

## **IELTS Band 9 Essays**

1. Today, the quality of life in large cities is decreasing. Discuss the causes and solutions.

The global phenomenon of urbanisation from the beginning of industrialisation to the present day has brought opportunity and prosperity, albeit at a cost in the quality of life. With an increasing city population, the complexity of the challenges also increases, the causes and solutions for this are outlined below.

The causes for the decrease in the quality of life are paradoxically the prosperity endowed on such metropolitan centres. Their growth is largely due to the increase of opportunities on offer, which in turn increases their attractiveness, essentially they are trapped in a positive self-reinforcing cycle. However, this eventually leads to a decrease in the quality of life as the city can experience overcrowding, exorbitant property prices, and increased vulnerability to terrorist attacks. For example the density of London makes it a more efficient place to attack, when compared to a smaller city such as Bradford. Therefore, due to continuous growth and prosperity, urban citizens, especially the less well off, often experience a lower standard of living.

Considering the solutions, greater investment in public transport would ease traffic congestion, as would bike lanes. In theory this would reduce air pollution, and possibly improve the wellbeing of the population if they did adopt a more active lifestyle and cycle to work. To counter violent terrorist attacks, cities could embark on CCTV installations, so as to closely monitor for threats. For example, it is said, the CCTV in London has foiled many potential attacks, and therefore greatly increased the security of its citizens.

To conclude, a wealthy city attracts a large population inflow, which then causes pressure on existing infrastructure and security. Various solutions exist to mitigate such drawbacks, nevertheless an indefinite solution has yet to be found.

2. Some people think that all children should learn geography in school. However, some others think that it is more important to learn subjects that are more relevant to life. What is your opinion?

With constant modifications in school curriculum and constant changes in society the question of whether to maintain or drop geography is an interesting topic. I believe there would be severe consequences if geography were to disappear, mainly due to the understanding and open-mindedness that is derived from such studies.

Firstly, with evermore complex geopolitical strategies being played out, it can be considered extremely valuable to have the ability to identify the location of these events without checking on a map. Religious and border conflicts are amongst the most common sources of news events, and a lack of knowledge as to where these events are being played out can be considered ignorant. For example, areas such as the Middle East are constantly in the news. Therefore, by being merely aware of their location in the world, readers or viewers can greatly increase their understanding of the conflict.

Secondly, making geography compulsory in the schools would most likely encourage students to travel later in life. This is because geography can bring to light options you may not have known existed previously. For example, historically England has been the top destination to learn English. However, in recent times students have learned about more economical options such as Malta or Ireland. Therefore, without a sound geographical knowledge of Europe, these options could have been overlooked.

To conclude, removing geography from the school curricula would reduce a student's ability to fully assimilate global events in the media. Furthermore, removing the subject could indirectly reduce the amount of perceived options available to students.

3. Some people think that a person improves their intellectual skills more when doing group activities. To what extent do you agree? Use specific details and examples to explain your view.

In recent decades, many researchers have studied the importance of group-level cognition. Indeed, to my mind, there is now convincing evidence that group activities improve the intelligence of individuals. In this essay, I shall examine how research in team-games and study-groups supports this view.

To begin with, team-games clearly require individuals to perform a diverse range of rapid mental calculations. This is because, in a sporting context, players must predict and anticipate possible actions within tight time constraints. For example, a recent Cambridge study showed that soccer players can – within the span of seconds – calculate over a dozen different permutations that could result from a single soccer related action. Such predictive powers clearly improve players' mental abilities and result from activities performed in a group context.

Secondly, study-groups enable individuals to obtain information that they could not acquire in isolation. This is because peer feedback allows individuals to refine their understanding of concepts and to also learn new information from other members in the study-group. For example, a study by The British Institute for Learning found that, if individuals participated in study-groups, they had a far more objective and sophisticated understanding of a topic than learners who were not part of study-groups. Therefore, it is certainly the case that learning in a group improves an individual's mental abilities.

In conclusion, I strongly agree with the notion that group activities improve intellectual abilities. In the future, we will certainly see schools take greater measures to ensure that more group-level cognition occurs in the classroom.

4. Some people think that secondary school children should study international news as one of the school subjects. Other people think that it is a waste of valuable school time. What do you think? Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

The potential for the global media to shape the views of today's youth is considerable. However, while some commentators think that the media has no place within secondary education, other analysts defend the idea that international news should be studied at school. In this essay, I shall examine a number of studies which show that both viewpoints are, to some degree, justified.

To begin with, the global media undoubtedly enriches teenagers' understanding of contemporary affairs. This is because television reports provide concise summaries of international affairs. For example, a study run by Oxford sociologists showed that the media heavily influenced teenagers' knowledge of contemporary affairs. Since any secondary school education would be incomplete without an awareness of such events, it is therefore clear that the media can play a vital role in assisting education.

On the other hand, many critics argue that teenagers are negatively affected by the global media's focus on wars and civil unrest. This is because exposure to violence often leads to depression. For example, recent surveys have discovered that depressed teenagers usually cite the dismal state of the world as a source of their depression. Since mental health is an important objective of secondary education, it is therefore questionable whether the study of international news wouldn't be a destructive and wasteful use of school resource.

In conclusion, it should be clear that there are reasons for and against the study of news at school. Thus if media studies are to enter schools in the future, schools will have to think about how negative aspects of the news can be decreased, and positive aspects maximized.

5. Some people like to travel outside their country. Others would rather travel to tourist spots in their own country first, before travelling abroad. Which do you prefer to do and why? Include specific details and examples to support your choice.

Over the past few decades the international tourism industry has gone through a boom period. Cheap air travel, in particular, has allowed ordinary working class people to travel to more international destinations than ever before. In this essay, I shall refer to number of sociological studies to show why – contrary to popular opinion – domestic travel should initially take precedence over international travel.

To begin with, people's knowledge of their own countries and culture has grown increasingly sketchy. This is largely because foreign brands, television shows and cultural objects flood local markets. For example, The Asian Cultural Society found that Japanese teenagers knew more about American television series than 19th Century Japanese woodcuts. It should therefore be clear that citizens need to know much more about their own countries, and that visits to local cultural centres should occur before visits to remote countries.

Secondly, people reap high economic benefits if they are well-travelled in their country of birth. This is because local travel, in particular, opens up business opportunities. For example, the Korean Society for Entrepreneurship found that 40% of successful start-up companies were run by individuals who had travelled extensively in Korea and sniffed out small openings in developmentally neglected areas. Seen in this light, local travel can also be of vital economic significance

To conclude, although few would argue outright against foreign travel, there are certainly reasons why domestic travel is initially preferable. In the future, as some of the hype surrounding foreign travel dies down, these reasons will no doubt appear more attractive and conspicuous.

6. In some countries, the number of shootings increase because many people have guns at home. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Across the globe, many individuals own guns for self-defence and recreational purposes. Gun related mortalities in households – in particular – throw the ethics of such forms of private gun ownership into sharp relief. In this essay, I shall appeal to crime statistics to argue that a person is at a far greater risk being shot if there is a gun in a household.

Firstly, it is intuitively obvious that having a gun in a household endangers children and teenagers. This is because minors do not have the requisite knowledge or maturity to handle guns safely. For example, the US Department of Justice recently revealed statistics showing that 150 American children and teenagers die each year because of accidents relating to household guns. Therefore it is incontrovertible that household guns lead to additional shootings.

Secondly, household guns became especially dangerous when spouses have violent arguments. This is because male sexual rage, in particular, often results in deadly aggression. For example, The International Crime Bureau recently produced statistical evidence that – if there is a household gun – a man is twice as likely (if he discovers his wife having an affair) to kill her in a fit of jealous rage. Therefore, once again, household guns correlate positively with additional shootings.

In conclusion, there is undeniable evidence that having a gun in a house leads to further shootings. Given the strength of this evidence, in the future, more legislature needs to be put in place to limit private gun ownership.

7. Obesity is a serious problem in many countries, especially in rich countries. Discuss ways to solve the problem. Provide specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

With the advent of urbanisation and the rise in popularity of fast food, there have been accompanying issues with rising obesity rates – especially in developed countries like England and the USA. After providing a careful analysis of why obesity has risen so sharply in these countries, I shall suggest a number of ways in which the obesity epidemic can be ameliorated.

To begin with, it should be unsurprising that fast food is incredibly popular in wealthy countries (like England and the USA). Due to the high levels of development in these countries, consumers possess more money and can therefore consume vast amounts of fast food without seriously diminishing their income. For example, the American Dietary Association found that (compared to the average Indian household), the average American household has a six times larger budget for food per month. Consequently, it is to be expected that obesity rates are much higher in countries with larger amounts of wealth.

However, despite the severity of the obesity problem, there are a number of ways in which developed countries could battle it more effectively. Firstly, developed governments could put far more pressure on fast food outlets to provide healthy alternatives to hamburgers, french fries and soft drinks.

Secondly, public exercise initiatives could be advertised and promoted far more vigorously. Lastly, modules that inform teenagers about healthy dietary requirements could be taught at schools.

In conclusion, although obesity is a serious issue in the developed world, if the above steps are taken, the situation will surely improve in the coming years.

8. Some people think that keeping pets is good for children while others think it is dangerous and unhealthy. Which opinion do you agree with? Discuss both options and give examples.

In recent times, pet related injuries and mortalities have sparked heated debates about whether it is healthy for children to be around pets. In this essay I shall argue that such dangers are overemphasised and that children receive substantive psychological benefits through having pets.

To begin with, although exotic pets (e.g. snakes, spiders, apes, etc.) have been known to occasionally hurt and even kill children, such incidents are so statistically rare as to be negligible. This is because the overwhelming majority of children have non-lethal cats, dogs, fish, rodents and rabbits for pets. For example The Child Safety Institute found that over 90% of children owned the aforementioned pets, and professed that they had never felt in the least bit endangered by them. Seen in this light, it is clearly unfounded to claim that pets present any physical danger to children.

Secondly, pets can impact positively upon child psychology. This is because young pet owners frequently empathise with their pets and perform a diverse range of actions to maintain their well-being (e.g. feeding, grooming, administering medicine, etc.). For example, the Cambridge Developmental Psychology Unit found that children who had grown up with pets were 30% less likely to bully others and resolve conflicts through aggression. Consequently, it is undeniable that a child's pro-sociality and mental health can be improved through exposure to pets.

In conclusion, the cited evidence provides strong support for the view that children owning pets is a good thing. In the future, as more laws are introduced to ban the ownership of illegally acquired exotic pets, this viewpoint will no doubt surge in popularity.



9. Some products can be made quickly by a machine. Other items take a long time to be made by hand. As a buyer, which do you prefer and why? Give specific details and examples in your answer.

Ever since the industrial revolution, mass produced goods have flooded the consumer market. Although such goods have proved to be highly popular, it is now becoming increasingly clear that handmade goods are more desirable for modern, informed consumers. In this essay, I shall look at some of the ethical and quality-based reasons for this re-evaluation.

To begin with, handmade goods can be made with far more care and attention to detail than mass produced goods. This is because machines lack a sensitivity that experienced craftsman evidently possess. For example, a study by the International Consumerist Society found that handmade furniture, musical instruments and jewellery were consistently rated as being more attractive (by consumers) than their mass made counterparts. Therefore it is clear that buyers prefer handmade goods for reasons that relate to quality of workmanship.

Secondly, handmade production companies have far more ethical attitudes towards the environment. This is because factories and chemical processes heavily underpin mass industrial production. For example the British Green Party found that the levels of toxicity and environmental damage outside handmade production centres were paltry compared to the levels found outside factories used for mass production. Consequently, since modern consumers are more environmentally conscious than ever before, these findings have clearly contributed to their preference for handmade goods.

In conclusion, there are compelling reasons for why modern consumers favour handmade goods. In the future, as environmental issues worsen, this preference will no doubt grow more pronounced.

10. Is it good for children to start using computers from an early age and spend long hours on them? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages.

In recent years, children, like adults, have become increasingly exposed to computers. While some child psychologists have claimed that this is a good thing, others have claimed that it has an overwhelmingly detrimental impact on children. In this essay, I shall draw upon a number of studies in cognitive science and industrial psychology that reveal the positive and negative aspects of this phenomenon.

To begin with, there are clearly reasons why computers do not allow children to develop long attention spans. This is because computers are packed with many supposedly child-friendly games that require minimal levels of concentration in order to be enjoyed. For example, a study by the New York Child Learning Association found that children who read from picture books were 50% less likely to get distracted than children who played educational computer games. Therefore computers almost certainly have a negative impact on young children.

However, since the world has become heavily reliant on computers, there are also clearly advantages to exposing children to computers. This is because children with such exposure will stand a better chance of finding employment. For example, after being interviewed by Yale psychologists, over 70% of young office workers admitted that they had spent long hours on computers in their middle and late childhood years. Therefore it is clear that computer exposure can be beneficial to children.

In conclusion, there are advantages and disadvantages to early computer exposure. However, if, in the future, the quality of educational gaming is increased, there is good reason to believe that these negative consequences will fall entirely away.

11. Some people think women should be given equal chances to work and excel in their careers. Others believe that a woman's role should be limited to taking care of the house and children. Which opinion do you agree with and why? Include specific details and examples to support your choice.

The question of women's rights has always sparked heated controversy. While some traditionalists claim that women should focus on the upkeep of their homes and children, more liberal minded people have claimed that women should have the same rights as men. In this essay, I shall refer to sociological studies that vindicate the correctness of the liberal view.

To begin with, it is false to believe that a woman cannot have a job and raise her children effectively. This is because part-time and online work obviously gives women the time and space to care for their children. For example, the Organisation for Child Care found that mothers who did part time or online work spent as much time with their children (after school hours) as housewives. Therefore, it is incoherent to claim – as traditionalists do – that having a career compromises a mother's ability to care for her children.

Secondly, mothers who work also gain the means to invest more in their children's education and personal development. This is because an additional source of revenue enables parents to send their children to private schools and extra-mural classes. For example, a Harvard study found that parents were 50% more likely to invest in these goods if both parents had separate sources of financial income. It is therefore clear that being a working mother can facilitate, rather than impede, good parenting.

In conclusion, there is strong evidence that women can have jobs and be good mothers. Seen in this light, it is clear that the traditionalist view is largely baseless, and that it will continue to decline in popularity.

12. Some people believe that international sporting events are the ideal opportunity to show the world the qualities of the hosting nation. Others believe that these events are mainly a large unjustifiable expense. To what extent do you agree or disagree.

Global athletic events such as the Olympics, the World Cup, the Extreme Games, and even the American Super Bowl are incredible opportunities for countries. These iconic spectacles can provide a country with an economic avalanche of benefits or expose it to a public relations disaster. This essay will look at both points, using Russia and the United Kingdom as examples.

Firstly, it is important to bear in mind that simply hosting the event and having the world's media attention cannot guarantee a positive promotion. This is because although the country is receiving enormous amounts of publicity, the media will often report controversial news as well as. Take the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, for example. The media spotlight is shining bright on the athletes but also highlighting the polemic legislation regarding homosexuality. Therefore, despite the international recognition to be gained, the country can also face a possible backlash.

Secondly, the expense of building large infrastructures necessary to hold these events can dwarf the benefits, unless they are fully amortized afterwards. This is largely due to the fact that stadiums, Olympic parks, ski runs etc. are expensive to construct and undertake large capital expenditure, often by the public sector. In the Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2002, the council commissioned a stadium for athletic events which was later adapted and sold to the local preeminent football club, Manchester City. Therefore with proper, fair, economic management of such buildings and facilities the cost can be recuperated.

To conclude, a host city or nation has a lot to gain from these events but only if they are economically administered correctly and the country has no controversial issues for the media to pull out of the closet.

13. Some people think that all children should learn geography in school. However, some others think that it is more important to learn subjects that are more relevant to life. What is your opinion?

With constant modifications in school curriculum and constant changes in society the question of whether to maintain or drop geography is an interesting topic. I believe there would be severe consequences if geography were to disappear, mainly due to the understanding and open-mindedness that is derived from such studies.

Firstly, with evermore complex geopolitical strategies being played out, it can be considered extremely valuable to have the ability to identify the location of these events without checking on a map. Religious and border conflicts are amongst the most common sources of news events, and a lack of knowledge as to where these events are being played out can be considered ignorant. For example, areas such as the Middle East are constantly in the news. Therefore, by being merely aware of their location in the world, readers or viewers can greatly increase their understanding of the conflict.

Secondly, making geography compulsory in the schools would most likely encourage students to travel later in life. This is because geography can bring to light options you may not have known existed previously. For example, historically England has been the top destination to learn English. However, in recent times students have learned about more economical options such as Malta or Ireland. Therefore, without a sound geographical knowledge of Europe, these options could have been overlooked.

To conclude, removing geography from the school curricula would reduce a student's ability to fully assimilate global events in the media. Furthermore, removing the subject could indirectly reduce the amount of perceived options available to students.

14. Many governments in the world spend large amounts of money on art, which helps to improve the quality of people's lives. However, governments should spend money on other things rather than art. Do you agree or disagree? Give your opinion.

Societies with a heritage in the 'arts' have long been considered culturally sophisticated and advanced. However, with the recent financial crisis this lavishness and expense should be questioned. Tax-payers' money has to be spent practically rather than on cultural endeavours. Firstly, not everyone in society appreciates art, and, secondly, employment should take precedence.

Art can bring quality into one's life if you are interested. In society art-lovers are typically in the minority, and other activities, such as sports are more popular. Take football, for example. Across the globe it is obvious that there are more people watching matches in stadiums than looking at sculptures or art. This fact makes it impossible that art can bring quality into a community if the galleries hold little interest for the region.

Secondly, the resources diverted to such projects come from the public and should be spent in a way that benefits them. Commissioning or purchasing art is an insult to taxpayers who endure high unemployment, such as, those in Newcastle, UK. This city suffers from historically high unemployment, yet the council commissioned a large sculpture called 'The Angel of the North'. Financing a job creation project would undoubtedly have been more practical for the local community.

To conclude, I believe that it is an unjust affirmation that art brings quality into one's life, and I agree that the money should be spent elsewhere. This is because art expenditures only benefit a small minority and secondly the expense involved should benefit the majority. Ideally in the future, governments will recognise that quality in a person's life derives from a decent opportunity in life, not a sculpture.

15. 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.

To derive a double benefit from anything is considered a bonus, and this is especially the case when discussing leisure activities for children. The idea to fuse both education and entertainment into one activity is a goal of many educators; some would even believe that failure to do this makes the activity pointless. Drawing from examples in Sweden and reviewing games, such as Pokemon, I firmly believe that all activities should have an educational value.

Leisure activities are a perfect time to take advantage of the receptiveness in a child's mind, and some countries are adamant about this. Take Sweden, for example. For many years they have legally stipulated that all children's toys sold in the country should have some educational value. In addition, for such a rule to be passed it must be upheld by scientific research. Therefore, the advantage of incorporating an education element into toys is scientifically proven.

On the other hand, across the UK, children were wasting their time collecting and learning the statistics of each creature on each Pokemon card. If, however, these cards had been intertwined with more educational data the child could have simultaneously gained a more practical education. Due to the child learning large swathes of irrelevant and useless information it can be argued that the time would have been better spent with real facts and figures on the cards.

To conclude, scientific evidence from Sweden and fantasy games such as Pokemon with little educational value are two clear reasons why children's leisure activities should have an element of learning involved.

16. Women can do everything that men can and they even do it better. They also can do many things that men cannot. But it is a fact that their work is not appreciated as much as men's, although they have to sacrifice a lot for their family and career... It is said: "A woman's place is in the home." What do you think?

Women and men have had different roles in the community since the beginning. Under modern pretexts these differences are slowly converging. However, due to the genetic inheritance and socio-demographic components, these differences do exist.

Firstly, men are undoubtedly better adapted genetically to perform physical tasks. Therefore, the assumption that women can match men in everything is clearly flawed. The difference between their physical abilities is clearly demonstrated in the sporting arena. Take, for example, the Olympics or any international sporting event. It can be clearly seen that in these competitions the genders are separated due to inherent differences between the sexes.

Secondly, it has been argued that women are less appreciated in society due to their traditional roles in the home. This statement is true to a certain extent because it largely depends on the society. In certain traditional societies in Africa, females working is frowned upon and is seen as neglecting the family, whereas in Afghanistan, in general, females are allowed to do little else but stay at home, being a housewife. Consequently a woman's value is largely dictated by the society, culture and history. Nevertheless, to state that her place is in the home is widely considered sexist in modern western societies.

To conclude, differences do certainly exist; however, these are largely through nature. Also, the role women may have is usually dictated by other factors, such as, religion or society, not ability.



17. Improvements in health, education and trade are essential for the development of poorer nations. However, the governments of richer nations should take more responsibility for helping the poorer nations in such areas. To what extent do you agree?

Undoubtedly governments of developed nations should share the responsibility of helping less fortunate nations. Different measures exist, ranging from market access to direct financial payments or even medical assistance. This essay will explain why certain measures are inherently better than other methods.

Firstly, the most adequate manner to assist the lesser developed countries is not through health or education 'hand-outs'. This method is flawed and only offers temporary relief from long-term challenges; also this assistance can be cut at any moment, leaving the country stranded. For example, economical help from the UK to disadvantaged regions in Africa has gradually been reduced since the onset of the financial crisis. Although some parts of the continent may be better educated or in better health, the benefit was short lived, thus leaving the countries of Africa to look for other donors.

Commerce is without doubt the most essential type of assistance that can be given. If the lesser developed country has the opportunity to develop trade, then it will build strong capabilities to serve it for the long term. These strengths can develop the local economy and are more reliable than education or health. For example, while trading with the richer country the government can search for other foreign markets to trade with. This would offer more stability and diversification for the nation.

To conclude, assistance is definitely necessary for the poorer regions; however, 'hand-outs' are short-term solutions. The optimum solution is to offer market access so the region can produce products and generate regular income.

18. Most schools are planning to replace sport and exercise classes with more academic sessions. How will this change affect children's lives in your view?

The debate between where to allocate valuable teaching resources probably started with the first educational institutions. In present-day society the conflict continues and rightly so. In my opinion converting sports classes to more traditional subjects has two significant advantages. Firstly, it is a more effective use of a student's time. Secondly, in the future, academic skills are more useful.

Switching time spent on sport in a school to time spent on more academic activities is a wise and cost-effective solution. Firstly, academic studies are inherently less expensive to perform when compared to physical education. For example, to play almost any sport one has to invest in the appropriate equipment, ranging from shorts, t-shirts to rackets and balls. Furthermore, excess time is spent in the changing rooms or washing afterwards. In more traditional subjects, students merely enter the classroom and are learning within minutes.

Secondly, sport can be argued as an activity practised naturally by children, especially boys. In every school at break time many children engage in energetic activities, whereas hardly any are studying algebra, biology or physics. Because these subjects are less popular more resources should be allocated to teaching them. In addition, academic skills could be argued as more important due to the small number of people in society currently using sport skills in a work environment. Thus, focussing on skills demanded by the labour market would benefit students' lives dramatically in the future.

To conclude, young learners going through school would finish much better prepared for life avoiding sport tuition. Furthermore, they would have taken full advantage of their school years through more time spent learning.

19. Crime is a big problem in the world; many believe that nothing can be done to prevent it. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give your own opinion.

Crime is unquestionably one of the most prevailing and worrying aspects in any society, and its prevention should be taken seriously. Crime prevention can be executed in various ways, firstly through a sustained honest presence in the community and secondly through international cooperation.

A local presence by incorruptible law enforcement authorities may be costly, however, the long-term investment would pay dividends in the future. A safer region would encourage trade, investment and set an invaluable example for younger generations. For example, crime has dramatically been reduced in the Favelas around Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. This was achieved largely through the government committing large funds of money to stationing police headquarters in and around the slums. These financial expenditures greatly benefited the community.

Secondly, due to the large-scale severity and the global impact that crime has in some areas of the world, global cooperation is critical. Operating in a different way would incur significant financial losses and render any expenditure futile. For example, Somalian pirates in Africa have reigned terror amongst many ocean transport companies in the area. Only through large-scale international cooperation was policing the area possible. Therefore, crime reduction can be attributed to a joint effort between countries.

To conclude, illegal activities are a costly and dangerous fact in the present global economy; however, through large-scale government investment prevention is an attainable goal. Also, spreading the expense through international cooperation the resources invested can be significantly more effective in reducing criminals' effectiveness abroad.

20. Should education and healthcare be free of charge and funded by the government, or should it be the responsibility of the people to pay for these services? Discuss the above and give your opinion using examples.

A healthy and educated society is the backbone of any successful society; however, deciding who is to provide this is a sensitive topic. I strongly believe the government should be held responsible to provide these services for two reasons. Firstly, the entire society benefits, and secondly the whole population is currently paying for the services. However, if one prefers extra services they should be prepared to pay for it themselves.

Firstly, education is largely considered a basic right. A population unable to calculate, read, write or even learn would be doomed in such a competitive global economy. Globalisation has increased competition and shifted the emphasis to knowledge, information and science. A state education should, therefore, be freely available to everybody. However, if people wish to purchase private education, this should also be allowed or even encouraged. Private education reduces the strain on public services and provides a source of tax revenue for the government, in effect, subsidising state education.

Secondly, health services must undoubtedly be available to all because the entire nation is paying taxes and, therefore, should not be excluded from any service. Take the NHS in the UK, for example; this organisation caters for the entire population, and no private medical insurance is needed. Unfortunately waiting lists can be long and service is occasionally slow; therefore, some purchase private medical insurance for a faster service. This reduces the workload of the public sector.

To conclude, I believe both healthcare and education are basic fundamental rights, necessary for any advanced society, and, therefore, the responsibility should lie with the government. Nevertheless, if individuals require more than the standard level, then they should be prepared to pay for it.

21. The United Nations recently celebrated its 70th anniversary. What benefits has it brought during this time? Do you think the UN will last another 70 years?

The United Nations was established at the end of the Second World War in order to provide a peaceful way to resolve national differences. Since its formation 70 years ago, there has not been a Third World War. Furthermore, the UN has expanded its global role to include many more activities besides peacekeeping. This essay will look at some of the UN's achievements and predict what the future might hold for the organisation.

It is difficult to imagine a world without the United Nations. The organisation plays a leading role in everything from conflict resolution and peacekeeping to emergency food aid and global public health. Many people trust the UN because it is a democratic organisation that reflects the interests of all its member states and not just one particular country. In this way, it can be argued that the UN has restricted the influence of powerful countries like the USA, Russia and China, while allowing smaller nations a say in global affairs. It is also effective at collecting funds from richer member states and redistributing it as economic aid or emergency assistance to parts of the world which need it most.

Yet the world is a very different place from how it looked in 1945, which has led some people to question the need for a powerful organisation like the UN. In particular, there are some proponents of free trade who argue that competition and not cooperation between nations is the fastest way to pursue economic development. However, I would argue that the more nations become interdependent, the more they will require a global forum to resolve their differences. While there are other global organisations that can play a similar role, such as the World Bank and International Criminal Court, none has the scope of the UN. For that reason, the UN is sure to exist for decades to come, and possibly for another 70 years.

In conclusion, the UN remains the most viable organisation for dealing with the world's problems, and this is unlikely to change very soon.