversight; welfare; student loans and household credit and debt; markets; economic drivers (stimulus, spending, budget, etc.)

security: intelligence agencies; espionage networks; cybersecurity; training; secret service protection for leaders; civilian monitoring; R&D; high-tech equipment; border patrol

military: personnel; equipment (military, medical, engineering, etc.); training; career soldiers; maintenance of bases (domestic and overseas); humanitarian missions; foreign intervention/aid; weapons development; peacekeeping missions; natural catastrophes

infrastructure: roads, bridges, highways; maintenance, repair, construction; public transit; traffic lights and cameras; public spaces; public parks; community centers; trade facilities (ports, freight train stations, etc.); government offices; weather factors (plows for snow, flood and fire control, etc.); emergency services (fire, ambulance, etc.); first responders

housing: affordable housing; subsidized housing for low-income families, immigrants; disabled (wheelchair access, etc.); young adults at beginning of careers; distressed people (abused, runaways, homeless, etc.); residential vs. commercial; growing populations and urbanization

the arts & sports: subsidize school programs; theaters, cinemas, broadcasting studios, etc.; fair opportunity (domestic vs. foreign influence); stadiums, arenas, pools, courts, etc.; community programs; inner-city youths, poor communities that can't afford these luxuries; can help those whose academic abilities are limited

R&D: medical equipment; exploration; resources; renewable energy sources and infrastructure; innovation; technology; efficiencies; space exploration; frontier exploration; cybersecurity; military advances

crime prevention: law enforcement (police); cruisers; police stations; hotlines (phone, online); prisons; education campaigns; CCTV (closed-circuit TV); body cameras; legal action; courts; personnel—prosecutors, public defenders, judges; prison guards; weapons and training; forensic equipment; crowd dispersal

foreign aid: disaster relief (earthquake, flood, volcano eruption, etc.); post-conflict reconstruction; peacekeeping; economic development; help domestic companies set up factories overseas; secure better deals on imports from “friendly” countries; enter new markets; make allies

## Miscellaneous

Accountability: means taking responsibility for one's actions; politicians need to be punished for wrongdoing; politicians that don't fear repercussions cannot lead properly; public/national interests above private interests; punishment should fit the crime; actions have consequences

Transparency: public should have access to all government information that concerns them (confidential, national security matters excepted); all government financial transactions should be available for the public/media to view in order to keep decision-makers honest; build public trust; protect taxpayers' money; prevent shift to dictatorship / autocracy

Civic duty/Voting: in a democracy, all citizens have a duty to participate in governing by voting in local, state/provincial, and national elections; apathy to governance gives others power over individuals; those who do not vote do not have a voice when it comes to leadership and/or policies (i.e., if didn't vote, can't complain); every vote counts; need to contribute somehow to nation and community; activism—knocking on doors to campaign, raise awareness, go to protests, send letters to politicians, etc.

Welfare: should government support people who cannot afford to pay for themselves? *For*: people with disabilities (mental or physical) should get government help if no one else can help; all members of a society should have an equal opportunity for a good life; *Against*: makes people lazy and dependent; hard-working people will be discouraged; paid for by taxpayers; social safety net

Poverty: it is the government's responsibility to ensure every child has a roof over his/her head and food on the table; some think poverty is a social responsibility, others believe it is an individual's duty to get out of poverty; poverty is a result of upbringing and education and it is government's duty to make sure everyone has an equal opportunity; vicious circle—need money to make money, need money to get better education and training, which then leads to better jobs, etc.

Gender Equality: women should receive equal pay for equal work; government should not dictate to companies how to pay their staff; position and pay should reflect ability only; men should be able to take time off work to help raise a child (paternity leave); a woman can do anything a man can do (already in police, army, business, politics, etc.)

## Crime and punishment

Deterrents: Punishments are supposed to deter people from engaging in criminal actions. Do these deterrents work? Why are there still criminals? Why are there still prisons? Is corporal punishment effective?

prison sentence: *pros*: loss of freedom is a strong deterrent; removes criminals from society; controlled environment (established costs, convicts are monitored, localized); creates jobs (guards, local food manufacturers, linen manufacturers, etc.); *cons*: taxpayers pay to take care of criminals; criminals do not come out of jail as "good" citizens; gangs; crime inside the prison; commit crime to get into jail and receive free board, meals, healthcare, etc.

monetary fine: *pros*: people lose rewards of hard work; pays for government services and infrastructure (government revenue); does not cost taxpayers; *cons*: wealthier people disregard the law because can afford the fines; desensitizes would-be criminals

corporal punishment (physical punishment, death penalty): *for*: strong deterrent for criminals; gives victims and/or their families some sense of relief; cheaper than prison; religious support; show of strength by authorities; *against*: two wrongs don't make a right; some criminals were abused, so being physically harmed might seem normal to them; psychologically, some criminals want to be physically punished; suicide by police shootout; some accused are found guilty with questionable evidence

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

By knowing what to expect, you can prepare for any scenario. These questions are varied enough to cover many aspects of Government & Law such that you can draw on the ideas you have prepared to answer these questions and apply them to any that may appear on a test. Also, you will notice that some of the questions cover similar topics, yet these are presented differently according to the question type.

Make sure to distinguish among questions that ask for an opinion, those that do not, and those that are hybrid (combination of both).

### **Yes / No** (don't forget the *why* or *how* questions that may be included)

1. Should citizens of a democratic country be forced to vote during elections?
2. Can a single individual change society?
3. In many countries, people are fighting to increase the minimum wage workers receive and are asking their governments to help protect workers' rights. Do you think that it is the government's responsibility to decide how much an employer pays his or her staff?
4. Some people believe that the role of a government is to decide what is best for its citizens. Should governments have the power to decide what is best for its citizens and how people should live their lives?
5. Some people believe that every crime should be punished by an equal measure. In other words, a murderer must be killed, a rapist castrated, and a thief have his possessions taken away. In your opinion, would this reduce the rate of serious crimes in society?
6. In some countries, governments invest billions of dollars in the creation of new cities. Would it be better if they spend more money on building more homes in populated cities?
7. Does the government have a duty to protect old heritage buildings or is this the responsibility of the buildings' owners?
8. Young offenders are usually punished less severely than adults who commit the same crimes. Some people believe that these teens' parents should carry some of the responsibility for their children's actions. Would punishing parents of these criminals reduce the crime rate amongst young people?
9. Since an educated population is more productive and helps the economy, should governments make higher education free for all high school graduates?
10. The world is becoming more dangerous. Should governments reduce individual freedoms in order to control their populations and maintain security?

other:

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## Agree / Disagree

**Do you agree or disagree with the following:**

**Do you agree or disagree with this statement/belief/idea?**

**To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

**Do you agree that \_\_\_\_\_?**

11. It is the duty of governments to protect children's health by fighting obesity. The government should implement laws against sugary drinks and fast food restaurants and take other measures as well.

12. Governments should do more to support the arts even if this means spending less on the sciences and Research & Development.

13. Governments have more influence on society than individuals.

14. The world's developed nations are largely responsible for the environmental damage harming this planet. Thus, many people think that these nations should pay more for environmental cleanup projects and to fight global warming.

15. A government should serve as a role model for society. Consequently, governments should employ an equal number of male and female staff.

16. A government budget should lean more towards defense spending than education.

17. Criminals cost taxpayers money for lodging, food, and healthcare. Some people propose that instead of spending taxpayers' money on keeping these criminals alive, these criminals should be forced to work to earn their costs.

18. Crime will decrease in the future as technology improves and is able to prevent most crimes from happening.

19. Not knowing the law is never an excuse for breaking it.

20. Many criminal acts are committed by people under the influence of alcohol. Some people thus argue that by banning alcohol, the government can reduce the crime rate.

Other:

## Compare / Contrast / Discuss

21. Some people believe that those who cheat on their taxes and do not pay their fair share are criminals and should be punished equally as those who commit other crimes such as murder or arson. Discuss this view and state your own opinion.

22. Some people argue that keeping a convicted felon alive in prison is a needless waste of taxpayer money and that these criminals should be put to death or somehow removed from civilized society. Others counter by pointing out that even criminals have a basic human right to be taken care of. Discuss both points of view and say which you agree with.

23. Some people believe that a government's priorities should be health care and education. Others believe it should be the safety of its citizens. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

24. Some people believe that in order to build a successful nation, governments should concentrate on improving their education systems. Others believe that the path to success comes from a strong economy. Compare these views and say which you agree with and why.

25. These days, many citizens are calling for fixed punishments for all crimes, regardless of context, intent, or result. Legal experts warn that this will greatly punish those who do not deserve it and should be avoided. Discuss both views and say which you agree with.

26. Some people want their government to increase the pensions paid to retirees, even if this means that services for the younger members of society are reduced in order to pay for it. Others think that the young offer more to society and therefore require more support from the government. Discuss both views and say which you agree with.

27. Business leaders all over the world are asking their governments to invest more heavily in tourism. They suggest that tourism brings in a lot of foreign cash and creates jobs for the local inhabitants. Locals argue that tourists destroy local cultures and the financial rewards are not worth it. Compare and contrast these views of tourism.

28. Some people believe that once a person commits a crime he or she has lost the trust of society and should never be fully trusted again. Others believe that once that person spent time in jail or otherwise faced a punishment, he or she should be given a second chance to rejoin society as an equal. Compare both views and give your own opinion.

Other:

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## Advantages and/or Disadvantages

29. Many people argue that governments should not spend their limited budgets on things such as the arts or other creative enterprises and should spend more on areas such as health, defense, and research. What are some benefits and drawbacks of funding creative people and organizations?

30. A government represents its citizens on the global stage. Therefore, some believe that politicians should be chosen only from among the elite of society. Would the advantages of doing this outweigh the disadvantages?

31. Cybersecurity has become a major issue in modern society. Some people argue that governments need to strictly control all internet activity in order to reduce instances of identity theft, fraud, and other crimes. What are the advantages and disadvantages of doing this?

32. These days, many people are calling on governments to increase the minimum age for a person to get a driver's license or to be allowed to drink alcohol. What are the advantages and disadvantages of raising the minimum age for these activities?

33. In many modern societies, youths under the age of 18 are treated differently than adults for the crimes they commit. Some people argue that young teens who commit serious crimes should be punished in the same way as adults. What might some disadvantages of this be?

34. In some countries women are part of the police force and military. Some people think this is not a good idea, while others see this as a positive step in gender equality. What are some advantages and disadvantages of having women serve in these roles?

35. In order to reduce traffic congestion in cities, as well as pollution, governments should impose higher taxes on gas. Do the advantages of this option outweigh the drawbacks?

36. Many people believe that politicians who commit crimes should be punished more severely than regular citizens because they are role models. What might some disadvantages be to doing this?

Other:

**Open** What (cause, reason, effect, solution)? Why? How? Who? When?

37. Scientists largely agree that human beings are the main cause of climate change and it is the government's duty to do something to fix this. Do you think it is governments' responsibility to fight climate change? What are some measures governments can take to combat this phenomenon?

38. Since all members of a nation are considered equal, governments have an obligation to take care of everyone, including those with physical and mental challenges. What can a government do to help these members of society? Who should be responsible for financially supporting these citizens?

39. The death penalty is less frequently used as a form of punishment in modern societies against murderers, rapists, and other serious criminals. Instead, these criminals are increasingly facing life sentences in prison. What are the advantages of this shift? What are some other forms of punishment that might deter people from committing these crimes?

40. Studies have shown that criminals who spend a lengthy amount of time in prison often return to society and commit another crime. Therefore, some people suggest that a better way to deal with criminals is to educate them and make them better people who can get along in society. How can criminals be taught to behave well? Do you believe that this approach is better than imprisonment?

41. Many political leaders are judged by what they do in their first 100 days in office. If you were elected leader of your country, what would you strive to accomplish in the first 100 days?

42. Many criminals, upon their release from prison, return to society and commit further crimes. Why do they do this? How can the authorities prevent or reduce this phenomenon?

43. Many people blame the violence youths see in the media for the crime rate rising among this group. Do you agree that the media has this influence on the young? What can the media do to change this perception?

44. According to voters, today's political environment has become mean. Politicians use negative advertising and campaign tricks to harm the image of their opponent rather than focus on their own personal strengths. What are some causes for this approach to campaigning? Do you think the voters themselves are to blame for this shift?

45. Sociologists often point to poverty as a major motivation to commit a crime. Why else would a person commit a crime?

46. Environmental groups do not want the government to pay for pollution cleanup. Instead, they want a special police force to punish companies that create the waste and pollute the environment. They believe this will make companies more accountable for their waste production. Do you think this is a good idea? What are some other ways companies can be encouraged to reduce their waste production?

other:



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## Choice / Preference

47. Governments have a duty to protect their citizens' well-being. However, this requires large expenses, which governments are often unable to spend equally on all areas of civic life. Which of the following areas should a government spend the most on? Why?

Health

Defense (military)

Education

The Arts

The economy

Infrastructure

48. Some people believe that governments have a duty to make lifestyle decisions for its citizens, while others think this is a personal choice for individuals to make freely. Which opinion do you agree with? Why?

49. Some people think it is the government's duty to fight obesity among its population, especially when it comes to children. Others think it is parents' responsibility to look after their children's health. Which opinion do you agree with? Why?

50. In an effort to discourage crime, the legal system has created many forms of punishment. Which of the following punishments do you think will most likely stop a person from committing a crime?

Jail time

A financial penalty

Loss of possessions (house, car, etc.)

A public display of the person's name, picture, crime, and general description of the harm caused to the victim

51. In some countries army service is mandatory while in others it is voluntary. Which approach do you think better protects a country?

52. Most wealthy nations provide aid to poorer ones. Is this a good thing, or should these poor nations learn to rely on themselves?

## EXAMPLES

Examples are used in all essay types to support an argument or a point made. They should be concrete, that is, real and specific, not abstract and vague, and they must be relevant to the context of the essay and especially the paragraph they are in.

It is very important to note that examples can be personal, they can come from related fields (government examples for a government topic), or even unrelated fields as long as the light they shed on the argument/point is clear. Test takers should keep in mind that examples must appear real and true but do not necessarily have to be so. For example, you may reference research that doesn't exist, or the results of surveys that were never presented to anyone. The key is to present the ideas in these "examples" in a way that supports the point made and that has a sense of authority (i.e., it "sounds" believable, realistic).

Don't forget to introduce your example:

For example, for instance, to illustrate, in fact, this idea is supported by, take \_\_\_\_ as an example; etc.

### Scientific Examples

**(According to, based on)...research, studies, surveys, polls—conducted, presented, held, looked into, released by; found, concluded, backed up, supported, reinforced the idea that...,**

**Researchers, Criminologists, Psychiatrists, Economists, Lawyers, Officers... at place/organization/school**

**Statistics—numbers, percentages, 120 per 1000, twice/four times more likely to, half as many**

Research conducted at Georgetown University found that older, successful business leaders greatly appeal to a large segment of the population who believe personal success is a sign of leadership skills.

According to recent studies released by the Department of Corrections, 65% of convicts released on early parole for good behaviour were 10 times less likely to commit a repeat offense.

This idea is supported by scientific polls in which participants were asked whether they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who has held political office before or one who has pursued a career in a non-political field; only 52% preferred the former.

Criminologists at the University of Pennsylvania, who had studied the effects of religious education in prisons in the US, contend that this type of program is a more effective rehabilitation process than corporal punishment.

## Personal Examples

To illustrate, take my neighbour; after serving for two years in the military, he was financially supported by the government in his academic pursuits and was even offered a position at his city office after he graduated.

To support this idea, I need only look as far as my aunt. After she was diagnosed with breast cancer, she had to leave her job and receive treatment. This, of course, was a financial hardship, but the government's employment insurance program helped her get by until she could return to work.

My cousin is a perfect example of this. The university near her home was small and did not have sufficient funding for an Arts department. Luckily, the government offered scholarships to gifted students, funded by the Ministry of Education, and my cousin was able to go to another city for two years to study her craft.

My own experience with this is a perfect example. Not long after my eighteenth birthday there was a local election in my district. I registered to vote and was so proud when I stuffed the ballot in the box, thereby officially making my first consequential choice as an adult.

(Note: None of the examples above are true. The schools named in these examples may or may not have conducted the research cited. These examples are presented to illustrate ways to present supporting evidence in your essays.)

## Concrete, Real-world Examples

**Current/recent world leaders** (listed alphabetically):

Shinzo Abe (Japan), Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil), Recep Erdogan (Turkey), Pope Francis (Vatican), Antonio Guterres (UN), Xi Jinping (China), Ali Khamenei (Iran), Emanuel Macron (France), Nicolas Maduro (Venezuela), Theresa May (UK), Angela Merkel (Germany), Narendra Modi (India), Benjamin Netanyahu (Israel), Barack Obama (USA), Vladimir Putin (Russia), King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud (Saudi Arabia), Mohammed bin Salman al Saud (a.k.a. MBS; Saudi Arabia), Donald Trump (USA)

**Dictators/Despots/Conquerors:** Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler, Pol Pot, Benito Mussolini, Mao Zedong, Saddam Hussein, Kim Jong Il, Fidel Castro, Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Attila the Hun, Cyrus the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte

**CNN, FOX, BBC:** These are major media networks in the USA and UK, respectively. CNN and FOX are notorious for their partisan delivery of the news, with CNN targeting Democrats and liberal voters and FOX targeting Republicans and conservatives. These networks are the main source of news for a large number of people in these countries, and they exercise a great power in shaping public opinion.

**Wikileaks:** This is an online NGO that releases secret and classified documents stolen from governments all over the world. Led by Julian Assange, the aim of this group of hackers, journalists, and other activists is to hold governments accountable for their actions and to provide transparency to the public.

**Edward Snowden:** A computer scientist who leaked NSA (National Security Agency) documents. This made him a *whistleblower*, someone who reveals the wrongdoings of his employer, in this case the government of the US in cooperation with other governments. He is now considered a criminal by the US government.

**Charles Manson:** A serial killer and cult leader. He is infamous for leading a group of young followers on a killing spree in the 1970s in California. His victims included a pregnant Hollywood actress. He became a cultural pop legend, famous in songs and movies. He may be considered a role model for other would-be criminals who want to be famous.

**Body camera:** More and more police districts are incorporating miniature cameras as part of their officers' uniforms. This is to protect the officer, but also to protect the people they deal with, both criminals and everyday people. The main motive is to minimize police abuse/brutality.

**Major wars and genocides of the 20th century:** WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq-Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syrian civil war; Nazi Europe (holocaust), Cambodia, USSR, Rwanda, Bosnia, Nanking, Armenia

**International cooperation:** ISS (international Space Station), NPT (Non Proliferation Treaty), Kyoto Protocol, Geneva Convention

**Gallup:** a well-respected polling company since 1935. Gallup provides surveys and polls internationally and is trusted by major political parties and candidates.

## Concrete, yet General Examples

To illustrate, consider a man who robs a liquor store in order to feed his starving children. This person may have been affected by a bad economy, a physical or mental disability, or any other reason beyond his control. It would be irresponsible to suggest that his punishment should be of equal severity to the university educated businessman who used his intellect to defraud people of their hard-earned money for no reason other than greed.

Take for instance a senior citizen who is not quite familiar with proper online safety and who consequently does not properly protect his or her identity. This type of person is an easy target for criminals who know how to manipulate technology.

For example, in many state elections in which no candidate wins 50% of the votes a *runoff* is required. In other words, every vote does count when no clear favourite emerges in a race.

## Facts

As of the end of 2016, 97 out of 167 countries (58%) with populations of at least 500,000 were democracies, and only 21 (13%) were autocracies, both post-World War II records.

Half of the world's prison population of about nine million is held in the US, China or Russia. Prison rates in the US are the world's highest, at 724 people per 100,000. In Russia the rate is 581.

Of the five countries with the highest violent death rates in 2016 – Syria, El Salvador, Venezuela, Honduras, and Afghanistan – only two had armed conflicts that year.

The starting salary for a rookie cop in the NYPD (New York Police Department) is \$42,500. The starting salary for a police constable in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is between £19,971 (about US\$25,000) and £23,124 (about USD\$30,000).

1.56 million people applied to take China's five-hour civil service exam in 2017. There were fewer than 30,000 government positions available.

## Terms and Quotes

*Checks and balances* — in constitutional governments, different branches have the power to make sure other branches do not exceed their authority. This is meant to prevent a government branch or even a single person (e.g., the President) from assuming too much power.

*The fourth estate* — the press. This term suggests the media is outside the realm of politics but still has influence over it. The media is considered a part of the system of checks and balances mentioned above. The media ensures politicians are transparent and accountable to the public for their actions.

*"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."* (John F. Kennedy, JFK): President Kennedy made this demand to the people of the United States during his inaugural address. It suggests that altruism (doing for others, not for oneself) is the greatest good.

*"The buck stops here."* — Harry Truman: this famous expression is a response to the idiom *pass the buck*. The second idiom means not to take responsibility and let someone else do it. President Truman suggested that the President has no one to pass responsibility to and therefore he, as President, will take full responsibility for the government's actions.

*To rest one's case*: in a court trial, both prosecutor and defense lawyers have the opportunity to present their case before the judge and/or jury. When they are done with their presentation, they inform the court that they *rest their case*. This expression has become widely used to emphasize that one has made his/her point convincingly and has no more to add.

other:

## SAMPLE ESSAYS

**In many countries there has been growing demand over the last few years for government action to protect the environment and combat climate change. Governments argue that the costs would be too high and it would hurt the economy, which most people do not want.**

**How can the government protect the environment while creating revenues for the nation?**

**Do you agree that most people would rather have a strong economy than a healthy environment?**

Environmental conservation is costly; it requires heavy investment in alternative energy sources and limits on industry, which, in turn, may lead to many job losses and a potentially stagnant economy. There are several ways, however, to help preserve fragile ecosystems while still generating revenues. Nevertheless, I would disagree that, at present, most people are willing to sacrifice their personal financial security to achieve this.

In terms of safeguarding the environment, governments have a variety of cost-efficient options. Firstly, they could increase taxes on all petroleum-based products such as gas and plastics. This would, theoretically, discourage the population from consuming these items, thereby reducing their carbon footprint. Meanwhile, those who continue to buy these products will in effect be contributing to government revenues. An alternative option would be to invest in a renewable energy infrastructure, with things such as electric filling stations and solar panel factories. This would not only create jobs, but would incentivize consumers to spend more wisely. In the long run, governments would continue to collect tax revenues and simultaneously protect the environment.

The above suggestions, however, depend heavily on a willing and cooperative populace. Unfortunately, history has shown that once people are personally affected by government policy, especially when it affects their finances, they become less supportive of the moves in question. Moreover, when a person has to provide for his family, any immediate threat to that provision outweighs any long-term considerations. As such, to effectively combat climate change, governments will have to look at corporations and other organizations to take a leading role, especially when it comes to shouldering the costs.

In conclusion, the battle to protect the environment is not hopeless. Governments can and should act, though they should not rely too greatly on individuals but rather on those sectors of society that can afford to take action.

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**No country is perfect; each has its good points and bad. If you were in a position to change something about your country, what would you change?**

Canada is a great country; it is peaceful, full of natural beauty, wealth, and it is a place where people can truly chase and fulfill their dreams. That being said, Canada also has some faults. Among them are the status of the indigenous peoples, the political system, and innovation. If I were in power here, I would work toward solving these three issues.

Firstly, I would improve relations with the native peoples of Canada, namely the First Nations people, the Inuit, and the Métis. Years of neglect and successive governments' failures to include aboriginals in their everyday decision-making processes have greatly harmed these groups, isolating them in their own lands and subjecting them to severe struggles. In fact, suicide and alcoholism rates in these communities are significantly higher than the national average. A powerful leader ought to change perceptions of these population segments in the public eye, thereby drawing all Canadians closer to each other.

Secondly, I would change the political system. Currently, a citizen cannot vote for his preferred prime ministerial candidate. He can only vote for the local representative of his or her party. In other words, if a person wants a particular person as PM, but doesn't want the local representative, he must decide on the lesser of two evils: choose the preferred local candidate even if it means voting against the preferred PM's party, or vice versa. This hardly seems a democratic choice.

Lastly, I would encourage more innovation in Canadian R&D. At present, Canada's vast resources are not exploited to their full potential because there are not enough experts in this country who can do it. To illustrate, Canada is mineral-rich, yet these resources are untapped because we lack the technology and know-how to extract them from the earth. As leader, I would invest more in education and promote, even subsidize, schools that create the minds that can make Canada one of the richest countries in the world.

In conclusion, though a wonderful place to live, there is much that can be improved about Canada. From our relations with our native peoples to our governance and economy, we can make this one of the most powerful nations on the planet.

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**Is the world better when it is managed by one superpower or by two or more superpowers?**

Over the course of history, many empires controlled large areas of the globe, shaping the world as we know it. However, one has to wonder what our world would be like today had there been a counterbalance in play during these superpowers' reigns. I tend to believe that for the sake of stability and fairness, it is better to have two equally strong nations exerting influence over the world rather than having one nation do it alone.

Power is a dangerous thing. Whether concentrated in one person or a group, there is little to stop those with power from using it for their own self-interest; as the expression states, "absolute power corrupts absolutely." Nations with too much control over other nations will, almost certainly, use that power to help their own citizens at others' expense. Even today, rich countries exploit the cheap labour of poor countries, or make trade deals that are one-sided because the weaker nation fears the consequences of refusing. In the long run this creates tension, hatred, and inequalities, all of which create a world where people feel they have nothing to lose by fighting against those who abuse them and treat them unfairly.

One way to counter this, however, is to distribute power amongst at least two groups. While this may also create tension, it is one that can be more positive. To illustrate, if two nations "manage" the world, they have natural checks in place, such as the fact that other nations have an option of whom to align with, thereby making them less susceptible to bullying. During the Cold War, for instance, the U.S. and U.S.S.R., though bitter enemies, managed to make alliances that benefitted more nations than is the case with only one superpower calling the shots. While a cold war is not an ideal scenario, it is probably better than a world that fears and bows down to the whims of one government.

To conclude, even though a world in which everyone gets along and shares the Earth is a wonderful dream, reality suggests that power will always find its way into the hands of some and not others. In this case, better that this power is somewhat distributed so as to ensure that no one nation rules the world.

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**Anyone who breaks the law is a criminal and should be punished severely.**

**To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

Laws are a tool that society creates to maintain safety and harmony among its members. Thus, while I agree that any member of society who breaks the law is technically acting against it and is a criminal, I do not agree that all crimes are a result of evil intent and not all deserve heavy retribution.

Undoubtedly, a person who commits a violent crime, such as murder or rape, is not worthy of membership in any civilized community. Moreover, society has not only the right but the duty to chastise this person and administer discipline accordingly. However, not all crimes are violent and many are a result of desperation more so than any psychological defect, such as greed, hate, or any other negative impulse.

Accordingly, one must remember that a nation has an incredibly vast number of laws, including those that regulate how fast one can drive or at what age one can consume alcohol. It is doubtful anyone would argue that violating these laws can be considered a crime in the same way robbery can. Thus, to suggest that a teenager's drinking some beer at a weekend party is equivalent to a Wall Street banker's willful embezzlement of millions of dollars from his clients is ridiculous.

With this in mind, lawyers and judges should carefully weigh the circumstances surrounding an accused's actions. For example, a poor person who steals some milk for his hungry children should be given some leniency. A repeat offender, on the other hand, who has proven his lack of regard for the law should be punished as severely as necessary to rehabilitate him once and for all.

To conclude, the law is designed as a guide for all members of society to follow. Harsh punishment, then, should be reserved for those who show a complete disregard for their fellows.

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**Many people believe that all violent crimes should be punishable by death. They argue that this would give the victim's family a sense of justice. Others argue that capital punishment only adds to the cycle of violence and is not effective in stopping future criminals. Discuss both views and state your own opinion.**

Since the earliest civilizations, the concept of "an eye for an eye" has dominated legal debate. On the one hand, many argue that the threat of the death penalty is a powerful deterrent to would-be killers and rapists and offers relief to victims' relatives; on the other, history has shown that this is not the case. While it is easy to see the merits of both sides of the discussion, I have to agree with the latter.

Violent crimes have been part of human history since the literal dawn of mankind, at least according to the Bible. Even for those who do not subscribe to religious ideologies, there is no doubting historical accounts of violence throughout antiquity to today, and in all corners of the world. In other words, violence seems to be an inherent part of the human condition and no amount of retribution is likely to change that. Moreover, seeking justice against criminals by the very means they used to commit their criminal acts is merely supporting the above claim.

Nevertheless, there is certainly an argument to be made for the psychological comfort the death penalty may offer the families of innocent victims of homicides and other violent acts. While this may be true, there is also sufficient evidence to suggest that this revenge simply fuels a cycle of violence that ends in more deaths and more anger, not less. For example, if a person murdered my wife, and I in turn murdered his, it is unlikely he will lay down his arms; rather, he will seek to avenge her and kill another person close to me. Ultimately, we would both grieve while attending more and more funerals.

Thus, the most effective deterrent, in my view, is imprisonment and fines. Since a sociopath will not change his behavior, because he fundamentally cannot, the best thing to do is to isolate him and remove his access to society at large. Furthermore, he should be made to compensate the victim and/or his kin for their loss and suffering, especially in cases in which the casualty was a main breadwinner. In this way, not only would the perpetrator receive his punishment, but those affected by his actions may feel justice has been served.

In conclusion, no corporal action will turn back the clock to undo an act of violence. Thus, better forms of punishment need to be established.

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**Many of the world's problems these days can only be solved with the involvement and cooperation of the international community.**

**To what extent do you agree with this view?**

(You can remove one of the three problem areas, slightly expand on the other two, and have a four-paragraph essay that's a little shorter)

The modern world is full of problems, be they environmental, security-related, or socio-economic. As a result of globalization, many people now believe that no country can resolve these issues on its own. While it is true that countries can and must act unilaterally at times, I strongly agree that the world's greatest dangers can only be dealt with as a collaborative effort amongst all nations.

To begin with, there are the problems of climate change and environmental degradation. While the causes are debatable, the solutions required to reduce humanity's carbon footprint and preserve its natural resources and landscapes will involve many nations taking action. If one country, for instance, decides to ban the use of coal, the result would be meaningless if its neighbours continue to utilize this highly polluting fossil fuel. Thus, when it comes to tackling greenhouse emissions, all nations must work in unison if this fight has any chance of success.

Another peril the world faces is the threat of foreign terrorism and other security risks. Nations, however, can protect themselves from infiltrators by knowing who these criminals might be, how their ideology guides them, and what their aims are. The only way to acquire this information is by having national security apparatuses share intelligence and viable threat details before catastrophes strike.

Lastly, there are the risks posed by increasing global economic inequality, which is a byproduct of globalization. As the rich get richer and the poor become poorer, the growing discontent among the masses can eventually turn into violent revolutions. While these income disparities might seem a national concern, the international community can work together to increase opportunities for everyone, through fair trade, comparable wages paid by multinationals, and other efforts to ensure that wealth is not concentrated in the hands of a plutocracy.

To conclude, many of the world's problems belong to everyone, and as such it will take nations and peoples working together to resolve them.

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**Each year, the number of fatal traffic accidents caused by distracted drivers is increasing. Many police officials are now asking governments to implement stronger laws to deter drivers from texting and driving. For example, they should lose their license on a first offence, or even go to jail after a second offence. Are these penalties too strong? What other policies can governments adopt to discourage distracted driving?**

**TOEFL version**

As the numbers of cars on today's roads increase, so too do occurrences of tragic deaths caused by inattentive drivers. Unfortunately, current laws aimed at deterring people from texting while driving are too lax, thus ineffective. As such, treating distracted drivers as lethal threats and punishing them severely is not only reasonable, governments need to do even more to tackle this dangerous phenomenon.

Distracted drivers are selfish. They do not seem to care for the welfare of those around them as evidenced by the fact that they will prioritize a text message over ensuring the safety of those with whom they share the road. Moreover, police statistics show that many drivers who have been penalized for using hand-held devices while operating motorized vehicles are repeat offenders, suggesting they either do not care, or that the authorities are too lenient on them.

With this in mind, the only way police are going to effect a change on city roads is by making punishments for rule breakers tougher. For example, many people consider a fine of \$150 an annoyance rather than a punishment. On the other hand, raising the first offence penalty to have a substantial impact on a person's wallet, perhaps \$500 or more, will surely deter most people from committing the offence. Even better would be to implement a zero-tolerance policy, whereby a first-time offender faces a hefty fine as well as a short suspension of his or her license. A second offence should include a fine, a longer suspension, and a driver retraining program. Only when drivers realize there is a real cost to this action will they change their behavior.

In addition, police need to reach out to young drivers early, especially those of the modern generation who barely ever put down their mobile gadgets. By initiating educational programs in high schools targeting those who will soon acquire a driver's license, police can establish a mindset among future drivers that the road is not theirs alone and that they need to put safety above all else.

To sum up, road safety needs to be every driver's top priority. Those who are too selfish to care about others should be punished severely for putting those others at risk, and they should, moreover, be thoroughly educated about the rules of the road.

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**IELTS version**

As the numbers of cars on today's roads increase, so too do occurrences of tragic deaths caused by inattentive drivers. Unfortunately, current laws aimed at deterring people from texting while driving are too lax, thus ineffective. As such, treating distracted drivers as lethal threats is not only reasonable, but even more needs to be done.

Distracted drivers are selfish. They do not care for the welfare of those around them as evidenced by the fact that they will prioritize a text message over the safety of those around them. Moreover, statistics show that many of these drivers are repeat offenders, suggesting that they either do not care, or that the laws treat them too leniently. Thus, severe punishments are certainly warranted.

That being said, the only way to truly effect a change on city roads is through education and by making punishments for rule breakers even tougher. Firstly, by educating high schoolers who will soon acquire driver's licenses, police can establish a mindset that the road is not theirs alone and that safety comes first. Furthermore, penalties need to be stronger. For example, a \$150 fine will not be as effective as a \$500 fine, and the latter option will surely deter most people from committing the offence. Lastly, police should implement a zerotolerance policy, whereby a first offence includes a hefty fine and a suspension of one's license. A second offence would include a fine, a suspension, and a driver retraining program. Only when drivers realize a real cost will they change their behavior.

To sum up, road safety needs to be every driver's top priority. Those too selfish to care about others should be punished severely for putting those others at risk; moreover, they should be thoroughly educated about the rules of the road.

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**Many people believe their governments should invest more heavily in alternative, renewable, safe energy projects such as wind farms and solar panels. Others agree but want their leaders to develop or expand nuclear energy sources.**

**Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches to clean energy and say which you prefer.**

Climate change, currently a source of great debate, has many activists calling for increased funding for clean, safe, alternative energy sources, such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric. Others, however, want more nuclear reactors built to supply this energy. While both sides present convincing arguments, I believe that nonnuclear options are better as they carry fewer risks.

First and foremost, we must consider clean energy's ecological impact. While greenhouse gases produced by burning fossil fuels are certainly harmful, the potential disaster a nuclear accident poses could be several times greater. Thus, simply swapping one harmful source for another is not only counterproductive, it is also potentially more dangerous. Some might disagree by pointing to Chernobyl and Fukushima, examples of nuclear accidents, and claim the damage was localized; yet the possibility of a multitude of these reactors failing increases the reach of this threat. Furthermore, unlike solar and wind farms, nuclear plants produce radioactive waste, which poses an even greater risk than toxic emissions.

However, the potential for harm can be minimized, even eliminated, by relying more on solar panels, wind turbines, and hydroelectric dams. These producers do not leave waste, have unlimited potential, and can be cost effective if implemented properly. Of course, there is a downside: unlike nuclear reactors, wind and solar projects need vast swaths of land to house enough equipment to produce equivalent levels of electricity. As well, many people find them unaesthetic, depriving the surrounding landscape of its natural beauty. Nevertheless, one could hardly argue that these drawbacks outweigh the need to protect those very landscapes, nor that the world is too small to spare some land for the greater good. Ultimately, there are very few reasons not to take advantage of nature's power to help protect that very nature.

In conclusion, while nuclear power is a viable option as an energy source, the risks involved as well as the superficial arguments against wind and solar power make the latter alternatives the clear choice for mankind's future.

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**Some people believe that a government should only be an administrative body that oversees the everyday business of running a country and should not get involved in making lifestyle decisions for its people.**

**To what extent do you agree with this belief?**

As the world's population grows, many question the function of government. While some believe a government's duty is to play the part of parent to its citizens, I wholeheartedly agree that a ruling authority should be nothing more than a technocratic overseer ensuring its citizens' security and efficiently managing national revenues.

A government is essentially a group of people who make policy decisions for the entire nation, chief among which are laws that provide security to every member of the public. To ask these politicians to engage in the distribution of beliefs is to invite a lack of security to those who do not share them. In other words, once we allow politicians to decide what is right or wrong in terms of religious traditions, sexual preferences, or any other deeply personal approach to life, then we create a situation in which some people control others. As such, a person who does not believe in god, for example, can be harassed by those whom the government has deemed morally acceptable because they follow the scriptures of a certain religion. Thus the government is not only intruding on the individual's right to choose for himself, it is also putting this person in danger.

Thus, the role of a governing body should rather be to establish an environment in which every citizen has a chance to succeed. One way to do this is to properly manage the income it receives through taxation and to fund institutions such as schools, hospitals, emergency services, and so on. This will give every member of the public the opportunity to decide their own way, while feeling secure in their choices based on personal worldviews, as opposed to being pushed along a certain path. Ultimately, every citizen must take responsibility for his or her life and the government should only be a means to facilitate this.

In conclusion, governments should not tell people how to live other than to make sure that they do not harm others. Moreover, a government should make it possible for every citizen to succeed regardless of their lifestyle choices.

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**Many people believe that they have no influence on government policies and actions and that their vote, therefore, is of little significance; consequently, they believe that voting during elections is a waste of time and energy.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with this belief?**

Many people nowadays, especially the young, have become apathetic towards governments they consider themselves powerless to change. Consequently, many see voting as a waste of time. While I agree for the most part that no individual can make a great impact through one vote, I also believe that mobilizing an entire segment of the population can make all the difference in the world and is therefore worthwhile.

A democracy, theoretically, is a government of the people by the people. It is therefore in everyone's interest to be as involved as possible in the process of governing. Most, though, do not have opportunities to participate in governance and become indifferent to it. However, evidence suggests that if this apathy were to become widespread, the results could be quite disastrous. One need only look at the Brexit vote and the immediate regret that followed it, at least amongst certain sectors of the population, to see what happens when large portions of the population feel impotent and take no action. Thus, one vote may be just a drop in the ocean, but when collected into a wave it can move mountains.

With this in mind, one may consider fringe movements that, although not in positions of official power, do nevertheless influence governments by virtue of grassroots activism and an ability to draw people to polling stations. These groups' powers thus lie in their ability to effect change by making their voices heard, even if the individual votes are inconsequential in terms of electing leaders. By making their existence known, these groups force officials to take their demands into account if only to avoid a growing sense of disenfranchisement. Similarly, these groups are aware that legitimacy requires every vote.

To conclude, no one vote on its own can change the status quo; however, every single vote can add to a pool and garner a powerful tool to make politicians listen and act.

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**It is the government's responsibility to save people from themselves, for example by banning smoking or enforcing helmet use for motorcyclists.**

**Do you agree or disagree with this statement?**

**TOEFL version**

A government has many duties toward its citizens. Chief among these, some say, is the duty to enforce rules that ensure the safety and well-being of those who elected it. When it comes to personal choices, however, I counter that a government should be limited in its authority over a person's right to decide what is best for him or herself. The reason for this is that allowing the government to make critical decisions regarding people's actions will deprive them not only of their individual freedoms, but also of their sense of personal responsibility.

When we allow others to decide for us, even if those decisions are in our best interests, we forfeit our individuality. History has shown repeatedly that once a government is given too much authority, it continues to expand that authority to all areas of life. George Orwell, in his novel 1984, demonstrated clearly how a leadership with excessive influence over its people will eventually dictate even how one should think. Telling a person he cannot smoke or that he must wear a helmet, while well-intentioned, is nevertheless a choice that should be left to the individual. Ultimately, most people understand what is good or bad for themselves; allowing others to decide this will inevitably lead to their judging what is morally wrong and right as well.

This power to judge, moreover, will negate the essential purpose of government. Most democratically elected governments are chosen by their adult citizens. Those who vote in a government, then, are trusted to make this decision by virtue of their being rational, responsible, and informed members of society. As such, they should also be trusted to make personal life decisions. Removing this ability, even in the area of personal safety, will lead people to deny any sense of responsibility for or to face the consequences of their actions. As a result, governments will gain sole authority to make decisions about their own powers, and individuals may ignore their responsibilities to each other. A person involved in a car accident, for example, may not feel obligated to help the victims because he may be accustomed to his government's doing this on his behalf.

In conclusion, a government must take care of its citizens in a way that does not diminish the power of the individual to decide for himself and to take responsibility for his decisions. Otherwise, a society faces the danger of its members acting without fear of consequences.

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**It is the government's responsibility to save people from themselves, for example by banning smoking or enforcing helmet use for motorcyclists.**

**Do you agree or disagree with this statement?**

**IELTS version**

Of a government's many duties, the primary one is ensuring the well-being of its citizens. While some say this ought to give the authorities decision-making powers over others, I disagree and argue that a government's authority should be limited to national concerns, not individuals. Otherwise, we risk not only personal freedoms, but also personal responsibilities.

By permitting others to decide for us, we forfeit our individuality. History has shown that governments granted excessive authority tend to exercise it in all areas of life. George Orwell's 1984 demonstrated clearly how a leadership with unchecked influence will eventually dictate even how one should think. Thus, telling a person he cannot smoke, while well-intentioned, is nevertheless an attack on personal choice. Moreover, as most people understand what is good or bad for themselves, giving others the power to decide this may devolve into their judging people's morals. At this juncture, individual freedoms will certainly cease to exist.

Furthermore, eliminating one's freedom to choose will negate the essential purpose of government. Democratic governments are elected by their adult citizens, who are trusted to base their votes on rational, responsible, and informed decisions. Thus, removing these deliberating powers, even regarding personal safety, will lead some members of society to deny responsibility for their actions and blame the government for their misdeeds. Consequently, governments will need to seize sole authority to decide their own powers, and citizens will become apathetic towards government and other members of society. To illustrate, a person witnessing a car accident might not help the victims because he will rely on his government to do so.

In conclusion, governments must care for their citizens in a way that does not diminish the power of the individual to decide for himself and to take responsibility for his decisions. Otherwise, society faces the danger of its members acting without fear of consequences.

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