

IELTS Academic Practice Test

Online Dating

Tutor & Writing Guide

Writing Task 1 (General Training): Model Answer & Analysis

The Task

You recently used a dating app and had a very positive experience meeting someone. Write an email to a friend who is single and thinking about trying online dating.

Model Answer (Band 9)

Hi Sarah,

Hope you're doing well. I'm writing because I have some exciting news and I thought of you. You know I've been single for a while and was getting a bit tired of not meeting anyone new. So, on a whim, I decided to download a dating app last month, mostly out of curiosity.

Well, you won't believe it, but I met someone really special! His name is Tom, and he's a graphic designer. He's incredibly kind, has a fantastic sense of humour, and we have so much in common, including our love for old movies and hiking. We had our first date last week and we talked for hours. It felt so natural and easy.

I know you’ve been thinking about trying it, and I honestly think you should. My advice would be to choose photos that really show your personality and to be honest in your profile. Also, just be patient and don’t take it too seriously at first. It’s a great way to meet people you wouldn’t normally cross paths with. Let me know if you decide to go for it!

Best,

[Your Name]

(Word count: 198)

Analysis

Criterion	Analysis
Task Achievement	The email fully addresses all three bullet points: the reason for trying the app, a description of the person met, and encouragement with advice.
Tone	The tone is informal and friendly, which is perfectly appropriate for an email to a friend. Uses contractions (“I’m,” “you’ve”) and casual expressions (“on a whim,” “you won’t believe it”).
Structure	The email is well-organized. Each paragraph has a clear purpose, making it easy to follow.
Vocabulary	Uses a good range of natural, idiomatic vocabulary (e.g., “on a whim,” “out of curiosity,” “cross paths with”).

Writing Task 2: Model Essay & Analysis

The Task

In today’s world, many people use dating apps to find a partner. Some people think this is a positive development, while others believe it has negative effects on relationships and society.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Model Essay (Band 9)

The proliferation of dating applications has fundamentally altered the way people search for romantic partners. While these platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for connection, they also attract significant criticism regarding their impact on relationships and society. This essay will discuss both the positive and negative aspects of this trend before concluding that, despite their flaws, dating apps are a largely positive development in modern society.

On the one hand, critics argue that online dating fosters a superficial and disposable approach to relationships. The ‘swipe’ mechanism, which is central to many apps, encourages users to make snap judgments based on a few photographs, reducing individuals to commodities in a digital marketplace. This can lead to the “paradox of choice,” where an abundance of options makes it harder to commit to one person, promoting a culture of transient and meaningless connections. Furthermore, issues such as ‘ghosting’—where individuals cease communication without explanation—can have a detrimental effect on users’ self-esteem and mental well-being.

On the other hand, dating apps provide significant benefits. Their primary advantage is efficiency and access. They offer a practical solution for individuals with busy careers or limited social circles to meet a wide range of people they would otherwise never encounter. Moreover, research has shown that online dating has contributed to a more integrated society. A study from Stanford University, for instance, found a dramatic increase in interracial marriages and relationships between people from different social backgrounds, a trend largely attributed to the rise of online dating platforms that break down traditional social and geographical barriers.

In my opinion, the advantages of online dating ultimately outweigh the disadvantages. While the problems of superficiality and rejection are real, they are not unique to online dating; similar challenges have always existed in the search for a partner. The key difference is that these platforms provide a level of access and opportunity that was previously unimaginable. They empower individuals to take control of their romantic lives and connect with a diverse pool of people. The solution to the negative aspects is not to reject the technology, but for users to approach it with mindfulness, honesty, and resilience.

In conclusion, while the concerns about the negative impacts of dating apps on society are valid, their role in creating connections and fostering a more diverse social fabric is

a powerful counter-argument. They are a tool, and like any tool, their effect depends on how they are used.

(Word count: 390)

Essay Structure Analysis

Paragraph	Purpose
Introduction	Paraphrases the question, acknowledges both sides, and states the writer's position.
Body Paragraph 1	Discusses the negative view of online dating (superficiality, paradox of choice, ghosting).
Body Paragraph 2	Discusses the positive view of online dating (efficiency, access, social integration).
Body Paragraph 3	Presents the writer's own opinion with supporting arguments.
Conclusion	Summarizes the main points and restates the writer's position.

Useful Linking Words and Phrases

Function	Examples
Introducing the first view	On the one hand, Some people argue that, Critics claim that
Introducing the second view	On the other hand, However, Conversely, In contrast
Adding information	Furthermore, Moreover, In addition, Additionally
Giving examples	For instance, For example, such as
Stating your opinion	In my opinion, I believe that, From my perspective
Concluding	In conclusion, To sum up, Ultimately

Speaking Section: Guidance for Tutors

Part 2: Cue Card - Key Points to Listen For

When assessing a student's response to the Part 2 cue card ("Describe a time you met someone for the first time"), look for the following:

Criterion	What to Listen For
Task Achievement	Did the student cover all four bullet points (who, where, what you talked about, first impression)?
Fluency	Did the student speak continuously for 1-2 minutes without long, unnatural pauses?
Coherence	Was the story logical and easy to follow? Did they use discourse markers (e.g., "First," "Then," "After that")?
Vocabulary	Did the student use a range of vocabulary related to people and impressions (e.g., "warm," "genuine," "approachable")?
Grammar	Did the student use a variety of tenses correctly, especially past tenses?

Part 3: Discussion - Suggested Follow-Up Questions

These questions can be used to extend the discussion and assess the student's ability to express and justify opinions on abstract topics.

- "Do you think people behave differently online than they do in real life? Why?"
- "What are the potential dangers of forming relationships with people you meet online?"
- "In the future, do you think most people will meet their partners online?"

END OF TUTOR & WRITING GUIDE