

Ideas for IELTS topics

Who is this book for?

Many students have no ideas or opinions about IELTS writing topics. Even if your grammar is perfect, you will not get a high IELTS score if you do not know what to write. This book is for students who want to go into the writing exam feeling confident that they have excellent ideas, opinions and vocabulary for as many topics as possible

How do you get an IELTS score of 7 or higher?

The key to a high score is not grammar, it is not your use of words like “moreover” or “in addition”, and it is not your use of phrases like “this is controversial issue nowadays”.

**To get a high score you need to use good “topic language” (words and phrases that are related to the question topic). You need good ideas in order to answer the question well.**

How should you prepare for IELTS writing task 2?

There is an enormous amount of advice on my website [ielts-simon.com](http://ielts-simon.com). Here is a summary of what I suggest:

- **Spend more time preparing than testing**

When you test yourself, you find out what your level is, but you do not learn anything new. You will not improve if you only write test essays. Before writing an essay, study the topic and prepare your ideas, opinions and vocabulary.

- **Steal my ideas**

If you only use the vocabulary that you already know, you will not learn anything new, and you will not improve. Practise linking my topic ideas together to write “perfect essays”. See the website for examples of how to do this.

- **Use this book together with the website**

The website [ielts-simon.com](http://ielts-simon.com) contains lessons and videos that show you how to use the ideas from this book. You can speak to me there if you have any questions.

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# 1. Advertising

## *Positives of Advertising*

Advertising is a key part of modern business  
Companies need to tell customers about their products  
Advertisements inform us about the choices we have  
Advertising is a creative industry that employs many people  
Without advertising we would have less choice  
Without advertising there would be higher unemployment  
Advertising is a form of modern art  
People enjoy adverts

## *Negatives of Advertising*

Advertising manipulates people  
It aims to persuade people that buying a product will make them happier  
Advertisers focus on selling a brand image  
They use glamorous, successful people  
We now live in a consumer culture  
We are persuaded to follow the latest trend  
We are encouraged to associate certain brands with a higher status  
Advertisers often aim their marketing at children  
Children can easily be influenced by advertisements.  
Children put pressure on parents to buy them things

## *Opinions about Advertising*

Advertising should be regulated  
Advertising aimed at children should be controlled or even banned  
Unhealthy foods should not be marketed in a way that attracts children  
Products that can be risk to healthy should display warnings  
In some countries it is illegal to advertise cigarettes on television  
Warnings must be displayed on cigarette packets  
However, advertising is necessary in free market economies  
It creates demand for products  
Governments should only censor false information or products that are harmful

## **2. Animal rights**

### ***Arguments for Animal testing***

Animals are used in important scientific research

It is necessary to do medical tests on new drugs

Animal testing helps to advance medical and scientific knowledge

Many important medical discoveries involved experimentation on animals

Researchers aim to minimize the suffering that animals experience

Testing for the cosmetics industry is now banned in many countries

### ***Arguments against Animal Testing***

The benefits of research using animals do not justify the suffering caused

There are alternative methods of research

The lives of animals should be respected

Humans have no moral right to do experiments on animals

### ***Arguments for Vegetarianism***

Vegetarians do not eat foods that are produced by killing animals

Many people choose a vegetarian diet for moral or health reasons

A healthy diet is possible without eating meat

It is unnecessary to kill animals for food

A vegetarian diet may reduce the risk of disease like cancer

Many people question the treatment of animals in factory farms

### ***Arguments against Vegetarianism***

Vegetarians do not eat a balanced diet

In many cultures, meat is the main ingredient in traditional meals

Meat-eaters argue that animals are below humans in the food chain

It is completely natural for us to kill them for food

Our aim should be improve farming methods

Farms should produce organic food

### ***Positives of Zoos***

Zoos paly an important role in wildlife conservation

They can help to protect endangered species

Zoos allow scientists to study animals and their behavior

Zoos are educational, interesting and fun

Children, in particular, enjoy learning about animals

Zoos provide job opportunities.

### ***Negatives of Zoos***

Zoo animals are kept in artificial environments

They are kept in cages or have limited space

Zoo animals rely on humans

They lose the freedom to hunt for food

They best way to save endangered species is by protecting natural habitats.

Some people believe that zoos are unethical

Zoos exhibits animals with the aim of making money

We have no right to use animals for entertainment and profit.

## **3. Cities**

### ***Reasons for Urbanization***

People move to cities in search of job opportunities

Cities offer greater employment possibilities and a higher standard of living

People migrate to cities from the countryside

Traditional activities like farming need fewer workers nowadays

### ***Negatives of City Life***

Life in cities has its drawbacks

The cost of living is higher than in rural areas

Some people do not manage to find work

Housing is usually much more expensive

Homelessness and poverty are common in cities

There is a gap between rich and poor

Life in cities can be extremely stressful

There are problems like traffic congestion and crime

Cities lack a sense of community

People do not even know their neighbor

Cities are sometimes described as “concrete jungles”.

### ***Pedestrian Areas***

Pedestrian zones in city centre can improve the local environment

Banning cars encourages people to walk or cycle

Many European cities have built bicycle lanes

Dependence on cars is linked to health problems like obesity

People who walk or cycle regularly are generally healthier

Pedestrian areas are safer and more attractive for both residents and tourists

## **4. Crime**

### ***Police and Crime Prevention***

The job of the police is to catch criminals

They must also prevent crime and make communities safer

There should be an increase in the number of police officers on the streets

Police officers should be seen as part of the community

They should be involved with education and prevention

The police should be in close contact with schools

They should focus on young people who have dropped out of school.

These teenagers may become involved with gangs

### ***Punishments/Prisons***

Fines are used as punishment for minor crimes

If the crime is more serious, prison is the most common punishment

Some criminals pose a threat to society

They are put in prison to ensure the safety of other citizens

### ***Negatives of Prisons***

Criminals are put together

They make friends with other offenders

Many prisoners re-offend when they are released

A criminal record makes finding a job more difficult

### ***Rehabilitation***

Another aim of prisons is rehabilitation

Prisoners receive education or vocational training

Prisoners should learn personal skills and specific job skills

Punishment could make prisoners' behavior worse

Rehabilitation aims to make them better citizens

Rehabilitated prisoners are less likely to re-offend

### ***Capital punishment***

Supporters say that capital punishment deters crime

Fear of the death penalty stops people from committing offences

The death penalty shows that crime is not tolerated

It is a form of revenge

The cost of imprisonment is avoided

The offender cannot pose a threat to others

### ***Against Capital Punishment***

Innocent people could be wrongly convicted and executed

Crime rates are not necessarily reduced

Many criminals do not think they will be caught

Capital punishment is not a good deterrent

Executing prisoners creates a violent culture and encourages revenge

We have no right to take another human life

### ***Community service***

Community service is a way to reform offenders

It could be a solution to prison overcrowding

It avoids the cost of imprisonment

It makes offenders useful in their local communities

They are required to clean streets or talk to school groups

Offenders repay their community

They avoid the negative influence that prison can have

### ***Against community service***

Community service is not a sufficient punishment

Criminals should be locked up, away from their victims

### ***Crime in the Media***

Crime is one of the main subjects of most news programs.

The mass media focus on violent and sensational crimes

This lead to fear of crime among the public

Sensational stories attract more viewers or readers

The media report crime stories in order to increase their audience

## **5. Education**

### ***Benefits of education***

Education gives people knowledge and skills

People with qualification are more likely to find work

They can earn a higher salary

They can contribute positively to society

Schools aim to teach young people moral values such as tolerance and sharing

Schools prepare children to be members of a society

### ***Benefits of Studying Abroad***

Foreign institutions may offer better courses

Many students want to attend a prestigious university

The best universities employ teachers who are experts in their fields

Qualifications gained abroad can open the door to better job opportunities

Living abroad can broaden students' horizons

Overseas students are exposed to different cultures and customs.

They become more independent

They are responsible for cooking, cleaning and paying bills

They will learn a foreign language

### ***Drawback of studying abroad***

Living and studying abroad can be difficult



Students have problems with paperwork such as visa applications

The language barrier can be a problem

Students have to find accommodation and pay bills

Studying in a foreign language is challenging

Living alone in an unfamiliar culture can cause homesickness

### ***Technology in Education: Advantages***

Technology is a powerful tool to engage students

Technology can make lessons much more interesting

Students can do research using online resources

Students can study at their own place

Adults can take distance learning courses

Students can study whenever and wherever they want

Students also learn skills which are useful for their future jobs

For example, they learn to write reports using a word processor

### ***Technology in Education: Disadvantages***

People rely too much on computers

Young learners do not become proficient in some basic skills

They use word processors and spelling may suffer

People should be able to write a letter by hand

Technology is no substitute for a real teacher

Learners need a structured course

An experienced teacher knows what materials to choose

Computers are expensive to maintain and can be unreliable

### ***Technology in Education: Opinion***

Institutions should supplement traditional teaching with the use of technology

Technology is part of everyday life

It can enhance a teacher's lessons

Students can use online resources to help with homework

Students must still learn to write by hand

They should still use traditional sources of information such as books

### ***Education in Developing countries: Problems***

Children often have to work from an early age

There are no schools in many areas

Families do not have access to books or computers

Literacy rates are often low

People in developing countries need knowledge and skills

Education is the key to improving the economy of these countries

### ***Education in developing countries: solutions***

Developed countries could help developing nations by providing money

They could invest in schools and technology

They could supply the funds to build schools and pay for teachers

Children need to have access to free schooling

Computer equipment could be donated

The Internet can expose students to a world of knowledge and information

Governments should make education compulsory for all children

They should encourage parents to send their children to school

Governments of developed and developing countries must work together

### ***Higher education: Advantages (also see "benefits of education")***

There are many benefits to going to university

A degree can open the door to better employment prospects

Economies are becoming increasingly knowledge-based

Most jobs require specific knowledge and skills

Skilled workers are needed for sectors such as information technology and engineering

Repetitive manual jobs are now done by machine

Many factories have moved to developing countries

### ***Higher education: Disadvantages***

A healthy economy needs a wide range of workers

Some manual workers will always be needed

A university degree is not necessary for many service professions

Practical training is more important in some industries

In the UK, for example, there is currently a shortage of plumbers

Their services are therefore becoming more and more expensive

### ***Advantage of Home-schooling***

Some parents decide to educate their children at home

Some families live in isolated areas with poor transport

Other parents are not satisfied with local schools

Parents can respond to what their children need and how they learn best

One-to-one lessons allow much faster progress

The child can work at his or her own pace

Discipline problems are avoided by home-schooling

### ***Disadvantages of home-schooling***

Most parents do not have the time to educate their children at home

One parent would need to give up work

School subjects are normally taught by up to ten different teachers

Most parents do not have the necessary knowledge or resources

Private tutors are expensive

Children will miss out on the social experience that school offers

At school, children learn how to get on with each other

Home-schooled children may lack social skills

Schools offer a better overall educational experience

### ***Bad behavior in schools: causes***

Bad behavior is due to a lack of structure and discipline

There are too many children in some classes

Large classes are difficult to manage

May disruptive students come from an unstable family background

Other parents are too lenient and spoil their children

Some children are used to getting whatever they want

Schools can do very little if they are not supported by parents

### ***Bad behavior in schools: solutions***

Schools need a clear code of conduct

Schools need a clear set of rules about behavior

They need to create a positive working atmosphere

Teachers must have the power to punish disruptive students

Schools should remove difficult children from lessons

Schools need to work closely with parents

Discipline could be lacking at home

Parents must support the school rules

They should take responsibility for their children's behavior

### ***Corporal Punishment: Opinion***

Corporal Punishment is not a good idea

Physical punishment is a way of controlling children using fear

This does not promote trust between adults and children

Children who are punished physically may become shy or resentful

Corporal punishment creates an atmosphere of fear and anger

### ***Single Sex Education: Advantages***

Some people believe that male and female students should go to separate schools

This is often for religious or cultural reasons

Discipline problems might be avoided by separating boys and girls

Boys and girls may learn in different ways and have different needs

Student at single-sex schools often get better exam grades.

### ***Single-sex Education: Disadvantages***

Separating boys and girls is unnecessary

It is unhealthy in terms of children's social development

Many coeducational schools are extremely successful

A mixed-sex environment is more representative of real life

Coeducational schools provide children with better social skills for adult life

### ***Advantages of Streaming (grouping children according to ability)***

Some schools separate students according to their academic ability

Teachers can work at the right speed for their students

Teachers can plan more suitable lessons

High-level groups may progress faster

Lower level groups can benefit from a slower pace

Some teachers and parents support streaming for these reasons

### ***Disadvantages of Streaming***

Grouping by ability may have a negative impact on students

Children do not want to be seen as less intelligent than others

Streaming could damage students' self esteem

They may lose motivation

Students from wealthier families tend to be better prepared

Children from poorer families may receive less support from parents

Mixed ability classes encourage everyone to achieve their potential.

## **6. Environment**

### ***Global warming***

Gases such as carbon dioxide trap heat from the sun

This causes global temperatures to rise

This process is known as the greenhouse effect

Human activity is a major factor in the rise of the greenhouse gases

Factories and vehicles produce emissions and exhaust fumes

Many developing countries are becoming industrialized

The number of cars on our streets is growing

Cheap air travel is allowing more people to fly

### ***Effects of Global Warming***

Global warming will have a significant impact on our planet

Rising temperature will cause melting of the polar ice caps

Sea levels will rise

We can expect more extreme weather conditions

Flooding and droughts may become more common

### ***Impacts of humans on the environment***

The increasing world population is putting pressure on natural resources

Fossil fuels like oil and gas are running out

We are destroying wildlife habitats

We have cut down enormous areas of rainforest

This has led to the extinction of many species of animals and plants

### ***Solutions to environment problems***

Governments could introduce laws to limit emissions from factories

They should invest in renewable energy from solar, wind or water power

They could impose “green taxes” on drivers and airlines companies

Government campaigns should promote recycling

Natural areas and wild animals should be protected

Individuals should also try to be greener

We should take fewer flights abroad for holidays

We should take public transport rather than driving

We should choose products with less packaging

We should recycle as much as possible

### ***Waste/rubbish***

The amount of waste we produce has increased

This problem is a result of our consumer culture

Products are not made to last

If something breaks, we throw it away and buy a new one

Advertisers encourage us to buy the newest fashions

Packaging is an important part of selling

Most foods are sold in non-biodegradable plastics packaging

The amount of household waste is growing

This waste ends up in landfill sites

### ***Litter***

People do not think about the consequences of dropping rubbish

They assume that somebody is paid to clean the streets

Plastic packaging does not break down easily

Most of the litter seen on streets is fast food packaging

### ***Recycling and other solutions***

Companies should make goods that last longer

They should not use so much packaging

Governments should be stricter, about waste produced by companies

They should put legal limits on packaging

Consumers should avoid buying over-packaged products

We should recycle and reuse useful materials.

There are collection banks for glass, paper and plastic bottles

Households can use several rubbish bins to separate waste

Recycling saves energy and raw materials.

### ***Nuclear Power: Positives***

There are several benefits to build more nuclear power stations

Fossil fuel like oil and gas are running out

Nuclear power is a sustainable energy source

It can be used to produce electricity without wasting natural resources

It could be replace the use of natural resources like coal, oil or gas

Nuclear power stations are cleaner than fossil fuel power stations

They could help to reduce carbon emissions that cause global warming



The risks of accidents are being reduced

### ***Nuclear Power: negatives***

Opponents of nuclear power worry about the safety of power stations

The building of new nuclear power stations is unpopular

Nobody wants to live near one

Nuclear waste disposal is a significant problem

There is currently no way to decontaminate radioactive material

People worry that terrorists could steal radioactive materials

It is safer to produce energy from solar, wind or water power.

## **7. Family**

### ***Family size***

Families in many countries are not as large as they used to be

We tend to live in small nuclear families rather than large extended families

Parents tend to have fewer children

Young children are no longer expected to work

Nowadays both parents often work

It costs so much to bring children up

It is more difficult to raise a large family

### ***Working parents (also see “gender” topic)***

Children and their parents seem to be less close nowadays

Parents spend less time with their children

Women traditionally stayed at home to cook, clean and look after children

Nowadays both parents often work full time

Children may be left alone, or with nannies or babysitters

Busy parents have less contact with their children

Many families no longer eat meals together

Children spend more time with friends or surfing the Internet

### ***Negative effects on Children***

The lack of closeness in families can have a negative effect on children  
Many parents have no idea how their children spend their time  
Friends, television and the Internet become the main influence on children's behavior  
Teenagers are influenced by peer pressure  
Some of them join gangs  
Juvenile delinquency is on the increase  
Parents should be more involved with their children's upbringing  
Young people need positive role models

### ***Divorce***

In the past, divorce was unacceptable  
It was considered to be embarrassing for a family  
People stayed together for religious or family reasons  
Divorce is more socially acceptable nowadays  
It has become much more common  
Divorce can be extremely stressful  
Lone parents may face financial difficulties  
Many single parents have to rely on benefits paid by the state  
Divorce can have a negative effect on children  
Children from single-parent families are more likely to get lower grades or drop out of school.  
The rise in divorce rates may be connected to some social problems

### ***Care for Old people***

Caring for elderly people was traditionally the responsibility of families  
Adults had to look after their elderly parents  
A woman's job was to stay at home taking care of her family  
Nowadays, fewer elderly people are looked after by their relatives  
Residential homes provide care for large number of elderly people  
Some families are unable to look after elderly relatives  
Families tend to be smaller these days, and women often have full-time jobs  
Cares homes provide a professional service for senior citizens  
Nurses are better trained than family members

### ***Care for Old people: Opinion***

The best form of care for the elderly depends on the family situation  
It depends on whether family members have the time resources  
We all have a responsibility towards the older people in our society  
Governments should invest money in facilities and training for care workers.

## **8. Gender**

### ***Gender and education***

Men and women should have access to the same educational opportunities  
Males and females should be accepted onto courses according to their abilities  
It is wrong to discriminate against students because of their gender  
Gender should be irrelevant in education  
Student's achievements should depend on hard work and individual merit  
In the UK, there are similar numbers of male and female students in higher education

### ***Gender and work***

Men and women should have access to the same professional opportunities  
Both man and women should be able to pursue a career  
They should earn equal salaries  
They should be employed according to their abilities, qualifications and experience  
Traditionally women have been restricted to certain roles  
They were often employed as secretaries or receptionists  
Nowadays, a range of occupations is available to both sexes  
Career success depends on individual merit

### ***Women's and Men's roles in the Family***

Some people argue that a mother should not work  
She should stay at home and bring up her children  
The father should be the breadwinner of the family  
Others believe that both parents should share these responsibilities  
Working women can take maternity leave during and after pregnancy  
Many mothers continue to work after this period  
Many fathers and mothers share their parenting and domestic responsibilities  
They contribute equally to childcare, cooking and cleaning  
Some women many have better career prospects than their husbands.

Paternity leave and “househusbands” are becoming more common  
Traditional gender roles are gradually changing  
Families can divide roles and responsibilities in the most convenient way.

## **9. Genetic Engineering**

### ***Positives of genetic engineering***

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

### ***Negatives of genetic engineering***

There are ethical concerns about human genetic engineering  
Parents might want to choose their children’s characteristics  
This would be unnatural  
It would be unacceptable in most religions  
Soldiers could be cloned from the genes of the strongest people  
Clones might be used like robots to do certain jobs  
Clones might even be developed just for organ replacements  
Society and human evolution would change completely  
Currently, human genetic engineering is prohibited

### ***Genetically-Modified (GM) foods: Advantages***

Farmers can produce crops that grow bigger and faster  
Some GM crops are more resistant to disease or insects  
This could be important for food production in developing countries  
Faster growing cereals, fruit and vegetables will mean more profit  
GM foods can be modified to look perfect

They may be more attractive to customers

### ***Genetically-Modified (GM) Foods: Disadvantages***

There may be risks involved in the genetic engineering of foods.

GM crops might change whole ecosystems

Food chains could be broken if crops are resistant to predators

Organic foods are produced without chemicals or genetic modification

Organic farming may be slower and more expensive

However, the environment is not damaged by fertilizers or pesticides.

## **10. Global issues**

### ***Problems in developing countries***

Developing countries face a range of problems

Standards of healthcare and education are low

Life expectancy is usually lower than in developed countries

There is a lack of infrastructure, employment and good quality housing

Many people are forced to live in poverty

Food, drinking water and basic medicines are in short supply

### ***How to help developing countries***

The best form of help for developing countries is development aid

Richer nations can help by investing in long-term projects

Governments and charities can help by building new houses and schools

Globalization may also help developing countries

Multi-national companies can create jobs in developing countries

On the other hand, many people emigrate to find work in richer countries

They often send money back home to their families

This money helps to improve the standard of living in developing countries

### ***Immigration***

Some people move to another country in search of a better life

Many immigrants come from less developed countries

Richer, industrialized countries may offer opportunities for employment

Free healthcare and schooling are available in some developed countries

Other people migrate to a foreign country to improve their academic qualifications

### ***Positives of immigration and Multi-cultural societies***

From an economic perspective, immigration can be extremely positive  
Many immigrants have skills that are needed in the country they move to  
Immigrants who find work contribute to the economy of their new country  
Many immigrants send money home to help family members  
Immigration also creates cultural diversity  
People of many different nationalities learn to live together  
This can help people to become more open-minded and tolerant

### ***Negatives of Immigration***

Some people believe that immigrants take jobs that should go to local people  
Some immigrant workers work longer hours for less money  
Companies might pay lower salaries to immigrant workers  
Unemployment rates could rise if there are too many immigrants

### ***Opinions about Immigration***

Immigration can help the economy of a country  
It can create multi-cultural societies  
However, immigration needs to be controlled  
In many countries, immigrants need visas or work permit  
Governments should stop companies from exploiting immigrant workers  
Foreign and local workers should have the right to equal pay and conditions

### ***Positives of Globalization***

Business of becoming increasingly international  
Multi-national companies do business across the world  
Companies like MacDonald's can be seen on high streets in most cities  
Goods are produced in one country and sold in many others  
A global economy means free trade between countries  
This can strengthen political relationships  
Globalization can also create opportunities for employment  
It encourages investment in less developed countries

It could reduce poverty in the developing world

### ***Negatives of Globalization***

Globalization is not always beneficial to everyone  
Companies can move to countries where labour is cheap  
This creates redundancies, or job losses  
Employees cannot be confident that they have stable jobs  
Companies sometimes exploit their employees in developing countries  
Global trade creates more waste and pollution

### ***The future of Globalization***

There should be global regulations for salaries and working conditions  
Governments should impose laws to protect the environment

## **11. Government and Society**

### ***What governments can do***

Governments provide public services like healthcare and education  
They support people who are living in poverty or unable to work  
Governments raise money by taxing working people  
They can spend money on resources and campaigns  
They can introduce new laws  
They can impose taxes  
They can raise people's awareness of issues (e.g climate change/healthy eating)  
They can influence people's habits and opinions  
They can create jobs  
They can regulate the activities of companies such as banks  
They can provide resources for schools  
They are also responsible for the security and well-being of their citizens  
They control armed forces and police forces

### ***Public services***

Governments pay the salaries of public sector workers like police officers and teachers  
The necessary money is raised by taxing people's income

Free education and healthcare may be provided by the state  
Some governments control public transport systems and even TV channels  
In other countries, these services are provided by private companies  
Some people believe that competition between private companies is good  
It helps to improve quality while bringing prices down  
Other people think that essential services should be free  
Governments should pay for them

### ***Censorship: Opinion***

Governments can censor what public sees or reads in the media  
To a certain extent censorship is necessary  
We should use censorship to protect children from violent images  
Some computer games involve killing people or committing crimes  
The Internet also needs to be controlled  
Many websites show pornography and violence  
There should be age limits for websites and computers games  
Parents need to take responsibility for checking what their children watch  
It is impossible for governments to control everything we see

### ***Video cameras in public places***

The use of CCTV is becoming widespread  
Video cameras have been installed in many public places  
They are supposed to protect us and deter criminals  
Many people think that this surveillance violates our privacy  
The authorities could build databases with our pictures and identities  
We should not be treated like criminals

### ***Smart cards: Positives***

Governments will probably introduce a digital identification card system  
Smart cards will have benefits and drawbacks  
They could help to reduce crime  
They could hold personal information, such as DNA  
Digital bank cards could contain fingerprint information  
It would be very difficult for criminals to use a stolen card  
It would be easier for police to identify people and catch criminals



### ***Smart cards: Negatives***

- Many people are worried about losing their privacy
- Governments could store all our personal and medical information
- This information could be used by insurance companies
- Employers could check our health records

### ***People with Disabilities***

- People with disabilities should be treated the same as everybody else
- They should have the same rights as other people
- They should have access to the same jobs as other citizens
- Discriminations against disabled people is illegal in many countries
- Ramps and lifts for wheelchairs should be installed in public buildings
- Support teacher can be employed to help children with learning difficulties

## **12. Guns and Weapons**

### ***Why guns should be legal:***

- In some countries, people are allowed to own firearms
- Individuals have the right to protect themselves
- People can use guns in self defence
- This deters criminals

### ***Why gun ownership should be illegal:***

- There is a risk of accidents with guns
- The number of violent crimes increases when guns are available
- Criminals may be armed
- The police then need to use guns
- Suicide rates have been shown to rise when guns are available
- Guns create violent societies with high murder rates

### ***Why polices should use guns***

- Many criminals use weapons
- The threat of a gun can deter criminals
- Police officers can force a criminal to surrender

It is easier to arrest someone and avoid physical violence  
The police may shoot violent criminals in self defence  
They can protect the public  
They can shoot an escaping criminal who poses a serious danger to the public

### ***Why police should not carry guns***

There is a risk of accidents and mistakes  
The police might shoot an unarmed criminal or an innocent person  
Accidents can happen in public places  
There are several alternatives to guns (e.g tear gas, sprays and electric shock weapons)  
Only special police units should use guns

### ***Arm Trade: Positives***

The export of arms, or weapons, is an extremely controversial issue  
Governments of rich, industrialized countries sell arms to each other  
This industry creates jobs and wealth  
The trade of weapons may improve relationships between governments

### ***Arms Trade: Negatives***

Weapons may be used in conflicts and wars  
The supply of arms could be responsible for deaths  
Governments are promoting war in order to make a profit  
Rich countries can influence the politics of other nations

### ***Nuclear weapons***

Nuclear weapons are capable of destroying whole cities  
A nuclear war between two countries would destroy both countries  
Nuclear weapons are used as a deterrent  
They prevent wars from starting

### ***Nuclear weapons: Opinion***

Nuclear weapons should be prohibited  
Governments should limit the production of nuclear weapons  
There is a danger of nuclear weapons being obtained by terrorists

Nuclear weapons cannot be used against terrorist organizations

### ***Armed Forces: Positives***

Armed forces provide security and protection  
They deter military attack by another country  
They can also be sued to maintain peace within countries  
They can be sued to give the police extra support  
Soldiers are also used to help in emergency situations, such as after a natural disaster

### ***Armed forces: negatives***

Armies require a lot of funding from governments  
Too much money is spent on weapons and military technology  
This money could be spent on schools, hospitals and other public services

## **13. Health**

### ***Diet***

The human body requires a balanced diet  
An unhealthy diet can cause various health problems  
Obesity, diabetes and heart disease are on the increase  
Many people nowadays rely on fast food or pre-prepared meals  
These foods often contain too much fat, salt and sugar  
They are cheap to buy and very easy to prepare  
Many young people have grown up on a diet of convenience foods  
Populations in developed countries are increasingly overweight

### ***Exercise***

Regular exercise is essential in maintaining a healthy body  
Exercise burns calories and helps to build healthy bones and muscles  
Doctors advise exercising at least three times a week for 20 minutes  
Most people nowadays lead a sedentary lifestyle  
We tend to walk less and do desk jobs  
Most adults relax by watching television  
Children play video games rather than doing outdoor sports  
In the past, people were more active in their jobs and at home

## ***Government's Role***

Governments have a significant role to play in reducing obesity  
More and more people, including young children are seriously overweight  
They are at risk of heart disease and diabetes  
This situation will increase the burden on hospitals and taxpayers  
Hospitals rely on the government for money and resources  
Governments should promote a healthy diet and regular exercise  
There should be more time for sports on school timetables  
Unhealthy junk food should be banned from school menus  
People need information about what foods contain  
Food packaging must show the food's nutritional content  
The British Government recommends eating five portions of fruit and vegetables per day

## ***State Health system: advantages***

Good healthcare should be available to everyone for free  
State healthcare is paid by the government using money from taxes  
Everyone has access to the same quality of care and treatment  
Private healthcare is unfair because only wealthy people can afford it  
The National Health Service in the UK provides free healthcare for every resident

## ***Private Healthcare: advantages***

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

## ***Alternative medicine: Positives***

People are increasingly using alternative medicines to treat illnesses.  
For example, acupuncture can be used to treat backache  
Herbal medicines can be used to treat allergies or viruses  
Many patients report positive experiences with these treatments  
Some traditional cures have been used for hundreds of years

### ***Alternative medicine: Negatives***

- Many alternative medicines have not been tested scientifically
- They may have no beneficial effect at all
- They may cause unknown side effects
- People should trust the opinions of qualified doctors
- An illness could get worse without treatment from a doctor

### ***Stress***

- Modern lifestyles are increasingly stressful
- People work long hours with strict deadlines
- Our busy lifestyles mean we have less time to relax
- Unemployment is a major cause of stress
- Children may be affected by their parents' relationship problems
- Tests and exams can also cause stress

### ***How to reduce stress***

- Stress can be reduced by taking regular exercise and eating a healthy diet
- It is also important to get sufficient sleep and make leisure time a priority
- People should work less overtime and take regular holidays
- Schools have started to employ psychologists
- They can offer emotional support to students
- They can help students to cope with exam stress

## **14. Housing and Architecture**

### ***State/council housing***

- In some countries the government provides state or council housing
- This helps people who cannot afford to buy their own house
- It can be argued that state housing creates dependence on the government
- People should be rely on the government to look after them
- People have no incentive to earn money and buy their own home
- Council properties are often made with cheap, poor-quality materials.

### ***Old Buildings***

- Historic buildings are part of a country's heritage

They should be protected  
Old buildings are often considered to be works of art  
They give character to cities and attract tourists  
They show us how people lived in the past  
We identify countries by architectural symbols like the pyramids in Egypt  
Governments should spend money on looking after historic buildings  
They need regular repairs and maintenance  
New buildings should be designed to complement them

### ***Modern/green buildings***

Modern buildings should be designed to be environmentally friendly  
They should use less energy and produce less waste  
Modern insulation can make houses more energy-efficient  
Solar and wind power can be used to generate electricity  
Rainwater and waste water can be recycled and used to flush toilets.  
Modern glass buildings take advantage of natural light

## **15. Language**

### ***English as an international language***

English is widely used around the world  
It is becoming a global second language  
It is the dominant language of technology, science and international business  
International business meetings are regularly held in English  
The most important textbooks and journals are published in English  
The ability to speak English is a necessary skill in the modern world

### ***Negative of English as an International Language***

If one language is dominant, other languages may disappear  
The dominant language brings its own culture  
American culture has become popular around the world  
Other cultures may be damaged  
As an alternative to English, a new global language could be invented  
It would have no nationality or culture attached to it  
This could help to promote international peace and understanding  
Esperanto is an example of a language that was invented with this aim

## **16. Money**

### ***Money and Society***

Society has become increasingly materialistic  
People aspire to earn more money  
They want a bigger house or a better car  
We connect wealth and material possessions with happiness and success  
Brands like “Armani” or “Mercedes” are status symbols  
Advertising creates new desires and needs  
It persuades us to buy the latest styles

### ***Positives of Consumerism***

Consumerism creates employment  
It helps to reduce poverty  
It encourages innovation and creativity in business  
We live in a global economy  
We have a better quality of life

### ***Negatives of Consumerism***

Consumerist societies create more waste  
They use more natural resources  
They cause damage to the environment  
Consumerism creates a “throw-away” culture  
Advertisers tell us who we are and what we want  
Wealth does not lead to happiness  
Materialism causes greed and crime  
We should return to traditional values like sharing

## **17. Personality**

### ***Happiness***

Happiness means different things to different people  
It can be described as a feeling of pleasure or enjoyment  
People enjoy spending time with family and friends

Hobbies, sports and games can be a source of fun and enjoyment  
Some people see money as a source of happiness  
Other people define happiness as something deeper  
In order to be truly happy it is necessary to live a good life  
We need to feel that we are doing something useful with our lives  
Some people get a sense of achievement from their work  
Others find happiness in bringing up their children  
Religion or a sense of purpose can also be a source of happiness

### ***Success***

People define success in different ways  
Some people get a sense of achievement from raising a family  
For others, success is defined by wealth or status  
We often think of rich and famous people as being successful in life  
Millionaires like Bill Gates are considered to be successful  
They have risen to the top in their chosen professions  
For some, being successful means achieving personal or professional goals  
They see success as the result of hard work  
Success in any field requires long-term planning and effort

### ***Nature or Nurture***

Some people believe that our personalities are determined mainly by genetics  
We inherit our abilities and talents from our parents  
Others think that our education and upbringing are more important  
We develop according to the influences around us  
Our personalities and achievements depend more on nurture than nature  
Many people argue that we control our own destinies  
We can shape our own personalities  
By working hard we can achieve and goal that we put our minds to  
Many successful people are “self-made”  
We are not limited by our genetic characteristic or upbringing

## **18. Sport and Leisure**

### ***Arguments against Professional/competitive sport***

Sport has become a business



Professional sport encourages people to compete for money  
Many sports stars are only concerned about money and fame  
Some athletes take drugs in order to win at any cost  
Competitors are often selfish and rude  
They are not good role models for children  
All sports should be amateur  
Sports should be leisure activities rather than jobs  
People should do sporting activities for enjoyment and health reasons  
Taking part is more important than winning

### ***Arguments for Professional sport***

Professional sports are the same as any other business  
Many people are employed in the sports industry  
People should be able to use their talents to earn a salary  
Sports stars entertain millions of people  
Money is necessary to improve facilities and train athletes  
The level of professional sport is much higher than that of amateur sport

### ***Arguments for Competitive sport***

Competition is a natural instinct in humans  
In daily life we compete to get jobs or the highest grades  
Sports are a safe form of competition  
Competition is healthy because it pushes us to give our best  
Competitors and fans can release energy and aggression  
Supporters of teams feel a sense of belonging to a community

### ***Opinion: professional sport salaries are too high***

Sports professionals earn too much money  
They do not provide a vital service  
Football players, for example, earn enormous salaries by simply kicking a ball  
We could all live happily without professional football  
Life would be difficult without doctors, engineers and other vital professionals.  
Society does not seem to value these professions as highly as professional sport  
Sports salaries should be compatible with the wages most people earn

### ***Opinion: professional sport salaries are fair***

It is fair that the best professional earn a lot of money  
Sport is a multi-million-pound industry  
There is a large audience of sports fans  
Sports on television attract many viewers  
Sports stars have dedicated hours of practice to developing their fitness and skills  
Only the most talented among them will reach the top  
A sports career many only last 10 years  
Sports fans are willing to pay to support their teams

### ***Sports and Politics***

Some people think that sport and politics should remain separate  
Governments are involved in the hosting of sporting events such as the Olympics.  
These events attract investment and create jobs.  
The Olympic Games are an advertisement for the host nation  
They attract huge numbers of visitors and sports fans  
Wealthy countries tend to hold these events  
Developing countries should be given the chance to become hosts

## **19. Television, Internet, Phones**

### ***Positives of television***

Watching television is a good way to relax  
It is many people's favorite way to wind down after a hard day at work  
Television programs can be entertaining and enjoyable  
Viewers have access to a huge variety of entertainment channels  
Television brings the best comedians, musicians and actors into our homes  
Programmers can also be informative and educational  
News coverage makes the public aware of events around the world  
Documentaries can make learning more interesting

### ***Negatives of Television***

Television is having a negative impact on society  
Some people link violence on television with crime rates in the real world

Children copy the behavior they see on the screen  
Children are less healthy because they spend less time palying  
Advertisers direct their marketing at children  
Most programs do not require much thought  
Watching TV is a waste of time

### ***Opinions about Television***

Television has many benefits  
However, it can be addictive  
Children should play outside rather than sit in front of a screen all day  
Behaviour shown on TV can influence people  
Parents should choose carefully what their children watch  
Children should not be exposed to violence, swearing or sexual images  
Advertising during children's programs should be strictly controlled  
TV companies should make more positive, educational programs

### ***Positives of the Internet***

There are many advantages to using the Internet  
It gives us instant access to information on almost any subject  
Shops and other services are now available online  
People can buy goods and services from the comfort of their homes  
The Internet is starting to replace other forms of entertainment  
It has revolutionized communication  
We can keep in touch by email or instant messenger services  
Video messaging is becoming common for business meetings

### ***Negatives of the internet***

Many websites contain offensive content  
Some sites show violent or sexual images  
Parents find it difficult to control what their children see online  
They do not always know who their children are chatting to  
With so many websites it is difficult to search for good information  
Criminals increasingly use the Internet to steal people's money

### ***Internet compared to newspaper and books***

Newspapers and books are now published online as well as in print  
We can read the news in any language from any country in the world  
It costs nothing to publish or access information on the Internet  
The Internet allows anybody to publish their own writing  
Newspaper articles and books are written by professionals  
Professionals produce better quality writing than amateur  
People still buy newspapers and books because they are portable  
People do not like reading from a screen

### ***Positives of Mobile Phones***

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

### ***Negatives of Mobile Phones***

Mobiles phones can be a problem in some public places  
Ringing phones cause disturbance in cinemas and school lessons  
Some people are not aware that others can hear their conversations  
Mobile phones may also interfere with electronic equipment  
Their waves could cause damage to our brains  
Mobile phones can also be a dangerous distraction  
Using a phone while driving reduces the driver's concentration  
Mobile phones are a popular target for thieves

### ***Opinion about Mobile Phones***

The benefits of mobile phones outweigh the drawbacks  
We need to use these phones with care

## **20. Tourism**

### ***Positives of Tourism***

Tourism is a popular leisure activity  
People go on holiday to relax and have fun  
Tourists can experience different cultures  
They can sunbathe on beaches or go sight-seeing  
Travelling abroad opens our minds  
We can learn to speak other languages  
The tourist trade is vital for some economies  
It creates employment in services like accommodation, transport and entertainment  
Some areas rely on tourism for their income  
Tourists spend money  
Tourism attracts investment from multi-national companies  
It helps to improve the standard of living  
Low-cost airlines are making it cheaper to travel abroad

### ***Negative effects of tourism***

Tourism can have a negative effect on the natural environment  
The building of facilities and infrastructure can destroy the habitat of wild animals  
Beautiful beaches are spoilt by the building of hotels  
Tourism creates pollution and waste  
It puts pressure on local resources  
Local traditional and cultures may be endangered  
A rise in the cost of living affects local people  
The price of goods, services and housing may increase significantly

### ***The future of tourism***

Government should introduce laws to protect natural environments and local cultures  
Tourism should have a low impact on wildlife  
Renewable resources like solar or water power should be used  
Waste should be recycled  
Local businesses such as farms should be supported

## **21. Traditional vs Modern**

### ***Losing traditional skills***

Because of industrialization and global trade, many traditions have disappeared  
Global advertising encourages everyone to buy the same products  
Most products are now made in factories  
Machinery has replaced skilled human labour  
Factory work is boring and leaves people feeling unfulfilled  
Goods are produced very quickly and in large numbers  
Products are cheaper, which means that more people can buy them

### ***Examples***

Clothes are mass produced in standard sizes  
People wear similar clothes, rather than traditional costumes  
Jeans and T-shirt are now worn throughout the world  
Historic buildings took skilled craftsmen years to build  
Modern concrete, steel and glass buildings are built in only weeks or months  
There are fewer people who can create hand-made goods

### ***Traditional customs***

Traditional customs are still important during weddings and religious festivals  
People wear traditional costumes and eat special foods  
It is important to maintain our different cultural identities  
We should celebrate festivals, teach traditional skills and protect historic places

## **22. Transport**

### ***Traffic problems***

Traffic congestion is caused by commuters travelling to work  
Most people live in the suburbs outside city centre  
Commuters tend to travel at the same time of day  
They tend to travel alone  
Cars and road space are not used efficiently  
This causes traffic jams during the rush hour

## ***Traffic solutions***

In order to reduce traffic we should change our working habits  
The internet can now be used to connect people  
More people could work from home  
Meetings can be held as video conferences  
Workers could be given flexible timetables  
Another solution would be to tax drivers  
Workers should share their cars and travel together  
In London, for example, there is a congestion charge  
This helps to raise money for better public transport  
Public transport needs to be reliable and efficient

## ***Positives of Public transport***

We need to reduce our dependence on cars  
Parking a car can be extremely difficult in big cities  
Well-designed transport systems are comfortable and convenient  
Modern public transport can be fast and cheap  
Public transport can help to reduce pollution in cities  
Investment in buses and trains will ease traffic congestion  
Buses can be given special lanes to avoid traffic

## ***Negatives of public transport***

Public transport is often slow and unreliable  
Metro systems and trains are often dirty and crowded  
People feel like “sardines in a can”  
Cars are much more comfortable

## ***Road safety***

Driving while tired or drunk is extremely dangerous  
Mobile phones can be a dangerous distraction for drivers  
They draw the driver's attention away from the road  
The use of phones while driving has been banned in many countries  
Punishments are becoming stricter  
Television campaigns are used to remind people to drive safely  
Speed cameras have become more common  
Speed bumps are another form of traffic calming

Many streets are designed with the aim of slowing traffic down

## **23. Water**

### ***Importance of clean water***

Water is as necessary natural resource  
Humans need access to clean, safe drinking water in order to live  
Poor water quality is a major cause of disease and death in some countries  
Water usually needs to be treated before we can drink it  
Developing countries often lack the means to treat and supply water to citizens  
Developed countries tend to have much better sanitation  
Citizens have access to clean tap water  
Drinking water is not contaminated by sewage or waste water  
The supply of clean water would improve public health in many developing countries

### ***Water supply***

Urban life would be impossible without water supply systems  
These systems are massive engineering projects  
Many professionals are involved in their planning, construction and maintenance  
The supply and distribution of water are major concerns  
Water is becoming scarce in some countries  
Areas that suffer droughts often need to import water  
As populations grow, there is more pressure on water supplies  
This could lead to a water crisis

### ***Water and politics***

The supply of water is also an important political issue  
Huge amount of water are needed for agriculture and industry  
The irrigation of crops accounts for a large proportions of water use  
A water crisis could lead to political conflicts or even wars

### ***Argument: water should be free***

Some people believe that water should be free for everyone  
Governments should supply water to all homes at no cost



Private companies should not be allowed to profit from this natural resource  
Money from taxes can be used to pay for water supply systems

***Argument: water should not be free***

If water is free, people take it for granted  
They do not think about how much water they waste  
They leave taps running while washing or brushing their teeth  
If we have to pay for water, we will use it more responsibly  
Water supply systems are extremely expensive  
Investment is needed to maintain and improve them  
Private companies may provide a better service than governments  
If they provide an efficient service, they will make more money  
They will repair leaks to avoid losing money

***Bottled Water: Opinions***

Some people carry bottles of water wherever they go  
For example, they take bottles of water to work or to the gym  
They believe that bottled water is healthier than tap water  
They also argue that it tastes better  
However, other people believe that we should consume less bottled water  
Plastic water bottles add to litter and waste problems  
Companies should not be able to make a profit from water  
It is unethical to make money by selling packaged water  
There is no difference in quality between bottled and tap water

## **24. Work**

***The benefits of staying in the same job for life***

Employees have a stable career with one employer  
They have a good pension and health insurance  
Their salaries gradually increase  
They may be promoted within the organization  
They demonstrate loyalty  
Experienced staff can be trusted with more responsibility  
They become part of a team  
There is a clearly defined path for development

### ***The benefits of not staying in the same job***

People often change jobs in order to further their career  
Another company may offer a promotion or a higher salary  
People who change jobs can gain experience  
They can learn different skills  
Changing jobs is interesting and challenging  
People can retrain in a different occupation  
In a fast-changing world workers need to be flexible  
People need to develop a range of experience and skills

### ***Self-employment***

Nowadays, it is easy to set up a company  
The Internet provides a global marketplace  
Self-employment offers greater freedom than working for a company  
However, there are risks to starting a new business  
Self-employed people may face financial difficulties  
Many businesses fail to make a profit  
There is less stability in self-employment  
There are no benefits like pensions, sick pay and holiday pay  
Self-employment involved hard work, long hours and total responsibility

### ***Unemployment***

Unemployment is a big problem for individuals, communities and society  
Some people are unable to find a job  
They may not have the sufficient level of education or qualifications  
They may find themselves homeless  
Unemployment causes frustration and stress  
Jobless people may become involved in crime as a means to get money  
The unemployed need careers advice  
Governments need to provide vocational courses and retraining

### ***Unemployment benefits: positives***

Some governments pay unemployment benefits in order to help jobless people  
Unemployed people need financial support until they find a new job

By claiming benefits they can continue to pay for their homes  
The benefits system helps to reduce poverty, homelessness and crime

### ***Unemployment benefits: negatives***

Some people claim benefits rather than working  
They become dependent on the government  
They are not motivated to find a job  
The benefits system is a burden on taxpayers  
All citizens should work to earn a living and support themselves  
Receiving benefits affects people's self esteem

### ***Work/Life Balance***

It is important to achieve a balance between work time and leisure or family time  
Too much work can result in stress and poor health  
“workaholics” may neglect their families and friends  
People need to take regular holidays  
Companies should be expect employees to work overtime  
Nowadays, many people work part-time or have flexible working hours  
Technology allow people to work from home  
Many companies provide childcare facilities  
A good work/ life balance can raise job satisfaction  
Happy, healthy workers are more productive

### ***Technology and work***

Internet, fax and mobile phone technologies have revolutionized working life  
Workers can communicate via email, online networks and video conferencing  
Technology can connect workers in different countries  
It gives people more freedom  
It can also save time and money  
Some people believe that offices could disappear in the future  
Virtual online offices may replace them

### ***Child labour***

In some countries, children are exploited  
They do repetitive jobs for very low pay

Children are often used in agriculture and factory work  
The employment of children is prohibited in other countries  
Many people think that children should be free to enjoy their childhood  
Governments should make education a priority  
They should build new schools  
They should supply the resources to educate children  
Children need to be given the knowledge and skills for adult life