

IELTS WRITING TASK 2

First 123 Questions then Answeres

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1

Some people think that it is important to use leisure time for activities that improve the mind, such as reading and doing word puzzles.

Other people feel that it is important to rest the mind during leisure time.

- You should write at least 250 words.
- You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

2

We have been living in the nuclear age now for over half a century. Since the first atomic bombs were developed, nuclear technology has provided governments with the ability to totally destroy the planet. Yet the technology has been put to positive use as an energy source and in certain areas of medicine.

To what extent is nuclear technology a danger to life on Earth? What are the benefits and risks associated with its use?

3

People in all modern societies use drugs, but today's youth are experimenting with both legal and illegal drugs, and at an increasingly early age. Some sociologists claim that parents and other members of society often set a bad example.

Discuss the causes and some effects of widespread drug use by young people in modern day society. Make any recommendations you feel are necessary to help fight youth drug abuse.

4

The world is experiencing a dramatic increase in population. This is causing problems not only for poor, undeveloped countries, but also for industrialised and developing nations.

Describe some of the problems that overpopulation causes, and suggest at least one possible solution.

5

Studying the English language in an English-speaking country is the best but not the only way to learn language.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

6

"Although abuse of the system are inevitable, social welfare payments are essential to protect the rights citizens have to a guaranteed minimum income in a democratic society"

Discuss.

7

Disruptive school students have a negative influence on others.

Students who are noisy and disobedient should be grouped together and taught separately.

Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer.

8

Should parents be obliged to immunise their children against childhood diseases?
Or do individuals have the right to choose not to immunise their children?

9

Should parents be obliged to immunise their children against common Band 9
childhood diseases?

Or do individuals have the right to choose not to immunise their children?

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10

We are becoming increasingly dependent on computers. They are used in businesses, hospitals, crime detection and even to fly planes.

What things will they be used for in the future? Is this dependence on computers a good thing or should we be more sceptical of their benefits?

11

Smokers can cause themselves serious health problems. The choice to smoke is made freely and with knowledge of dangers.

Smokers should therefore expect to pay more for medical treatment than non-smokers.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

12

International entertainers, including sports personalities, often get paid millions of dollars in one year.

In your view, with widespread poverty in the world, are these huge earnings justified?

- *You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.*

13

Most writers of fiction do not earn enough money to live from their writing. Do you think the government should give them financial assistance to help encourage good literature?

- *You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.*

14

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

"Prevention is better than cure."

Out of a country's health budget, a large proportion should be diverted from treatment to spending on health education and preventative measures.

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

15

The position of women in society has changed markedly in the last twenty years. Many of the problems young people now experience, such as juvenile delinquency arise from the fact that many married women now work and are not at home to care for their children.

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

- *You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.*

16

People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, new experiences, career preparation, increased knowledge).

Why do you think people attend college or university?

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.

17

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Parents are the best teachers. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.

18

Nowadays food has become easier to prepare. Has this change improved the way people live?

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.

19

It has been said, "Not everything that is learned is contained in books."

Compare and contrast knowledge gained from experience with knowledge gained from books.

In your opinion, which source is more important? Why?

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience

20

As computers are being used more and more in education, there will be soon no role for teachers in the classroom.

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.

21

Popular events like the football World Cup and other international sporting occasions are essential in easing international tensions and releasing patriotic emotions in a safe way.

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.

22

In the past, buildings often reflected the culture of a society but today all modern buildings look alike and cities throughout the world are becoming more and more similar.

What do you think is the reason for this, and is it a good thing or a bad thing?

- *You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your argument with examples and relevant evidence.*

23

Going overseas for university study is an exciting prospect for many people. But while it may offer some advantages, it is probably better to stay home because of the difficulties a student inevitably encounters living and studying in a different culture.

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

Give reasons for your answer.

24

In some countries the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 50, while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70. Meanwhile, we see some politicians enjoying power well into their eighties. Clearly, there is little agreement on an appropriate retirement age.

Until what age do you think people should be encouraged to remain in paid employment?

Give reasons for your answer.

25

Many people believe that women make better parents than men and that this is why they have the greater role in raising children in most societies. Others claim that men are just as good as women at parenting.

Write an essay expressing your point of view.

26

'Telecommuting' refers to workers doing their jobs from home for part of each week and communicating with their office using computer technology.

Telecommuting is growing in many countries and is expected to be common for

most office workers in the coming decades.

How do you think society will be affected by the growth of telecommuting?

27

The rising levels of congestion and air pollution found in most of the world's cities can be attributed directly to the rapidly increasing number of private cars in use. In order to reverse this decline in the quality of life in cities, attempts must be made to encourage people to use their cars less and public transport more.

Discuss possible ways to encourage the use of public transport.

28

The mass media, including television, radio and newspapers, have great influence in shaping people's ideas.

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

Give reasons for your answer.

29

Some governments say how many children a family can have in their country. They may control the number of children someone has through taxes. It is sometimes necessary and right for a government to control the population in this way.

Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer.

30

Millions of people every year move to English-speaking countries such as Australia, Britain or America, in order to study at school, college or university.

Why do so many people want to study in English?

Why is English such an important international language?

Give reasons for your answer..

31

"Fatherhood ought to be emphasised as much as motherhood. The idea that women are solely responsible for deciding whether or not to have babies leads on to the idea that they are also responsible for bringing the children up."

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

32

Without capital punishment (the death penalty) our lives are less secure and crime of violence increase. Capital punishment is essential to control violence in society. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

33

Television has had a significant influence on the culture of many societies. To what extent would you say that television has positively or negatively affected the cultural development of your society?

34

Many people believe that television programs are of no value for children. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Provide reasons and examples to support your response.

35

News editors decide what to broadcast on television and what to print in newspapers.

What factors do you think influence these decisions?

Do we become used to bad news?

Would it be better if more good news was reported?

36

Some people believe that children's leisure activities must be educational, otherwise they are a complete waste of time.

Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your experience.

37

It has been more than 30 years since man first landed on the moon.

Some people think that space research is a waste of money.

Discuss.

38

It is generally acknowledged that families are now not as close as they used to be.

Give possible reasons and your recommendations.

39

Many people think that nowadays people are being subjected to more and more pressure in their work, and thus are having less and less time to relax.

What is your opinion?

40

It is often said that the subjects taught in schools are too academic in orientation and that it would be more useful for children to learn about practical matters such as home management, work and interpersonal skills.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

41

With the increasing popularity of computers and calculators, student literacy is decreasing dramatically. What are the positive and negative effects the progress of science and technology has brought about?

42

Learning a foreign language offers an insight into how people from other cultures think and see the world.

The teaching of a foreign language should be compulsory at all primary schools.

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

- You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples.

43

In many major cities of the world, you will find large public buildings, both new and old.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of such buildings.

How important is it for a country to construct impressive public buildings when houses are wanted is really required?

- You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples.

44

In the past, buildings often reflected the culture of a society but today all modern buildings look alike and cities throughout the world are becoming more and more similar.

What do you think is the reason for this, and is it a good think or a bad think?

- You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples.

45

Write about the following topic:

Should animals be used in testing new drugs and procedures?

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

46

Action movies with spectacular car chases are very popular with young people. It is often said that these sorts of movies lead to an increase in car accidents among young drivers as they try to copy what they have seen in the films.

Do you agree that such movies increase the amount of bad driving? What can be done to encourage young people to drive more safely?

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

47

In Britain, when someone gets old they often go to live in a home with other old peopleswheresthere are nurses to look after them. Sometimes the government has to pay for this care.

Who should be responsible for our old people?

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

48

The earth is being filled with waste material such as plastic bags and other rubbish. Is this really happening? What are some solutions to this problem?

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

49

Children who are brought up in the family that do not have a lot of money are better prepared to deal with problems when they become adults than children who are brought up by wealthy parent.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

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

50

Some people think high school graduates should travel or work for a period of time instead of going directly to study at university. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches.

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

51

Some people insist that senior workers 65 or over should retire but others believe that they should continue working. What is you opinion?

52

In many countries, sports and exercise classes are replaced with the academic subjects. Discuss the effects of this trend.

53

Children's lives these days are quite different from our generation's. Describe what are the biggest changes in younger generation and explain some factors of this phenomenon.

54

With the pressures on today's young people to succeed academically, some people believe that non-academic subjects at school (eg: physical education and cookery) should be removed from the syllabus so that children can concentrate wholly on academic subjects.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

55

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

A lot of people believe that the amount of violence shown on TV and in the cinema affects the actions of our young people and therefore increases the amount of violence in our society today.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What can be done to reduce violence in our society today?

56

Every day traffic seems to get worse on our roads. How can we reduce the number of cars on our roads today? What alternatives can we offer car drivers?

57

The wealth gap between 1st world countries and 3rd world countries seems to be increasing. How can we reduce this gap? Do you think that developed countries have a duty to assist developing countries in every way?

58

Trade and travel would be a lot easier with a single, global currency that we all use.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Would a single currency cause any problems?

59

All education, primary, secondary and further education, should be free to all people and paid for by the government.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

60

The 21st century has begun. What changes do you think this new century will bring?

Use examples and details in your answer.

61

Some people prefer to plan activities for their free time very carefully. Others choose not to make any plans at all for their free time. Compare the benefits of planning free-time activities with the benefits of not making plans.

Which do you prefer - planning or not planning for your leisure time?

Use specific reasons and examples to explain your choice.

62

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Advertising can tell you a lot about a country.

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

63

Some people say that advertising encourages us to buy things we really do not need. Others say that advertisements tell us about new products that may improve our lives. Which viewpoint do you agree with?

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

64

Some people like to do only what they already do well.

Other people prefer to try new things and take risks. Which do you prefer?

Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

65

Some people believe that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends. Other people believe that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. Compare the advantages of these two different ways of learning about life. Which do you think is preferable?

Use specific examples to support your preference.

66

Some people think that human needs for farmland, housing, and industry are more important than saving land for endangered animals. Do you agree or disagree with this point of view? Why or why not?

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

67

Many parts of the world are losing important natural resources, such as forests, animals, or clean water.

Choose one resource that is disappearing and explain why it needs to be saved.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

68

It has been said, "Not everything that is learned is contained in books." Compare and contrast knowledge gained from experience with knowledge gained from books.

In your opinion, which source is more important? Why?

69

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People should read only those books that are about real events, real people, and established facts.
Use specific reasons and details to support your opinion.

70

It has recently been announced that a new movie theater may be built in your neighborhood.

Do you support or oppose this plan? Why?

Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

71

A company has announced that it wishes to build a large factory near your community.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this new influence on your community.

Do you support or oppose the factory? Explain your position.

72

The government has announced that it plans to build a new university.

Some people think that your community would be a good place to locate the university.

Compare the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a new university in your community.

Use specific details in your discussion.

73

Should a city try to preserve its old, historic buildings or destroy them and replace them with modern buildings?

Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

74

Businesses should hire employees for their entire lives.

Do you agree or disagree?

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

75

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Businesses should do anything they can to make a profit.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

76

Some people enjoy change, and they look forward to new experiences.
Others like their lives to stay the same, and they do not change their usual habits.
Compare these two approaches to life. Which approach do you prefer? Explain why.

77

What are some important qualities of a good supervisor (boss)?
Use specific details and examples to explain why these qualities are important.

78

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Children should be required to help with household tasks as soon as they are able to do so.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

79

It is better for children to grow up in the countryside than in a big city.
Do you agree or disagree?
Use specific reasons and examples to develop your essay.

80

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Parents or other adult relatives should make important decisions for their (15 to 18 year-old) teenage children.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

81

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Children should begin learning a foreign language as soon as they start school.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

82

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Watching television is bad for children.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

83

Some people think that children should begin their formal education at a very early age and should spend most of their time on school studies.
Others believe that young children should spend most of their time playing.
Compare these two views. Which view do you agree with? Why?

84

A person you know is planning to move to your town or city. What do you think this person would like and dislike about living in your town or city?
Why? Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

85

It is better for children to grow up in the countryside than in a big city.
Do you agree or disagree?
Use specific reasons and examples to develop your essay.

86

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Classmates are a more important influence than parents on a child's success in school.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

87

We all work or will work in our jobs with many different kinds of people.
In your opinion, what are some important characteristics of a co-worker (someone

you work closely with)?

Use reasons and specific examples to explain why these characteristics are important.

88

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Television has destroyed communication among friends and family.

Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

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

89

You have decided to give several hours of your time each month to improve the community where you live.

What is one thing you will do to improve your community? Why?

Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

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

90

Some people prefer to work for a large company.

Others prefer to work for a small company. Which would you prefer?

Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

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

91

When people need to complain about a product or poor service, some prefer to complain in writing and others prefer to complain in person.

Which way do you prefer?

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

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

92

Some people say that computers have made life easier and more convenient. Other people say that computers have made life more complex and stressful. What is your opinion? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

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

93

It is generally agreed that society benefits from the work of its members. Compare the contributions of artists to society with the contributions of scientists to society. Which type of contribution do you think is valued more by your society? Give specific reasons to support your answer.

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

94

You have the opportunity to visit a foreign country for two weeks. Which country would you like to visit? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

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

95

A foreign visitor has only one day to spend in your country. Where should this visitor go on that day? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

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

96

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Modern technology is creating a single world culture.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

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

97

When people move to another country, some of them decide to follow the customs of the new country.

Others prefer to keep their own customs. Compare these two choices.

Which one do you prefer? Support your answer with specific details.

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

98

Describe a custom from your country that you would like people from other countries to adopt.

Explain your choice, using specific reasons and examples.

99

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

A person should never make an important decision alone.

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

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

100

What discovery in the last 100 years has been most beneficial for people in your country?

Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

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

101

Some people prefer to eat at food stands or restaurants.

Other people prefer to prepare and eat food at home.

Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

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

102

Some people believe that a college or university education should be available to all students.

Others believe that higher education should be available only to good students.

Discuss these views. Which view do you agree with? Explain why.

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

103

The costs of medical health care are increasing all the time. Governments are finding it difficult to balance the health care budget.

Should citizens be totally responsible for their own health costs and take out private health insurance, or is it better to have a comprehensive health care system which provides free health services for all? Discuss.

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

104

Some people think that universities should not provide so much theoretical knowledge but give more practical training throughout their courses.

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

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

105

It is widely believed that children of different levels of intelligence should be taught together, while others think that more intelligent children should be taught separately.

Discuss and present your own opinion.

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

106

job for the same company, whereas others prefer to change jobs frequently. Write about the advantages and disadvantages of each viewpoint?

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

107

Nowadays, international tourism is the biggest industry in the world. Unfortunately, international tourism creates tension rather than understanding between people from different cultures.

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

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

108

Nowadays, education overseas has become more accessible and growing numbers of people send their offspring to study in other countries. However, this trend has its detractors.

I strongly believe that the pros far outweigh the cons, and will examine both below

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

109

Fashion trends are difficult to follow these days and it's widely believed that they primarily exist just to sell clothes. Some people believe that we shouldn't follow them and that we should dress in what we like and feel comfortable in.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?.

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

110

Some people think that it is important to have a single language as an international official language. Others think that it will make it difficult to identify countries and cause a loss of culture.

What are your opinions on this?

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

111

Some people say the government should not put money into building theatres and sports stadiums; they should spend more money on medical care and education.

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

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

112

Companies should encourage employees who work in a high position to leave at the age of 55 in order to give opportunities to the new generation.

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

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

113

Traffic and housing problems in major cities could be solved by moving large companies and factories and their employees to the countryside.

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

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

114

As the world becomes technologically advanced, computers are replacing more and more jobs.

Describe some job positions that may be lost because of computers, and discuss at least one problem that may result.

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

115

Families who do not send their children to government-financed schools should not be required to pay taxes that support universal education.

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

116

Families who do not send their children to government-financed schools should not be required to pay taxes that support universal education.

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

117

Some people think that a sense of competition in children should be encouraged. Others believe that children who are taught to co-operate rather than compete become more useful adults.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

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

This is an answer written by a candidate who achieved a Band 6 score. Here is the examiner's comment:

118

By punishing murderers with the death penalty, society is also guilty of committing murder. Therefore, life in prison is a better punishment for murderers.

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

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

119

By punishing murderers with the death penalty, society is also guilty of committing murder. Therefore, life in prison is a better punishment for murderers.

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

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

120

In some countries young people are encouraged to work or travel for a year between finishing high school and starting university studies.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages for young people who decide to do this.

121

Research indicates that the characteristics we are born with have much more influence on our personality and development than any experiences we may have in our life.

Which do you consider to be the major influence?

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

122

Children should never be educated at home by their parents. Do you agree or disagree?

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages for young people who decide to do this.

123

Scientists and the news media are presenting ever more evidence of climate change. Governments cannot be expected to solve this problem. It is the responsibility of individuals to change their lifestyle to prevent further damage.

What are your views?

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

IELTS WRITING TASK 2

1

Some people think that it is important to use leisure time for activities that improve the mind, such as reading and doing word puzzles. Other people feel that it is important to rest the mind during leisure time.

- You should write at least 250 words.
- You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

model answer:

It is generally accepted that we all need leisure time to recover from the stresses of work and everyday life.

Personally, I prefer to be active during this time, as I think this suits me better. However, what we do with our leisure time is up to us and no one can say that any particular activity is the best.

Some people relax by watching movies, reading or surfing the internet. People who have physically demanding jobs may choose these types of activities. If you are a nurse or builder, you may feel that you don't want to do a five-kilometre run after work, because you are already physically tired.

Other people do very sedentary jobs. Computer analysts, for example, may spend all day sitting in front of a computer screen. At the end of the working day, they may be keen to stretch their limbs and improve their health by swimming or going to the gym.

Another factor that influences our choice of leisure pursuit is where we work. People who work indoors often prefer outdoor hobbies, whereas for people who work outdoors, the reverse may be true. I am a student myself and this involves a lot of sitting in lectures, so I need to get out into the fresh air afterwards.

In any situation, the important thing is that people need to stay healthy by choosing what is best for them. The only wrong way to spend free time, in my view, is to have a sedentary job and then go home and watch television.

2

We have been living in the nuclear age now for over half a century. Since the first atomic bombs were developed, nuclear technology has provided governments with the ability to totally destroy the planet. Yet the technology has been put to positive use as an energy source and in certain areas of medicine.

To what extent is nuclear technology a danger to life on Earth? What are the benefits and risks associated with its use?

These days, many people are afraid of nuclear technology because of the dangers associated with its use. In my opinion, although it is true that nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to life, the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes also carries some serious risks.

Nuclear power stations provide an important source of cheap power for many industrialised nations and some developing countries. However, there is always the danger of radiation leaking from these plants. Even though safety precautions are taken, there have been numerous disasters such as the explosion of a nuclear plant in Russia not long ago.

Nuclear technology is even used to help cure some diseases such as cancer. Radiation can be applied to the body to burn away cancerous cells. This is, however, a dangerous procedure, and the application of radiation is almost always painful and not always successful.

The most worrying aspect of nuclear technology, though, is its use for military purposes. Enough atomic bombs have already been built to completely destroy the planet, and the real danger is that one day some country will start a war with these weapons. Too many countries now have the technology required to make such bombs, and there is currently much debate about how to control the situation.

In conclusion, nuclear technology certainly has positive uses, but is, nonetheless, dangerous. However, it would have been better if it had never been used to create nuclear weapons. If life on Earth is to continue.

3

People in all modern societies use drugs, but today's youth are experimenting with both legal and illegal drugs, and at an increasingly early age. Some sociologists claim that parents and other members of society often set a bad example.

Discuss the causes and some effects of widespread drug use by young people in modern day society. Make any recommendations you feel are necessary to help fight youth drug abuse.

Youth drug abuse is a serious problem nowadays in many cultures. Not only is illegal drug use on the rise, but children as young as 10 years old are experimenting with alcohol and tobacco. The reasons for this behaviour are unclear, but certain sociologists blame the examples set by their elders.

Parents who drink and smoke to excess are, in effect, telling their children that it is acceptable to abuse their bodies with drugs. Consequently, children may have a similar view towards illegal drugs, even if their parents are against their use. In

addition, drug use shown on television and in films can only confuse children who are also taught at school that drug abuse is wrong.

The pressure on young people to perform well at school in order to compete for jobs is a possible cause of the problem. Many believe they cannot live up to their parents' expectations, and feel a sense of hopelessness. Also, the widespread availability of drugs means teenagers are faced with the temptation to experiment. Drugs are used as a means of expressing dissatisfaction with the pressures they face in society.

The effects of drug abuse are well known. Many young people's talents are wasted and addiction to hard drugs can cost a user his or her life. Furthermore, those who drink and drive may be involved in fatal road accidents. The cost to society is great and enormous amounts of money are spent on convicting drug dealers and on education programmes.

To conclude, I recommend that the only sensible way to solve this problem is to educate young people about the dangers of drug use, and to take steps to reduce the pressure of competition placed upon them.

4

The world is experiencing a dramatic increase in population. This is causing problems not only for poor, undeveloped countries, but also for industrialised and developing nations.

Describe some of the problems that overpopulation causes, and suggest at least one possible solution.

In most countries of the world the population is increasing alarmingly. This is especially true in poor, undeveloped countries. Overpopulation causes a considerable number of problems.

In poor countries it is difficult to provide enough food to feed even the present number of people. In addition, education to limit the number of children per family is not always successful. Poorer countries usually have a lot of unemployment too, and an increase in population simply makes the situation worse. The environment also suffers when there are too many people living on the land.

In rich, industrialised and developing countries it is very difficult for governments to provide effective public services in overcrowded cities. Moreover, there is usually a great deal more crime, which is often due to high rates of unemployment. Furthermore, large increases in population only cause more overcrowding, unemployment and crime.

There are two main solutions to the overpopulation problem. Firstly, every woman who is pregnant, but who does not want to give birth, should be allowed by law to have an abortion. Secondly, governments must educate people to limit the size of

the family. In China, couples are penalised financially if they have more than one child. This may seem cruel, but the "one-child policy" is beginning to have an effect in the world's most populous nation. Eventually, similar policies might also be necessary in other crowded nations such as India, for example.

To sum up, if the population explosion continues, many more people will die of starvation in poor countries, and life in the cities, even in affluent nations, will become increasingly difficult.

5

Studying the English language in an English-speaking country is the best but not the only way to learn language.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Studying a language in a country where it is widely spoken has many advantages. It is, therefore, a good idea to study English in a country such as Britain. However, I believe it is not the only way to learn the language.

In the first place, most students in non-English-speaking countries learn English at secondary school, and sometimes at university nowadays. Although their spoken English is not usually of a very high standard, their knowledge of grammar is often quite advanced. This is certainly useful when students come to an English-speaking country to perfect the language.

Secondly, studying the basics of English at secondary school is less stressful than learning the language while overseas. This is because students living at home do not have to worry about problems such as finding accommodation, paying for their study and living costs, and trying to survive in a foreign country where day to day living causes much stress.

However, there are obvious advantages of learning English in Britain. Every day there are opportunities to practise listening to and speaking with British people. Also, students can experience the culture firsthand, which is a great help when trying to understand the language. This is especially true if they choose to live with a British family, as exchange students for example. Furthermore, if students attend a language school full-time, the teachers will be native speakers. In this case, not only will students' speaking and listening skills improve, but attention can be given to developing reading and writing skills as well.

In general, even though it is preferable to study English in an English-speaking country, a reasonable level of English can be achieved in one's own country, if a student is gifted and dedicated to study.

"Although abuse of the system are inevitable, social welfare payments are essential to protect the rights citizens have to a guaranteed minimum income in democratic society"

Discuss.

Social welfare is an essential element of an advanced society. Good systems are always abused, but that does not mean they are faulty. In my opinion, the two main reasons why welfare payments are necessary are as follows:

First of all, critics forget that there are many forms of welfare besides payments to the unemployed. Their negative opinions harm those who are not capable of earning a wage, such as single-parent mothers, the disabled, and the sick. Moreover, the unemployed have the right to an income, too. They are not always at fault for not having a job, and in most cases the tax they have paid in the past entitles them to assistance.

The second reason is that crime increases when people have no means of support. The desperately poor inevitably turn to crime, which is not only dangerous but costly. Policing the streets is more expensive than providing welfare. A policeman's wage is four or five times higher than a "dole" payment.

Certain members of society believe that people should look after themselves. They point out that welfare increases dependency on others and destroys dignity. This may be true, but in the case of the unemployed, the relief payments are usually temporary. It is surely the fault of the government if there are long-term unemployed. Welfare critics also believe that it is the responsibility of a victim's family to provide financial assistance. However, it is too expensive to provide complete help for a severely disabled person.

To conclude, it is vital to understand the need for welfare in a modern democratic society. Without welfare payments the poor are destined to become poorer. The first duty of a government is to provide a financial safety net for all disadvantaged persons, and that includes those without work.

**Disruptive school students have a negative influence on others.
Students who are noisy and disobedient should be grouped together and taught separately.**

Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer.

There is no doubt that some students in schools behave badly and their behaviour causes difficulty for others either because it has a negative effect on the group or

because ordinary students find it difficult to study with them.

One solution is to take these students away and teach them on their own. However, if we simply have them removed after one or two warnings, we are limiting their educational opportunities because it seems to me that a school which caters for difficult students is a sort of "prison" whatever name you give it and the people who go there may never recover from the experience. This can then cause problems for the wider society.

Perhaps we need to look at why the disruptive students behave badly before we separate them. Disruptive students may be very intelligent and find the classes boring because the work is too easy. Perhaps these students need extra lessons rather than separate lessons. Or perhaps the teachers are uninspiring and this results in behavioural problems so we need better teachers. On the other hand, most students put up with this situation rather than cause trouble, and some people argue that we have to learn to suffer bad teachers and boring situations and that students who can't learn this lesson need to be taught separately.

So before we condemn the students to a special school, we should look at factors such as the teaching, because once the children have been separated, it is very unlikely that they will be brought back.

8

Should parents be obliged to immunise their children against childhood diseases?

Or do individuals have the right to choose not to immunise their children?

Some people argue that the state does not have the right to make parents immunise their children. However, I feel the question is not whether they should immunise but whether, as members of society, they have the right not to.

Preventative medicine has proved to be the most effective way of reducing the incidence of fatal childhood diseases. As a result of the widespread practice of immunising young children in our society, many lives have been saved and the diseases have been reduced to almost zero.

In previous centuries children died from ordinary illnesses such as influenza and tuberculosis and because few people had immunity, the diseases spread easily. Diseases such as dysentery were the result of poor hygiene but these have long been eradicated since the arrival of good sanitation and clean water. Nobody would suggest that we should reverse this good practice now because dysentery has been wiped out.

Serious diseases such as polio and smallpox have also been eradicated through national immunisation programmes. In consequence, children not immunised are far less at risk in this disease-free society than they would otherwise be. Parents choosing not to immunise are relying on the fact that the diseases have already been eradicated. If the number of parents choosing not to immunise increased, there would be a similar increase in the risk of the diseases returning.

Immunisation is not an issue like seatbelts which affects only the individual. A decision not to immunise will have widespread repercussions for the whole of society and for this reason, I do not believe that individuals have the right to stand aside. In my opinion immunisation should be obligatory.

9

Should parents be obliged to immunise their children against common childhood diseases?

Or do individuals have the right to choose not to immunise their children?

The issue of whether we should force parents to immunise their children against common diseases is, in my opinion, a social rather than a medical question. Since we are free to choose what we expose our bodies to in the way of food, drink, or religion for that matter, why should the question of medical 'treatment' be any different?

Medical researchers and governments are primarily interested in overall statistics and trends and in money-saving schemes which fail to take into consideration the individual's concerns and rights. While immunisation against diseases such as tetanus and whooping cough may be effective, little information is released about the harmful effects of vaccinations which can sometimes result in stunted growth or even death.

The body is designed to resist disease and to create its own natural immunity through contact with that disease. So when children are given artificial immunity, we create a vulnerable society which is entirely dependent on immunisation. In the event that mass immunisation programmes were to cease, the society as a whole would be more at risk than ever before.

In addition there is the issue of the rights of the individual. As members of a society why should we be obliged to subject our children to this potentially harmful practice? Some people may also be against immunisation on religious grounds and their needs must also be considered.

For these reasons I feel strongly that immunisation programmes should not be

obligatory and that the individual should have the right to choose whether or not to participate.

10

**We are becoming increasingly dependent on computers. They are used in businesses, hospitals, crime detection and even to fly planes.
What things will they be used for in the future? Is this dependence on computers a good thing or should we be more suspicious of their benefits?**

Computers are a relatively new invention. The first computers were built fifty years ago and it is only in the last thirty or so years that their influence has affected our everyday life. Personal computers were introduced as recently as the early eighties. In this short time they have made a tremendous impact on our lives. We are now so dependent on computers that it is hard to imagine what things would be like today without them. You have only got to go into a bank when their main computer is broken to appreciate the chaos that would occur if computers were suddenly removed world-wide.

In the future computers will be used to create bigger and even more sophisticated computers. The prospects for this are quite alarming. They will be so complex that no individual could hope to understand how they work. They will bring a lot of benefits but they will also increase the potential for unimaginable chaos. They will, for example, be able to fly planes and they will be able to co ordinate the movements of several planes in the vicinity of an airport. Providing all the computers are working correctly nothing can go wrong. If one small program fails disaster.

There is a certain inevitability that technology will progress and become increasingly complex. We should, however, ensure that we are still in a position where we are able to control technology. It will be all too easy to suddenly discover that technology is controlling us. By then it might be too late I believe that it is very important to be suspicious of the benefits that computers will bring and to make sure that we never become totally dependent on a completely technological world.

11

**Smokers can cause themselves serious health problems. The choice to smoke is made freely and with knowledge of dangers.
Smokers should therefore expect to pay more for medical treatment than non-smokers.**

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Everyone has the choice of being a smoker or not. The people who choose to smoke do so knowing there is a risk of causing harmful damage to themselves. However, I do not entirely agree that these people should have to pay more to receive all the medical treatment they need.

I think there are many situations in which a medical problem has nothing to do with whether a person smokes or not. In these cases, where an illness has no relation to smoking, then I believe that smokers should not be required to pay more than other people for their medical treatment. Most car accidents, for example, have no connection with smoking, and the people who are injured ought to have the same medical help, regardless of the cost. And what about the common flu - it does not seem justifiable to me that a smoker should have to pay more to see a doctor for an illness we can all contract.

On the other hand, I agree that a smoker should pay more than a non-smoker for the necessary treatment of any condition which has been caused by smoking. The principle that people should take responsibility for their own actions is a good one. Consequently, if a person chooses to smoke knowing that this habit can cause serious health problems, then there is no reason why the community or an insurance company should have to pay for medical treatment for an illness which could have been avoided.

In many countries, cigarette packets have a clear warning that smoking can cause health problems and so no smoker can claim not to know the danger. Lung cancer sometimes a fatal disease and the treatment is both lengthy and expensive, and it is unfair for the smoker to expect the hospital or the community to carry the cost. In fact, it could also be argued that those who smoke in public should be asked to pay extra because of the illness caused to passive smokers.

In conclusion, I feel that smokers should pay more in cases related to smoking, but for any other illness they should pay the same as anyone else.

12

International entertainers, including sports personalities, often get paid millions of dollars in one year.

In your view, with widespread poverty in the world, are these huge earnings justified?

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.***

The salaries of many singers, dancers and sports people have increased out of all proportion in recent years, while in places like Sudan people are starving to death. I do not believe that anyone should be able to earn such enormous salaries when so many people in the world are living in poverty.

One of the factors which should affect what a person can earn ought to be the benefit of person's work to society. It is unreasonable for a famous singer to be able to earn far more from an evening's entertainment than, for instance, a medical scientist who develops a new drug which produces a treatment for a common disease. The pop star certainly has a value in society, but the value in no way exceeds, or even matches, the value gained from a successful medication.

Secondly. work done should be paid according to the amount of effort and skill that goes into it. Nobody would deny that a famous person works hard and is skillful, yet such people do not work any harder than thousand of other workers who have no claim to fame. Yet market force are such that these superstars can obtain millions of dollars while other unknown people sometimes earn less than they need to survive.

Finally, it should be possible for governments to work together to ensure that the amount of money in circulation should be more equally and fairly distributed. This seems only fair given that there are so many suffering.

To conclude, it is clear that world poverty is a serious problem and yet the problem could be eased if governments and companies gave more thought to paying salaries on a more equitable basis and if they started to contribute more money to those in need.

13

**Most writers of fiction do not earn enough money to live from their writing.
Do you think the government should give them financial assistance to help encourage good literature?**

- *You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.*

There are some conditions under which a novelist could reasonably expect some government support. In general terms, if the writer has already proved that he or she can write well, and if the stories produced are stimulating and interesting, then I consider that some financial help might be given.

Language quality is difficult to define, but if the writing shows, for example, good grammar, a wide vocabulary, and elegance and imagination, then I can see a valid reason for assisting an author to spend some time free from money problems. Such a writing needs to be encouraged. the entertainment value of a book would be also a factor in deciding whether to provide assistance to an author. Further consideration would include social and educational values expressed in the author's work.

However, if the ideas were socially irresponsible, or if the stories contain unnecessary violence or pornography for its own sake, then I would not want to see the author sponsored to write stories which do not benefit society. Other exceptions

are the many writers of good books who do not require financial help. Books which proved to be extremely popular, such as the Harry Potter stories, clearly need no subsidy at all because the authors have become rich through their writing.

Views on what good quality writing means will vary widely, and so if any author is to be given money for writing, then the decision would have to be made by a committee or panel of judge. An individual opinion would certainly cause disagreement among the reading public.

14

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

"Prevention is better than cure."

Out of a country's health budget, a large proportion should be diverted from treatment to spending on health education and preventative measures.

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

Of course it goes without saying that prevention is better than cure. That is why, in recent years, there has been a growing body of opinion in favour of putting more resources into health education and preventive measures. The argument is that ignorance of, for example, basic hygiene or the dangers of an unhealthy diet or lifestyle needs to be combatted by special nationwide publicity campaigns, as well as longer-term health education.

Obviously, there is a strong human argument for catching any medical condition as early as possible. There is also an economic argument for doing so. Statistics demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of treating a condition in the early stages, rather than delaying until more expensive and prolonged treatment is necessary. Then there are social or economic costs, perhaps in terms of loss of earnings for the family concerned or unemployed benefit paid by the state.

So far so good, but the difficulties start when we try to define what the 'proportion of the budget should be, particularly if the funds will be 'diverted from treatment'. Decisions on exactly how much of the total health budget should be spent in this way are not a matter for the non-specialist, but should be made on the basis of an accepted health service model.

This is the point at which real problems occur - the formulation of the model. How do we accurately measure which health education campaigns are effective in both medical and financial terms? How do we agree about the medical efficacy of various screening programmes, for example, when the medical establishment itself does not agree? A very rigorous process of evaluation is called for, so that we can make informed decisions.

The position of women in society has changed markedly in the last twenty years. Many of the problems young people now experience, such as juvenile delinquency, arise from the fact that many married women now work and are not at home to care for their children.

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

- *You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.*

It is certainly true that the position of women in society has undergone a dramatic change in the past twenty years but I do not feel that this is a direct cause of the indisputable increase in juvenile-related problems during this period.

It is now accepted that young women should find work on leaving school; indeed to rely totally on their parents' financial support is no longer an option in many families. Likewise, once they get married, the majority of women continue working since the financial pressures of setting up a house and establishing a reasonable standard of living often require two incomes.

Twenty years ago it was common for women to give up work once they had children and devote their time to caring for their children. This is no longer the general rule and the provision of professionally-run child care facilities and day nurseries have removed much of the responsibility for child rearing that used to fall to mothers. However, these facilities come at a cost and often require two salaries coming into a family to be afforded.

I do not believe that the increase in the number of working mothers has resulted in children being brought up less well than previously. Indeed it could be argued that by giving mothers the opportunity to work and earn extra money children can be better provided for than previously. There is more money for luxuries and holidays and a more secure family life is possible. Of course there are limits as to the amount of time that ideally should be spent away from home and the ideal scenario would be for one of the parents (often the wife) to have a part-time job and thus be available for their children before and after school. It is important to establish the correct balance between family life and working life.

People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, new experiences, career preparation, increased knowledge).

Why do you think people attend college or university?

- *You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.*

People attend college for a lot of different reasons. I believe that the three most common reasons are to prepare for a career, to have new experiences, and to

increase their knowledge of themselves and of the world around them.

Career preparation is probably the primary reason that people attend college. These days, the job market is very competitive. Careers such as information technology will need many new workers in the near future. At college, students can learn new skills for these careers and increase their opportunities for the future.

Students also go to college to have new experiences. For many, it is their first time away from home. At college, they can meet new people from many different places. They can see what life is like in a different city. They can learn to live on their own and take care of themselves without having their family always nearby.

At college, students have the opportunity to increase their knowledge. As they decide what they want to study, pursue their studies, and interact with their classmates, they learn a lot about themselves. They also, of course, have the opportunity to learn about many subjects in their classes. In addition to the skills and knowledge related to their career, college students also have the chance to take classes in other areas. For many, this will be their last chance to study different subjects.

Colleges offer much more than career preparation. They offer the opportunity to have new experiences and to learn many kinds of things. I think all of these are reasons why people attend college.

17

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Parents are the best teachers. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.**

Parents shape their children from the beginning of their children's lives. They teach their children values. They share their interests with them. They develop close emotional ties with them. Parents can be very important teachers in their children's lives; however, they are not always the best teachers.

Parents may be too close to their children emotionally. For example, they may limit a child's freedom in the name of safety. A teacher may organize an educational trip to a big city, but a parent may think this trip is too dangerous. A school may want to take the children camping, but a parent may be afraid of the child getting hurt.

Another problem is that parents sometimes expect their children's interests to be

similar to their own. If the parents love science, they may try to force their child to love science too. But what if the child prefers art? If the parents enjoy sports, they may expect their child to participate on different teams. But what if the child prefers to read?

Parents want to pass on their values to their children. However, things change. The children of today are growing up in a world different from their parents' world. Sometimes parents, especially older ones, can't keep up with rapid social or technological changes. A student who has friends of different races at school may find that his parents have narrower views. A student who loves computers may find that her parents don't understand or value the digital revolution.

Parents are important teachers in our lives, but they aren't always the best teachers. Fortunately, we have many teachers in our lives. Our parents teach us, our teachers teach us, and we learn from our peers. Books and newspapers also teach us. All of them are valuable.

18

Nowadays food has become easier to prepare. Has this change improved the way people live?

- **You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.**

Food is a basic part of life, so it follows that improved methods of food preparation have made our lives better. Nowadays we can prepare meals much faster than we could in the past. We can also enjoy a greater variety of food and eat more healthfully, all because of modern methods of food preparation.

Microwave ovens have made it possible to prepare delicious food quickly. People these days rarely have time to shop and prepare meals the old-fashioned way. We live very fast lives. We are busy working, caring for our families travelling, playing sports, and many other things. Because of microwave ovens, we have time to enjoy a good meal with our family and then play soccer, go to a movie, study, or do anything else we want to afterwards.

Modern methods of preserving food have made it possible to enjoy a wide variety of food. Because of refrigerators, freezers, canning, and freeze-drying, we can eat fruits and vegetables that come from far away places. We can prepare a meal one day and save the leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer to eat at another time. We can keep different kinds of food in the refrigerator or on the shelf. Its easy to always have food available and to be able to eat completely different meals every day.

Healthful eating is easier now than it ever was. Because of modern transportation methods, fresh fruits and vegetables are available all year round. Modern kitchen appliances make it easy to prepare fruits and vegetables for cooking. Bread machines make it possible to enjoy healthful, home-baked bread whenever we like. We can eat fresh and healthful food everyday because modern methods have made preparation easy.

Our lifestyle is fast, but people still like good food. New food preparation methods have given us more choices. Today we can prepare food that is more convenient, healthier, and of greater variety than ever before in history.

19

It has been said, "Not everything that is learned is contained in books."
Compare and contrast knowledge gained from experience with knowledge gained from books.

In your opinion, which source is more important? Why?

- **You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience**

"Experience is the best teacher" is an old cliché, but I agree with it. We can learn a lot of important things from books, but the most important lessons in life come from our own experiences. Throughout the different stages of life, from primary school to university to adulthood, experience teaches us many skills we need for life.

As children in primary school, we learn facts and information from books, but that is not all we learn in school. On the playground we learn how to make friends. In our class work, we learn how it feels to succeed and what we do when we fail. We start to learn about the things we like to do and the things we don't. We don't learn these things from books, but from our experiences with our friends and classmates.

In our university classes, we learn a lot of information and skills we will need for our future careers, but we also learn a lot that is not in our textbooks. In our daily lives both in class and out of class, we learn to make decisions for ourselves. We learn to take on responsibilities. We learn to get along with our classmates, our roommates, and our workmates. Our successes and failures help us develop skills we will need in our adult lives. They are skills that no book can teach us.

Throughout our adulthood, experience remains a constant teacher. We may continue to read or take classes for professional development. However, our experiences at work, at home, and with our friends teach us more. The triumphs and disasters of our lives teach us how to improve our careers and also how to improve our relationships and how to be the person each one of us wants to be.

Books teach us a lot, but there is a limit to what they teach. They can give us information or show us another person's experiences. These are valuable things, but the lessons we learn from our own experiences, from childhood through adulthood, are the most important ones we learn.

20

As computers are being used more and more in education, there will be soon no role for teachers in the classroom.

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.

There have been immense advances in technology in most aspects of people's lives, especially in the field of education. Nowadays, an increasing number of students rely on computers to research for information and to produce a perfect paper for school purposes. Others have decided to leave the original way of learning to get knowledge through online schools. These changes in the learning process have brought a special concern regarding the possible decrease of importance of teachers in the classroom.

Some people believe the role of teachers started to fade because computers have been helping some students to progress in their studies quicker than when compared with an original classroom. For example, in the same classroom, students have different intellectual capacities, thus some would be tied to a slow advance in their studies because of others' incapacity of understanding. In this way, pupils could progress in their acquisition of knowledge at their own pace using computers instead of learning from teachers.

However, the presence of a teacher is essential for students because the human contact influences them in positive ways. Firstly, students realize that they are not dealing with a machine but with a human being who deserves attention and respect. They also learn the importance of studying in group and respect other students, which helps them to improve their social skills.

Moreover, teachers are required in the learning process because they acknowledge some student's deficiencies and help them to solve their problems by repeating the same explanation, giving extra exercises or even suggesting a private tutor. Hence, students can have a bigger chance not to fail in a subject.

In conclusion, the role for teachers in the learning process is still very important and it will continue to be in the future because no machine can replace the human interaction and its consequences.

21

Popular events like the football World Cup and other international sporting occasions are essential in easing international tensions and releasing patriotic emotions in a safe way.

- You should give reasons for your answer using your own ideas and experience.

Every four years, the whole world stops to watch international sporting events such as the Olympics and the Football World Cup in which athletes show their best performance to make their country proud of them. These sporting occasions have proved to be helpful in easing international tensions in difficult times when powerful leaders were trying to control the world's economy and other governments were fighting over land.

The Olympic Games are one of the best examples which prove how sporting events can bring nations together, at least temporarily. From ancient History, when Greeks and Romans would interrupt battles to participate in the games, to the more recent international disputes, when athletes from Palestine and Israel would forget their differences, compete peacefully and even embrace each other after an event. Moreover, these popular events have called the world's attention to the terrible consequences of wars; thus some leaders have tried to accept agreements to end their dispute and live peacefully.

Similarly, international sporting events show benefits in some developing countries which live in a daily internal civil war. For example, Brazil has a high rate of unemployment, lack of education, hunger, crime, poverty and corruption which leads to an immense embarrassment of being Brazilian and a low self-esteem. However, when the Football World Cup starts, the Brazilian squad, which is considered the best team in the world, provokes an amazing feeling of pride in the country. Most people seem to forget all their problems and even the criminal activity decreases. They paint roads with the national colors, use wear the Brazilian team shirt and buy national flags. Moreover, the competition brings families and neighbors together and even rival gangs watch the games and celebrate peacefully.

In conclusion, popular sporting events play an important role in decreasing international tensions and liberating patriotic feelings as History has shown.

22

In the past, buildings often reflected the culture of a society but today all modern buildings look alike and cities throughout the world are becoming more and more similar.

What do you think is the reason for this, and is it a good thing or a bad thing?

- You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.

Every city has its architectural character, but the similarities between cities are more obvious these days than in the past. In my opinion, one reason for this is the high price of land.

In most large cities, land is scarce and consequently it is very valuable. This has led to the construction of tall buildings which occupy only a small area of land while providing lots of floor space where people can live or work. Buildings of this type are made of concrete and steel and can be built comparatively quickly using prefabricated materials. They do not use local materials, such as stone, timber or brick, which used to give cities their individual character. In consequence many cities now look very much the same and you might not know whether you were in Brisbane, Bangkok or Berlin when you are on the street.

While I realise that we cannot stand in the way of progress, I believe that cities should try to keep some individuality. For example, in Paris it is prohibited to build very tall buildings in the centre of the city, as this would spoil the overall appearance of the skyline. Other cities have chosen to design unique buildings to ensure they look different. The twin towers in Kuala Lumpur or the Opera House in Sydney are examples of this approach, and I agree with this kind of initiative.

All in all, although it is regrettable that modern cities look similar, I tend to feel that this is unavoidable. However, it can be argued that, even if the buildings are similar, cities will maintain their own character as a result of cultural diversity, the terrain and the climate, which ultimately determine how people live.

23

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Going overseas for university study is an exciting prospect for many people. But while it may offer some advantages, it is probably better to stay home because of the difficulties a student inevitably encounters living and studying in a different culture.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?
Give reasons for your answer.**

There is no doubt that going to study in a foreign country, with its different language and culture, can be a frustrating and sometimes painful experience. But while overseas study has its drawbacks, the difficulties are far outweighed by the advantages. Indeed, people who go abroad for study open themselves up to experiences that those who stay at home will never have.

The most obvious advantage to overseas university study is real-life use of a different language. While a person can study a foreign language in his or her own

country, it cannot compare with constant use of the language in academic and everyday life. There is no better opportunity to improve second-language skills than living in the country in which it is spoken. Moreover, having used the language during one's studies offers a distinct advantage when one is applying for jobs back home that require the language.

On a university campus, the foreign student is not alone in having come from far away. He or she will likely encounter many others from overseas and it is possible to make friends from all around the world. This is not only exciting on a social level but could lead to important overseas contacts in later professional life.

Finally, living and studying abroad offers one a new and different perspective of the world and, perhaps most important, of one's own country. Once beyond the initial shock of being in a new culture, the student slowly begins to get a meaningful understanding of the host society. On returning home, one inevitably sees one's own country in a new, often more appreciative, light.

In conclusion, while any anxiety about going overseas for university study is certainly understandable, it is important to remember that the benefits offered by the experience make it well worthwhile.

(301 words)

24

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

In some countries the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 50, while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70. Meanwhile, we see some politicians enjoying power well into their eighties. Clearly, there is little agreement on an appropriate retirement age.

Until what age do you think people should be encouraged to remain in paid employment?

Give reasons for your answer.

Mandatory retirement age varies from society to society, perhaps a reflection of economics, population pressures or simply value systems. Indeed, retirement at 50 can probably be as easily justified as that at 70. It is my belief, however, that the longer an able person is allowed to work, the better for both the individual worker and the employer.

Chronological age is not always a true indicator of ability. While some 65-year-olds may not perform as well as they did in their past, many workers at this age do just as well or better than they used to. People's suitability for a position should be a reflection of their performance in the job, rather than the number of wrinkles or gr

hairs they have. Employers concerned about the increasing age of their employees need only observe their work records. Those doing poorly may be asked to retire, but those as yet unaffected by age should stay on. Indeed, it would appear economical for an organisation to retain its older employees when possible rather than spend time and money on training new workers.

Remaining in one's job for as long as one is able makes sense as life expectancies increase around the world. As people live longer, they are longer able to contribute to society in the form of meaningful work. But they are also in need of income for a longer period, so a mandatory retirement age of 55 for someone who is statistically likely to live to 77 becomes increasingly difficult to justify. At a time when populations are ageing, governments are less able to provide for their senior citizens, so by keeping able workers in paid employment for as long as is practicable, public expenditures are less strained.

Thus, workers who can still demonstrate their capacity to carry out their work should not be asked to retire simply because they have reached a certain age. Societies that insist on early retirement may do well to look again at their policies.

25

Many people believe that women make better parents than men and that this is why they have the greater role in raising children in most societies. Others claim that men are just as good as women at parenting.

Write an essay expressing your point of view.

The view that women are better parents than men has shown itself to be true throughout history. This is not to say that men are not of importance in child-rearing indeed, they are most necessary if children are to appreciate fully the roles of both sexes. But women have proven themselves superior parents as a result of their conditioning, their less aggressive natures and their generally better communication skills.

From the time they are little girls, females learn about nurturing. First with dolls and later perhaps with younger brothers and sisters, girls are given the role of carer. Girls see their mothers in the same roles and so it is natural that they identify this as a female activity. Boys, in contrast, learn competitive roles far removed from what it means to nurture. While boys may dream of adventures, girls' conditioning means they tend to see the future in terms of raising families.

Girls also appear to be less aggressive than boys. In adulthood, it is men, not women, who prove to be the aggressors in crime and in war. Obviously, in raising children, a more patient, gentle manner is preferable to a more aggressive one.

Although there certainly exist gentle men and aggressive women, by and large, females are less likely to resort to violence in attempting to solve problems.

Finally, women tend to be better communicators than men. This is shown in intelligence tests, where females, on average, do better in verbal communication than males. Of course, communication is of utmost importance in rearing children, as children tend to learn from and adopt the communication styles of their parents.

Thus, while it is all very well to suggest a greater role for men in raising children, let us not forget that women are generally better suited to the parenting role.

26

'Telecommuting' refers to workers doing their jobs from home for part of each week and communicating with their office using computer technology.

Telecommuting is growing in many countries and is expected to be common for most office workers in the coming decades.

How do you think society will be affected by the growth of telecommuting?

The spread of telecommuting is sure to have far-reaching effects on society. By itself telecommuting refers to office workers spending much of their time working from home and using electronic technologies to communicate with their employers. The broader implications of telecommuting, however, may involve changes to corporate structure, workers' lifestyles and even urban planning.

The most obvious changes may be apparent in the 'normal' offices of companies, governments and other organisations. If even half the working week is spent telecommuting from home, then we would initially expect many empty desks in the office. As offices grow smaller, workers coming in for the day would be expected to share desks with their absent colleagues. This, in turn, may affect the social atmosphere of an organisation, however, as less social contact with one's colleagues could harm morale and loyalty.

For the individual office worker, telecommuting would mean spending more time at home. For a parent with young children, this may be a blessing. Moreover, many telecommuters would be able to work the hours they wished: having a nap in the afternoon, for example, but working some hours in the evening. One substantial benefit for all telecommuting workers is that there will be no need to travel to work, allowing more free time.

The structure of urban life is also likely to be affected by telecommuting. We would expect to see fewer cars on the road during peak hours and, eventually, a smaller concentration of offices in cities' central business districts. In short, people will have less reason to travel to city centres from outlying areas. As more people work and

live in the same location, shops and cultural events will likely relocate themselves out of the city centre.

In sum, telecommuting will serve not only to change the way we work but also the way we live.

27

The rising levels of congestion and air pollution found in most of the world's cities can be attributed directly to the rapidly increasing number of private cars in use. In order to reverse this decline in the quality of life in cities, attempts must be made to encourage people to use their cars less and public transport more.

Discuss possible ways to encourage the use of public transport.

Anyone who lives in a city is aware of the increasing number of cars on the road and the kinds of problems this creates: traffic jams, air pollution and longer commuting periods. As economies grow and access to cars spreads to increasing numbers of people, this trend is likely to worsen. The solution, it would seem, is for government to encourage the use of public transport in urban areas, thus decreasing dependence on the car.

One way to stimulate public transport use is to make private car use more expensive and inconvenient. The introduction of tolls along urban motorways has been successfully employed in many cities. Other such measures are high-priced permits for parking in urban areas and the restriction of parking to a limited number of cars. Faced with high costs or no place to park, commuters would perhaps be more willing to abandon their cars in favour of buses or trains.

There are also less punishing ways of spurring public transport use. The construction of free carparks at suburban train stations has proven successful in quite a number of countries. This allows commuters to drive part of the way, but take public transport into the central, most congested, urban areas.

Indeed, making public transport more comfortable and convenient should work to attract more commuters and decrease traffic congestion. Public transport that is convenient and comfortable retains its passengers, much like any business that satisfies its customers. The more commuters committed to taking public transport, the less congestion on city streets.

28

The mass media, including television, radio and newspapers, have great influence in shaping people's ideas.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?
Give reasons for your answer.**

The mass media have a powerful influence in shaping our lives. We have come to depend on them for information and entertainment, and in doing so we let them affect important aspects of our lives.

The undeniable usefulness of the media in almost instantly providing information about events around the world is largely taken for granted. But in our dependence on the media we have allowed them to mould our notions and opinions of events, places and people. Though few of us probably think about it, our conceptions of, say, our elected officials spring from television images and newspaper stories. Most of us will never meet prime ministers or presidents, but anyone who is regularly exposed to the media will have an opinion of them. When it is time to cast our vote we will make our decision based on how the media portray the candidates. We are similarly swayed by coverage of wars. The media, representing the values of their owners, societies and governments, tend to report wars with a bias; which is the 'good' side and which the 'bad' is determined for us by reporters, editors and commentators, and sure enough the public begins to form opinions that reflect the coverage they see, hear and read in the major media.

The media are also influential in the way they facilitate the spread of culture and lifestyle. The so-called 'global youth culture', in which one finds young people around the world displaying a common interest in music, clothing styles and films is an example of the media's enormous sway in this regard. A popular figure such as Michael Jackson would never be so well known were it not for the media's extensive reach into every society on the globe.

Thus I would argue that the mass media's influence is certainly great. Indeed, with technological advancements such as the Internet bringing even more forms of electronic media to our homes and workplaces, it is likely the media's influence will grow even stronger.

29

Some governments say how many children a family can have in their country. They may control the number of children someone has through taxes. It is sometimes necessary and right for a government to control the population in this way.

**Do you agree or disagree?
Give reasons for your answer.**

It is certainly very understandable that some governments should start looking at ways of limiting their populations to a sustainable figure. In the past, populations were partly regulated by frequent war and widespread disease, but in recent years the effects of those factors have been diminished. Countries can be faced with a population that is growing much faster than the nation's food resources or employment opportunities and whose members can be condemned to poverty by the need to feed extra mouths. They identify population control as a means to raising living standards.

But how should it be achieved? Clearly, this whole area is a very delicate personal and cultural issue. Many people feel that this is not a matter for the state. They feel this is one area of life where they have the right to make decisions for themselves. For that reason, it would seem that the best approach would be to work by persuasion rather than compulsion. This could be done by a process of education that points out the way a smaller family can mean an improved quality of life for the family members, as well as less strain on the country's perhaps very limited, resources.

This is the preferred way. Of course if this does not succeed within a reasonable time scale, it may be necessary to consider other measures, such as tax incentives or child-benefit payments for small families only. These are midway between persuasion and compulsion.

So, yes, it is sometimes necessary, but governments should try very hard to persuade first. They should also remember that this is a very delicate area indeed, and that social engineering can create as many problems as it solves?

30

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

**Millions of people every year move to English-speaking countries such as Australia, Britain or America, in order to study at school, college or university.
Why do so many people want to study in English?
Why is English such an important international language?**

Give reasons for your answer..

I am not surprised when I read in the newspapers that many people move to English speaking countries. I am an engineer in a process control since ten years and I understand the necessity of English language. For example, when I read technical English specifications, when I meet Japanese Industrials to build together some electronic materials or when I go on holidays in Italy where the best way (for me) to communicate is to speak English. Therefore, today, it's necessary to learn English

and the best way is to study in English as soon as possible when we are at school but also when we have a job. It's so Important to communicate with foreigners, because of work. For example: to seafoods in USA, to build electronic cards with the Japanese, to obtain a certification with FDA (American organization) in order to sell some pharmaceutical products. In fact, it's Important for everybody, the workers, the visitors, the scientists, etc ...

These are the main reason which explain why so many people go to English speaking countries (the best way to learn) and why English is such an Important International language (the communication between many the people over the world).

Comment:

This is an answer written by a candidate who achieved a **Band 6** score. Here is the examiner's comment:

This response is underlength and is marked down because of this. Only a few relevant ideas are presented and these are used rather repetitively and are insufficiently developed or supported. However, the writing communicates fluent and a satisfactory range of structures and vocabulary are used.

31

"Fatherhood ought to be emphasised as much as motherhood. The idea that women are solely responsible for deciding whether or not to have babies leads to the idea that they are also responsible for bringing the children up."

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

believe that child-rearing should be the responsibility of both parents and that, whilst the roles within that partnership may be different, they are nevertheless equal in importance. In some societies, it has been made easier over the years for single parents to raise children on their own. However, this does not mean that the traditional family, with both parents providing emotional support and role-model for their children, is not the most satisfactory way of bringing up children.

Of crucial importance, in my opinion, is how we define 'responsible for bringing the children up'. At its simplest, it could mean giving the financial support necessary to provide a home, food and clothes and making sure the child is safe and receives an adequate education. This would be the basic definition.

There is, however, another possible way of defining that part of the quotation. That would say it is not just the father's responsibility to provide the basics for his children, while his wife involves herself in the everyday activity of bringing them up. Rather, he should share those daily duties, spend as much time as his job allows with his children, play with them, read to them, help directly with their education,

participate very fully in their lives and encourage them to share his.

It is this second, fuller, concept of 'fatherhood' that I am in favour of, although I also realise how difficult it is to achieve sometimes. The economic and employment situation in many countries means that jobs are getting more, not less, stressful, requiring long hours and perhaps long journeys to work as well. Therefore it may remain for many a desirable ideal rather than an achievable reality.

32

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Without capital punishment (the death penalty) our lives are less secure and crimes of violence increase. Capital punishment is essential to control violence in society.

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

Before talking about the essential role of death penalty, you have to think about the meaning, and the purpose, of any kind of punishment. If you consider that the purpose is to prevent the guilty from being nasty again, you can be seduced by an argumentation in favour of the suppression of capital punishment. But you have to think about another aspect of the problem: a punishment is also useful to impress people, to make them fear the law. In fact, let's take the example of a young misfit, which has grown in a violent atmosphere, influenced by older delinquents, etc ... He lives in the streets, he's got no aim but to survive. This is the kind of person who could possibly kill someone for money, or even for fun ... Why would he fear prison? Life would be easier for him there. In addition, in many cases, when you behave normally, you can benefit from penalty reductions. This young misfit needs to be impressed, he needs to know that the law is a frontier. When you cross it, you can lose your life. That is why capital punishment helps keeping a distance between robbery and murder. If you abolish it, you suppress the difference between these two types of crime, which are completely different.

But there is also a limit to define: even if death penalty is unavoidable, it would be a crime to apply it to inadequate cases. If there is no premeditation or past facts which can justify such a punishment, it is far too strict to apply death penalty. That is why the lawmakers have to establish precisely the context in which capital punishment can be pronounced. That is the price to pay to limit violence without using excessive violence.

Comment:

This is an answer written by a candidate who achieved a **Band 8** score. Here is the examiner's comment:

This response is very fluent and well expressed in an appropriate register. A range

of relevant issues is skilfully presented and discussed. The argument is logically developed and well organised. A wide range of structures and vocabulary are used appropriately and accurately with only minor flaws.

33

Television has had a significant influence on the culture of many societies. To what extent would you say that television has positively or negatively affected the cultural development of your society?

It has been around forty years since television was first introduced into Australian households and people today still have mixed views on whether it has a positive or a negative influence on the society.

Many people believe that television damages culture. It promotes the stronger cultures of countries such as Britain and North America and weakens the cultures of less wealthy countries. This is because the stronger, wealthier countries are able to assert their own culture by producing more programs that are shown widely around the world. These programs then influence people, particularly young people, in the countries where they are shown.

Also, because television networks need to attract large audiences to secure their financial survival, they must produce programs which are interesting to a broad range of people. In Australia this range is very broad because we are a multicultural society and people of all ages like to watch television. To interest all these different people, most television programs are short in length, full of action and excitement, do not require much intelligence or knowledge to understand, and follow universal themes common to all cultures, such as love and crime. Television programs which concentrate on or develop themes pertinent to one particular culture are not so successful because they interest a smaller audience.

Nevertheless we much acknowledge that television does have some positive effect on the cultures within a society as well. People who do not live within their own culture can, in a limited way, access it through the multicultural station on the television. For example, Aboriginal children who have grown up in white families or migrants and international students living in Australia, can watch programs from their own culture on the television.

In conclusion, I hold the view that television promotes and strengthens those cultures that are wealthy and influential while it weakens the cultures that are already in a weakened position.

34

Many people believe that television programs are of no value for children. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Provide reasons and examples to support your response.

Televisual media has become a pervasive force in the lives of families around the world today. Yet, a central question remains regarding whether watching television is harmful or beneficial for children. An analysis of this question reveals that television programs present three major concerns in the case of children, including depictions of violence, the use of profane language, and the representation of poor moral role models.

Television programs that portray violence are a paramount concern for parents nowadays. Recent research has shown that children may commit acts of violence because they wish to emulate the behavior that they see on television. This is especially true when violent acts are committed by well-known action "heroes." In addition, television programs show cartoon figures, as well as actors, committing violent acts. Using comic situations to depict violent themes causes further problems with the way in which young people view violence.

Television programs that contain profane or disrespectful language also worry parents with young children. Because censorship laws have relaxed over the past few decades, it has become very common for television programs of each and every kind to show characters expressing impolite, rude, and insulting utterances to one another. Bearing resemblance to the case of portrayals of violence, children unfortunately often try to imitate these actions they watch on their television screens.

Finally, some parents are upset about the moral behavior depicted on television. As they struggle to teach their children moral and ethical values, parents might despair about the lack of morals and ethics represented in some of the so-called role models on television. For instance, certain characters not only have no remorse for their immoral actions, but also frequently go unpunished by larger society.

Because of these factors, many parents believe that television programs send their youth the wrong kinds of messages. The emulation of this poor behavior by their children is something they wish to avoid at all costs, and they have accordingly decided to ban television in their households for these reasons.

News editors decide what to broadcast on television and what to print in newspapers.

What factors do you think influence these decisions?

**Do we become used to bad news?
Would it be better if more good news was reported?**

It has often been said that. Good news is bad news. because it does not sell newspapers. A radio station that once decided to present only good news soon found that it had gone out of business for lack of listeners. Bad news on the other hand is so common that in order to cope with it, we often simply ignore it. We have become immune to bad news and the newspapers and radio stations are aware of this.

While newspapers and TV stations may aim to report world events accurately, be they natural or human disasters, political events or the horrors of war, it is also true that their main objective is to sell newspapers and attract listeners and viewers to their stations. For this reason TV and radio stations attempt to reflect the flavour of their station by providing news broadcasts tailor-made to suit their listeners' preferences. Programmes specialising in pop music or TV soap operas focus more on local news, home issues and up-to-date traffic reports. The more serious stations and newspapers like to provide so called. objective news reports with editorial comment aimed at analysing the situation.

If it is true, then, that newspapers and TV stations are tailoring their news to their readers. and viewers. requirements, how can they possibly be reporting real world events in an honest and objective light? Many radio and TV stations do, in fact, report items of good news but they no longer call this news. They refer to these as human interest stories and package them in programmes specialising, for instance in consumer affairs or local issues. Good news now comes to us in the form of documentaries the fight against children's cancer or AIDS, or the latest developments in the fight to save the planet from environmental pollution.

<http://ieltsexamination.blogspot.com>

36

Some people believe that children's leisure activities must be educational, otherwise they are a complete waste of time.

Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your experience.

Today, education has become a priority for many parents seeking to secure a good future for their children in this rapidly changing world. They believe that if their children apply themselves and work hard at school, then they will increase their opportunities for going to higher education and eventually getting a good job. Of course they are right, and as access to the best education and best jobs is becoming more competitive, then it is true that children have to make the best of their study

time when they are young.

However, the parents who do not allow their children sufficient free time for leisure activities outside school hours, are misguided. Such activities are far from being a waste of time for the children simply because they are not academic. It is important to remember that children need to develop skills other than intellectual ones, and the best way to do this is through activities such as sports, games and playing with other kids. If they cannot play make-believe games, how can they develop their imagination? How can they learn physical co-ordination or learn important social lessons about winning and losing if they do not practise any sports? Many children form strong, personal relationships with the friends they play with, and without the opportunity to do this, they could grow up emotionally immature or unformed.

Finally, I think it is also important to remember that children need to relax as well as work. If everything they do must have some educational or academic relevance, then they will soon get tired of studying altogether, which is the last thing parents would want.

37

It has been more than 30 years since man first landed on the moon.

Some people think that space research is a waste of money.

Discuss.

For over fifty years, a number of nations have been involved in the exploration of outer space. This research has been very costly, of course. Has this money been well-spent or wasted?

Some people believe that all or most space research should be eliminated because of its incredible expense, not only in terms of money, but also in terms of scientific and human resources. These people point out the fact that it cost billions of dollars to send astronauts to the moon, but all they brought back were some worthless rocks. These people say that the money and effort now being wasted in outer space could be spent for homeless people, improving the education system, saving the environment, and finding cures for diseases.

However, other people believe that space research has provided many benefits to mankind. They point out that hundreds of useful products, from personal computers to heart pacemakers to freeze-dried foods, are the direct or indirect results of space research. They say that weather and communication satellites, which are also products of space programs, have benefited people all over the globe. In addition to these practical benefits, supporters of the space program point to the scientific knowledge that has been acquired about the sun, the moon, the planets and even our own earth as a result of space research.

I agree with those people who support space research and want it to continue. Space research, as shown, has already brought many benefits to humanity. Perhaps it will bring even more benefits in the future, ones that we can not even imagine now. Moreover, just as individual people need challenges to make their lives more interesting, I believe the human race itself needs a challenge, and I think that the peaceful exploration of outer space provides just such a challenge.

38

It is generally acknowledged that families are now not as close as they used to be.

Give possible reasons and your recommendations.

There is much discussion nowadays as to whether or not the relationship between family members is as close as before. Diverse contributing factors can be identified. In the following, I would like to present my point of view.

Great changes have taken place in family life along with the development of society. One of them is that the once-extended family tends to become smaller and smaller. Many children have to leave their parents at an early age to study or work elsewhere. As time passes, children become emotionally estranged from their parents.

Compared with the past, social competition is becoming increasingly fierce. People are urged to concentrate their efforts upon work, so that they can achieve success, at least a good standard of living. As a result, they can't afford to spend their leisure hours with their families. The importance of bonds of kinship is gradually fading from their minds.

In addition, the availability of various kinds of recreational facilities also diverts people from enjoying chats with the members of their families. Their free time is mostly occupied by watching TV, surfing the Internet or playing video games. They come to lose interest in communicating with the other members of their families.

In view of such alienation within families, urgent steps must be taken, in my opinion. For members of families who live away from one another, regular contact on the phone can bring them the care that they need. Family reunions on holidays or other important occasions can make a difference as well. For those living together,

is a good idea to take some time off work or recreation periods to spend more time with each other. In the final analysis, a close family relationship can surely be maintained as long as we realize the significant role it plays in our lives and attach importance to it.

39

Many people think that nowadays people are being subjected to more and more pressure in their work, and thus are having less and less time to relax.

What is your opinion?

In modern society, especially in big cities, undoubtedly hard work has become a very important feature of ordinary people's everyday life. It seems that many people are under the impression that their work is becoming more pressing and urgent, and thus they sacrifice more and more leisure time.

In the first place, with the rapid development of science and technology, work today is more demanding than it used to be. For example, college graduates nowadays have to master English, computer science and driving skills before they can find decent jobs. People have to spend more time acquiring new techniques and skills. And their spare time tends to be fully occupied, not with leisure pursuit, but with work-related pursuits.

In the second place, competition is becoming more intense. Many people feel anxious that they may be "laid-off" if they can't work as hard as others. And they also feel at a disadvantage before new graduates. Therefore, it is understandable that people keep themselves involved in intensely hard work in order to preserve their positions.

In my opinion, the worst aspect of this phenomenon is that the huge pressure of work will gradually affect people's mental health. Excessively hard work means that people can never get rid of the fatigue of their work, even in their leisure time. This means that they can not enjoy a normal life.

In a word, in modern society overwork is stealing our leisure time. however, I believe this problem will be settled eventually with the development of science and technology.

40

It is often said that the subjects taught in schools are too academic in orientation and that it would be more useful for children to learn about practical matters such

as home management, work and interpersonal skills.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

A criticism often heard these days is that the subjects taught in schools tend to be too academic, and contribute little to preparing a young person for the real-life tasks he or she will have to perform after graduation. They say that academic subjects are rooted in the past, and are not useful for solving modern problems. I disagree with this point of view for three reasons.

My first reason is that it is the duty of parents, not teachers, to prepare their children to deal with the practical affairs of life. The home, not the classroom, is the ideal place to learn about home management and interpersonal skills. As for work abilities and attitudes, they are best learned "on the job" and under the supervision of an experienced older worker.

My second reason is that academic subjects have withstood the test of time. They represent the accumulated wisdom of our ancestors down through the ages, and, if from being impractical, they equip us with the knowledge and confidence to make sound judgements about any problems which may crop up. In addition, academic subjects are good for training us in mental discipline, while practical subjects are weak in this regard.

My third reason is based on the saying "Man does not live by bread alone." Schooldays devoted solely to instruction in down-to-earth practical matters would be dull indeed! Lessons in the best literature of the world, and the epoch-making scientific and geographical discoveries of the past enrich our lives and make us feel that we are part of the great family of mankind.

All in all, the teaching of academic subjects in schools is entirely appropriate. It is my firmly held view that practical subjects have no place in the classroom. On the contrary, the curriculum should be more academic!

41

With the increasing popularity of computers and calculators, student literacy is decreasing dramatically. What are the positive and negative effects the progress of science and technology has brought about?

It has been widely noted that, with the growing use of computers and calculators both in the classroom and in the home, the level of literacy and mathematical ability of students is dropping. This raises serious doubts about the value of the progress of science and technology. Here I will discuss the pros and cons of this question.

First of all, advances in science and technology have certainly brought about many benefits for mankind. They have made our lives more comfortable and healthier. In addition, they have eased the burden of work for most people and provided them with more leisure opportunities, while at the same time increasing productivity dramatically.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that technology has some negative side-effects. As mentioned above, with computers which check spelling, grammar and calculation for them, students have little incentive to learn how to do these things for themselves. Also, the availability of TV programs and videos encourages an unhealthy, sedentary lifestyle.

Another aspect of this issue is that technology may be good or bad, depending on how we use it. For instance, dynamite may be used to make road construction easier, or it may be used to kill people. Again, nuclear reactors can supply huge amounts of cheap electricity, but if they are carelessly handled they can cause devastating pollution.

We can conclude that the progress of science and technology has both positive and negative effects. What we must do is to make sure that the positive ones are encouraged and the negative ones are eliminated as far as possible. Among other things, this means that students are warned not to let computers and calculators do all their work for them.

42

Learning a foreign language offers an insight into how people from other cultures think and see the world.

The teaching of a foreign language should be compulsory at all primary schools.

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

- You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples.**

(Clear statement followed by a question based on the premise.)

Language is linked to the identity of a nation, and speakers of a common language share many things, but does this give governments the right to restrict the way a language is used or taught?

(Concession mode to the "For" case, but followed by the Against' point of view. An example is given which comments on the likely effectiveness of such a policy.)

It can be argued that a nation maintains its culture through its language, and so there is a need to restrict the use of foreign words and changes in pronunciation. However, in reality this approach is fruitless, because language is a living thing and

it is impossible to stop it from changing. This policy has been tried in some countries, but it never works. People, especially young people, will use the language that they hear around them, and which separates them from others; stopping the use of certain words will only make them appear more attractive.

(Puts the case Against' governments preventing spelling reform, but concedes it may be useful.)

As for spelling, we all know that the English system is irregular and, I believe, it would benefit from simplification so that children and other learners do not waste time learning to read and write. On the other hand, some people may feel, perhaps rightly, that it is important to keep the original spelling of words as a link with the past and this view is also held by speakers of languages which do not use the Roman alphabet.

(Puts both sides of the argument about which language to use in schools.)

While it is important for people who speak a minority language to be able to learn and use that language, it is practical for education to be in a common language. This creates national pride and links people within the society. Realistically, schools are the best place for this to start.

(Ends with a clear statement.)

Ultimately, there is a role for governments to play in the area of language planning particularly in education, but at no time should governments impose regulations which restrict people's linguistic freedom.

43

In many major cities of the world, you will find large public buildings, both new and old.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of such buildings.

How important is it for a country to construct impressive public buildings when houses are wanted is really required?

- You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples.**

(Introduction: mention that public buildings exist in all cities and towns, large and small, e.g. post office, court house, places of worship, theatre)

A public building is a building that belongs in some way to the state. The number of public buildings in any town or village will depend on the size of that community and its needs. For example, you will usually find a town hall of some sort, a school and a place of worship at least. In larger communities there will be a police station, law courts, a library and maybe a theatre funded by the state.

(Pros: city pride, beautiful to look at, useful/necessary buildings, create a city centre.)

The desire to build impressive buildings is not new. The ancient cities of the Middle East and South America were designed with large public buildings to impress visitors and enemies and give a sense of pride. In modern times, outstanding public buildings still create a great sense of local and national pride. They are what gives a city its character and they form a social centre, a place where people like to meet.

(Cons: waste of public money, intimidating, nationalistic. Give opinion on whether they stop us from building houses or whether they can be compatible.)

However, some people argue that governments have constructed unnecessary, and sometimes ugly, buildings simply to make themselves feel important. I tend to feel that such buildings may be a waste of public money but I am not sure we can claim that they prevent houses from being built, because these governments have often ensured that adequate housing was also available. Houses and public buildings can exist side by side.

(Conclusion - sum up the two parts to the answer. Leave the reader thinking.)

The answer lies in finding the right balance. We want to feel pride in our town, but we also want our citizens to have comfortable homes. It is hard to please everyone.

44

In the past, buildings often reflected the culture of a society but today all modern buildings look alike and cities throughout the world are becoming more and more similar.

What do you think is the reason for this, and is it a good thing or a bad thing?

- You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples.

city has its architectural character, but the similarities between cities are more obvious these days than in the past. In my opinion, one reason for this is the high price of land.

In most large cities, land is scarce and consequently it is very valuable. This has led to the construction of tall buildings which occupy only a small area of land while providing lots of floor space where people can live or work. Buildings of this type are made of concrete and steel and can be built comparatively quickly using prefabricated materials. They do not use local materials, such as stone, timber or brick, which used to give cities their individual character. In consequence many cities now look very much the same and you might not know whether you were in Brisbane, Bangkok or Berlin when you are on the street.

While I realise that we cannot stand in the way of progress, I believe that cities should try to keep some individuality. For example, in Paris it is prohibited to build

very tall buildings in the centre of the city, as this would spoil the overall appearance of the skyline.

Other cities have chosen to design unique buildings to ensure they look different. The twin towers in Kuala Lumpur or the Opera House in Sydney are examples of this approach, and I agree with this kind of initiative.

All in all, although it is regrettable that modern cities look similar, I tend to feel that this is unavoidable. However, it can be argued that, even if the buildings are similar, cities will maintain their own character as a result of cultural diversity, the terrain and the climate, which ultimately determine how people live.

45

Write about the following topic:

Should animals be used in testing new drugs and procedures?

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

Every year, millions of animals undergo painful suffering or death as a result of scientific research into the effects of drugs, food additives, cosmetics and other chemical products. While most people think animal testing is necessary, others are upset by what they see as needless suffering. This essay looks at some of the positive and negative aspects of animal testing.

Many medical treatments and procedures have been developed from experiments on animals. Since animals share many features with humans, scientists use animals to test the safety and effectiveness of newly developed drugs before pilot testing on small groups of patients. Medical teams practice new operating techniques such as transplants on animals. Without animal testing, many procedures or new drugs would be extremely unsafe.

However, many people are concerned that animals are suffering unnecessarily and cruelly. They do not believe that every new drug needs to be tested on animals, especially with the huge database of knowledge and modern computer models. They also are worried that many animal tests are ineffective, pointing out that any drugs have had to be withdrawn from the market despite extensive testing. They particularly feel that animal testing should not be used for non-essential products such as cosmetics, shampoos, soaps, and cleaning products. Furthermore, some campaigners would like to see certain tests replaced and more humane methods used.

We need to make sure that the millions of animals who are used for testing new

products are treated with the minimum of suffering. Although some animal testing may be unavoidable at present, treating our fellow creatures as mercifully as possible will demonstrate our humanity.

267 words

46

Action movies with spectacular car chases are very popular with young people. it is often said that these sorts of movies lead to an increase in car accidents among young drivers as they try to copy what they have seen in the films.

Do you agree that such movies increase the amount of bad driving? What can be done to encourage young people to drive more safely?

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

Movies tend to have a very large influence on young people who are influenced both by what they see and hear. Because this is the case, it is true that car chases in action movies tend to lead to an increase in the number of car accidents among young drivers because they try to copy what they have seen in the films. They drive too fast and take unnecessary risks and the difficulty is that most young people lack the skills and experience to do this.

There are a variety of ways in which young people can be encouraged to practise safer driving habits. Firstly, the Government should launch a safe driving campaign to convey the fact that driving safely is not uncool. In effect, it should be cool to stay alive and healthy! Secondly, every movie should make it clear that dangerous car chases are undertaken only in strict safety conditions with experienced drivers, and often special movie-making tricks are used to enhance the action. Thirdly, young people should be forced to take safe driving courses every year for the first five years that they have their driver's licence. In this way, they are forced to perfect their driving skills or their licence will be taken away.

Finally, as part of this course, young drivers should go to hospitals and witness the effects of poor or dangerous driving on other people. When they see hospitalised people whose lives have been destroyed due to stupid risk-taking, they will surely change their minds about whether it is cool to copy action heroes and drive fast.

264 words

47

In Britain, when someone gets old they often go to live in a home with other old peopleswheresthere are nurses to look after them. Sometimes the government h to pay for this care.

Who should be responsible for our old people?

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

Many old people in Britain, after a lifetime of hard work and the toil of bringing up children, are put into homes for the elderly by their families. There, they are looked after by professional nurses, and this is sometimes at the expense of the government. However, this situation has raised controversy about whether we extend to our elders the care and respect they deserve.

The critics of this system say that it is the duty of the family to look after its senior members in the years when they are no longer able to work. They point out that in retirement homes old people tend to feel useless and unwanted by their family members, who seldom come to see them. In addition, there is evidence that young people benefit from the experience and wisdom of older people who live with them on a daily basis.

On the other hand, those who support the system say that retired parents can be a burden to young families. Not only is it expensive to support old people who have little or no income, but the fact that old people are often ill and need a great deal of looking after can be too much for their busy children.

In my opinion, neither side is completely right. Old people in good health and with enough finances to support themselves can be a great help to their children. For instance, they can look after their grandchildren while children are out at work. On the other hand, sick and penniless old people are better off being looked after in retirement homes at government expense.

48

The earth is being filled with waste material such as plastic bags and other rubbish. Is this really happening? What are some solutions to this problem?

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

Over the past few decades, the increasing amount of industrial wastes and household garbage has become a major problem in many countries. People have

questioned what caused this problem and what can be done to improve the situation. In my opinion, two of the most critical causes of this waste material problem are the increased consumption and a shortage of space for landfill.

To begin with, modern lifestyle has contributed greatly to the increasing amount of waste and garbage we produce everyday. In other words, we have turned into a materialistic and mass-consumption society where we use more and throw away more than ever before. Moreover, countries are running out of space to store garbage and waste material. In fact, securing land for waste disposal raises controversies in many countries.

To solve this intractable problem, every citizen needs to participate in producing less garbage. For example, we can bring our own personal shopping bags instead of using plastic bags provided by stores and shops. Besides, the government can enforce stricter laws on companies to use biodegradable packaging or use recycled material. Indeed, this alone can eliminate much of the waste which is sent to at land fills. Companies can also contribute by developing new raw material which is recyclable and will ultimately lead to less garbage. One good example of this is that tire companies develop new tires for cars which are not made of rubber but of new biodegradable material.

As discussed above, individuals, business and the government can share the responsibility to reduce the amount of waste material and to save the earth. I hope that in the future our offspring will be better off with the well-preserved environment.

(282 words)

49

Children who are brought up in the family that do not have a lot of money are better prepared to deal with problems when they become adults than children who are brought up by wealthy parent.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

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

Over the past few decades, along with growing interest in child education, people's attention to the family environment where a child is brought up has also significantly increased. Some people have begun to feel that a child who has grown up in a poor family tend to be better prepared to deal with problems. In my opinion, however, family environment alone does not much influence a child's ability to