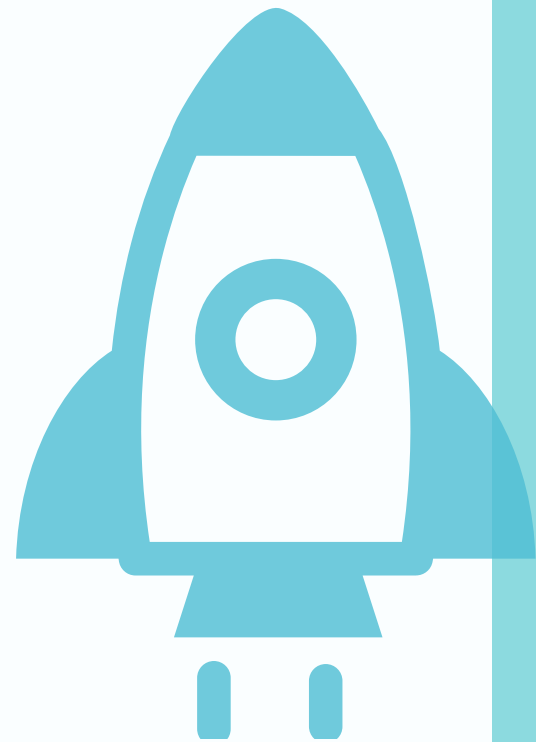




E-BOOK

20X TOPIC TOOLKITS TO **BOOST** YOUR SCORE



Essay topics | Sample Essays | Speaking
Questions | Resources | Vocabulary

For IELTS Academic & General



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LANGUAGE

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How to use the E2 IELTS Topic Toolkits

1. Use the **essay topics** to brainstorm and practise writing Task 2s for the IELTS Writing test.
2. Use the **speaking questions** to practise answering typical IELTS questions. Use them with a friend or record yourself and listen back.
3. Follow the links in the **resources section** to read articles, listen to podcasts and watch videos on the toolkit topic. Use the resources to
 - see/hear authentic English in use
 - discover ideas and language to use in your test
 - learn new vocabulary
 - practise reading/listening for overall meaning and detail
4. The **sample essays** are written by ex-IELTS examiners. Analyse their structure, linking and language.
5. Add your own translations and sample sentences to the **vocabulary** list. Transform the words into flash cards or read them into your phone to use as spelling tests. There's extra space to add your own words too—perhaps those you discover in the resources.

Watch this [YouTube video](#) from the E2 IELTS team for more information about using the Topic Toolkits.

Topic 1: Animals



Essay topics

Zoos are inhumane and pointless. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Wild animals serve no purpose in the modern world and trying to save them is a waste of money. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Some people believe that humans should be able to use animals for their own benefit, while others argue that the rights of animals should be protected. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Many animals are on the verge of extinction. What are some reasons for this? How can animals be protected?

With deforestation, urban development and illegal hunting, many animal species are becoming endangered and some are even facing extinction. Do you think it is important to protect animals? What can be done to deal with this problem?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about animals.

Do you like animals? (Why/Why not?)

What animals can you see in your city/country?

Are animals used in farming in your country? (Why/Why not?)

What animal would you like to see in the wild? (Why/Why not?)

Let's talk about pets.

Did you have a pet as a child? (Why/Why not?)

What kind of pets are popular where you come from? (Why/Why not?)

Why do people enjoy keeping pets?

Do you think it is good for children to grow up with a pet? (Why/Why not?)

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a pet you or someone you know has had.

You should say: What it looks like

What its personality is/was like

What kind of care it needs/needed

and say how you feel/felt about it.



Describe a wild animal you're interested in.

You should say: what it is
 what it looks like
 what you know about it
and say whether you will be able to see it in real life.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about zoos.

Why do most cities have a zoo?
How can zoos help people and animals?
Why are some people against zoos?
Do you think zoos have more benefits or more problems?
In the future, how could zoos be improved?

Let's talk about animals.

What are some ways that people use animals?
In your country, has the way people used animals changed much?
Why are some people passionate about animal welfare and others less so?
In the future, do you think more people will become vegetarian due to their concern for animal welfare?

Resources



Horton, D. **Rattling the Cages**, ABC

Wren, C. L. **Pets: Is it ethical to keep them?** The Conversation

Vidal, J. **We're losing species at shocking rates - so why is conservation failing?** The Guardian



Rewilding, Future Tense, ABC Radio National

How predators can help prevent extinction, Dr Euan Ritchie, Deakin University



How humans and animals can live together, Jane Goodall, TED Talk

Wolves of Yellowstone, National Geographic

Sample Essay



Topic:

Zoos are inhumane and pointless. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Love them or loathe them, zoos have been part of the cityscape for over 150 years. Recently, however, many have questioned their value and the quality of care provided to the animals. Personally, I feel that zoos are cruel, pointless and ought to be phased out.

Although many zoos have made great improvements over the years, there can be no doubt that the captive animals suffer. Not only are the enclosures usually far too small, but the climate and conditions are often completely unsuitable. Polar bears, for instance, travel across vast distances of ice daily and yet, in some tropical regions, they are kept in small pens with only a tiny pool for relief. In addition to this discomfort, zoo animals can suffer stress as a result of being kept with unfamiliar and unrelated cage-mates, not to mention the crowds of noisy visitors.

In terms of conservation, while zoos can assist in the preservation of endangered species, this effort is ultimately futile. The Sumatran tiger, for example, has been successfully bred in captivity, however, having been reared by humans, the captive population has lost its natural instinct to hunt, avoid humans, and raise its young. It would therefore be impossible to re-introduce these creatures into the wild. As well as this loss of instinct, there is also the loss of habitat to consider. Urban sprawl, industrialisation, farming and logging all contribute to the destruction of habitat, meaning that even if a captive bred population of pandas or tigers were ready for release, there is, in fact, nowhere left for them to go.

In conclusion, zoos may be able to keep animals alive but the quality of this life is poor and the animals' future prospects are bleak. Efforts should instead be made to preserve wilderness areas to ensure the long-term survival of species.

Vocabulary - Animals

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
captive (adj)	imprisoned, confined		(in) captivity	Zoos exhibit captive animals.	
carnivore (n)	a meat-eating animal		carnivorous (adj)	A lion is a carnivore.	
cattle (n)	cows (or similar animals) raised for milk or meat			Australia has a large cattle farming industry.	
endangered (adj)	seriously at risk of extinction		endanger (v)	Pandas are endangered.	
extinct (adj)	having no living members		extinction (n)	Dinosaurs went extinct 65 million years ago.	
fauna (n)	animals			The native fauna is unique.	
to forage (v)	search widely for food		forager (n)	Possums forage at night.	
fur (n)	the soft short hair of certain animals		furry (adj)	The cat's fur is grey.	
to graze (v)	to eat grass in a field		overgraze (v)	Cows graze all day.	
habitat (n)	natural home of an animal			A gum tree is a koala's habitat.	
herbivore (n)	an animal that feeds on plants		herbivorous (adj)	A zebra is a herbivore.	
humane (adj)	having/showing compassion		inhumane (adj)	Is it humane to keep animals in captivity?	
livestock (n)	farm animals			The country's main export is livestock.	
mammal (n)	warm-blooded animal that feeds its young on milk		mammalian (adj)	A mammal does not lay eggs.	
nocturnal (adj)	active at night			Bats are nocturnal.	
parasite (n)	organism that feeds on another organism		parasitic (adj)	A mosquito is a parasite.	
poacher (n)	illegal hunter		poach (v)	The poacher killed the endangered animal.	

Vocabulary - Animals

[illegible]

Topic 2: Art



Essay topics

Many governments spend a lot of money on art. Some people think this investment in art is necessary, but others say the money is better spent on improving health and education. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

All students should study art and music in school. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Modern technology has made it possible for people to view exhibitions at home, so museums and art galleries will disappear soon. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Advances in science and technology have made great changes to the lives of ordinary people, but artists such as musicians, painters and writers are still highly valued. What can the arts tell us about life that science and technology cannot?

Creative artists should always be given freedom to express their own ideas (in words, pictures, music or film) in whichever way they wish. There should be no government restrictions on what they do. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about painting and drawing.

Did you enjoy painting and drawing when you were a child?

Do you think painting and drawing are important activities for children?

Do you ever paint or draw now?

Do you think adults should paint draw more?

Let's talk about making things.

Did you make things as a child (e.g. artworks, cards, cakes)?

What kinds of things do children enjoy making these days?

Have you ever made something for your house?

Would you like to make anything in the future?



Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe an artwork (a painting, drawing, sculpture or decorative object) that you like.

You should say: What the piece of art is
 Where and when you saw it
 What it looks like or what it shows
and explain why you like this piece of art.

Describe a gallery or museum you know about.

You should say: Where it is
 What you know about it
 Why people visit it
and say whether you would like to visit it in the future.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about creativity.

Do you think creativity can be learned, or is it a natural talent?
How can parents help develop their child's creativity?
How important is creativity in the workforce?
Are there any drawbacks to being very creative?

Let's talk about artists.

Does your country have any famous artists?
Do you think governments should invest money in the arts?
What impact can art have on society (positive and negative)?
How important is it for an artist to have creative freedom?
How do you think art will change in the future?

Resources



Ricci, C. **Research shows cutting arts education a loss to all**, The Age
Robertson, T. **Arts in prison: why cut our chances to create crime-free futures**,
The Guardian
Kisida, B. & Bowen, D. **New evidence of the benefits of arts education**, Brookings



'Don't stop the music' : Harnessing the power of music, RN Breakfast, ABC
Radio National
Art or vandalism? 6-minute English, BBC



Creating art and meaning from waste, ABC Education
What makes art good or bad? ABC Education



Sample Essay

Topic:

Many governments spend a lot of money on art. Some people think this investment in art is necessary, but others say the money is better spent on improving health and education. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

It is generally accepted that art enriches a society and plays a valuable role in its culture and history. Although some support government investment in galleries, artistic organisations and other art-related matters, others feel that this money should be spent on public services. In this essay, I will consider both views and explain why I agree that state funding of the arts should be redirected.

Those who support government funding usually argue that it is essential to maintain a healthy arts scene. In Australia, the government pours millions of dollars into this sector, with the National Gallery alone receiving over \$8 million annually. Such institutions, it is claimed, are pillars of society, and money from the government makes them more accessible. Indeed, it is free to enter most public galleries and museums in Australia, thanks to the government's support. Smaller arts groups and emerging artists also benefit from government funding, and without it, many worry that arts bodies would not survive, and that society would be poorer for it.

There are others, however, myself included, who feel that these fears are unfounded, and that taxpayers' money would be more wisely spent on services that benefit the entire community. Already, many arts organisations not only survive but thrive without government handouts. The Museum of Old and New Art in Tasmania, for instance, is the state's major tourist attraction, despite earning money solely from ticket sales and private investors. This kind of self-sufficiency supports the claim that state money should instead go to hospitals which could certainly use more staff, more wards and better technology or schools where the money could be put towards updating facilities, hiring more teachers or improving their resources. These are services used by every citizen and, in many cases, they are severely underfunded.

In conclusion, even though state support of the arts has been a long tradition, there are many other ways for artists and organisations to raise funds. It is more important for the government to spend on vital services such as education and healthcare.

Vocabulary – Art

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
aesthetic (adj / n)	relating to the enjoyment or study of beauty		aesthetically (pleasing) (adv)	She appreciates the aesthetic quality of the building.	
abstract (adj)	using shapes, lines, and colour in a way that does not try to represent reality			He is most famous for his abstract pieces.	
artefact (n)	an object made by a person, such as a tool or decoration, usually of historical interest			The museum contains many artefacts from the local area.	
artwork (n)	a piece of art			The government paid for a new artwork next to the freeway.	
canvas (n)	a heavy, closely woven fabric			The painter started a fresh canvas.	
carve (v)	to make something by cutting into wood or stone (for example)		carving (n) carver (n)	He carved a figure from the wood.	
censorship (n)	restriction on access to ideas and information		censor (v) censor (n) censored (adj)	The artist fought against censorship of her work.	
collaborate (v)	work together on a common enterprise or project		collaboration (n) collaborative (adj)	The artists decided to collaborate on a new project.	
craft (n)	an activity involving skill in making things by hand		crafty (adj) craft (v)	You can buy local crafts from the store.	
creative (adj)	having the ability or power to invent or make something		creativity (adj) create (v)	Children are often very creative.	
curate (v)	select and care for objects to be shown in a museum or to form part of a collection or exhibition		curator (n) curation (n)	She curated an exhibition of Japanese pottery.	
eclectic (adj)	made up of a variety of sources or styles			I have eclectic taste in music; I like all kinds of it.	
exhibition (n)	public display of works of art or items of interest		exhibit (v)	His exhibition will feature his new drawings.	
gallery (n)	a room or building for the display or sale of artworks			The gallery is closed for renovations.	

Vocabulary - Art

[illegible]

Topic 3: Communication



Essay topics

Some people believe that handwriting is no longer useful in the modern world and should not be taught in schools. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

These days the internet is easily accessible to children. Is this a positive or a negative development?

Nowadays people use social media to keep in touch with others and be aware of the news. Do the advantages of this outweigh the disadvantages?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about writing.

Do you prefer to write letters or emails?

How often do you send letters or emails?

When did your last receive a handwritten letter?

Do you think people will still send letters in the future?

Let's talk about chatting with friends.

How often do you chat with your friends?

Do you think men or women prefer to chat with friends more?

What kinds of things do your friends like to chat about?

Do you think chatting with friends is a good way to spend time?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a piece of advice you received recently

You should say:
When this happened
Who gave you the advice
What the advice was

and explain how you felt about receiving this advice.



Describe a speech that somebody gave and you heard.

You should say: Who gave the speech
 What the topic was
 How you felt at the time
and say what you liked or disliked about the speech.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about communicating online.

What are some ways people communicate online?

What are some of the benefits of using the internet to communicate?

Are there any drawbacks of communicating online?

Do you think older people and younger people feel differently about this kind of communication?

Let's talk about public speaking.

When do people tend to give speeches in your culture?

Why do you think people fear public speaking so much?

What are the important aspects of a good speech?

Can *anyone* learn to be a good public speaker, do you think?

Resources



Crines, A. S. **How to make a historic speech**, The Conversation

Nosheen, I. **Have smartphones killed the art of conversation?**, The Guardian

Favila, E. **How the internet changed the way we write**, The Guardian



The bilingual brain, All in the Mind, ABC Radio National

Body language, Stuff You Should Know



Do whales communicate in different accents? Seeker

10 ways to have a better conversation, TED Talks

Sample Essay



Topic:

Some people think that because of email, social media and telephones, communication among people is less personal now than it used to be. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Communication between people has never been faster or easier than it is now, thanks to the development of information technology and the Internet in particular. Some people, however, claim that despite these advancements, people's communication is more superficial, and lacking genuine interaction. While I agree that this is true to some extent, I feel that the modern tools of email, mobiles and social media platforms create wider networks and greater intimacy.

Certainly, it could be argued that more traditional methods of communicating had a more personal touch. Take the handwritten letter as an example. It used to be the case that to contact someone living abroad, we had to write out a letter or card by hand, buy a stamp and envelope, take it to the post office, and wait for weeks until it reached its destination. Upon arrival, it is easy to imagine that the recipient felt a much greater sense of connection than they would these days simply clicking on an email or opening a WhatsApp message. Similarly, speaking on the phone, as opposed to sending a text, could also be viewed as a more personal interaction. I would argue, however, that such views of the past are clouded by nostalgia rather than truth.

Modern forms of communication, by contrast, create even stronger connections between people. Nowadays, when living abroad, we can maintain our relationships as if we were living under the same roof. Given that it is free to message and email, there is not the need to keep interactions brief and irregular. In fact, friends and loved ones can be in almost constant contact, regardless of their geographic proximity. In addition to this physical ability to keep in touch, there is also the depth of intimacy that comes from sharing pictures and stories on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. These tools enable us to have access to aspects of our loved ones' lives that we never had before. We can share in celebrations, tragedies and triumphs, all of which strengthen our bonds and networks.

In conclusion, communication has definitely changed dramatically in the last fifty years. Although some feel a sentimental yearning for the old days, I feel that modern devices and tools have enhanced the way we interact with each other.

Vocabulary – Communication

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
articulate (adj)	able to express ideas and feelings clearly in words		inarticulate (adj)	She's an intelligent and articulate woman.	
chat (v)	to talk with someone in a friendly and informal way		chatty (adj)	Can we chat after class?	
compose (v)	to write a speech, letter, etc, thinking carefully about the words to use		composition (n) composer (n)	He spent hours composing his love letter.	
connect (v)	to join two things or places together		connection (n) disconnect (v)	You use particular words to connect your ideas in an essay.	
content (n)	the information or ideas that are talked about in a book, speech, film, etc			The website's content is constantly updated.	
delivery (n)	the way in which someone speaks in public		deliver (v)	People were moved by his powerful delivery.	
engaging (adj)	pleasant, attractive, and charming		engage (v) engagement (n)	She has a very engaging manner.	
gesture (n)	a movement of the hands, arms, or head, etc. to express an idea or feeling		gesture (v)	Her gestures during her speech were quite distracting.	
(be) glued to (v)	to be watching something, especially television, with all your attention			The kids were glued to the TV all afternoon.	
gossip (n)	conversation or reports about other people's private lives that might be unkind, disapproving, or not true		gossip (v) gossip column (n)	I don't like it when people spread gossip, especially at work.	
handwritten (adj)	written with a pen or pencil		handwriting (n)	Receiving a handwritten letter is quite rare these days.	
interaction (n)	the activity of talking and doing things with other people, or the way you do this		interactive (adj) interact (v)	Many online courses require interaction via forums or chat board.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
keep in touch (v)	to communicate or continue to communicate with someone by telephoning, or writing to them		be in touch (v) get in touch (v) stay in touch (v) lose touch (v)	It's easy to keep in touch these days with messaging and social media.	
misunderstand (v)	to think you have understood someone or something when you have not		misunderstanding (n)	When you don't speak the same language fluently, it can be easy to misunderstand each other.	
orator (n)	someone who gives good speeches		oratory (adj)	Obama is considered to be a brilliant orator.	
public speaking (n)	the activity of speaking on a subject to a group of people			Many people have a chronic fear of public speaking.	
tactful (adj)	careful not to say or do anything that could upset someone		tact (n) tactless (adj)	Mentioning her weight was not very tactful.	
recipient (n)	a person who receives something			A letter writer needs to consider how the recipient will interpret their words.	
rhetoric (n)	speech or writing intended to be effective and influence people		rhetorical (adj)	I was persuaded by his rhetoric to change my vote.	
verbal (adj)	spoken rather than written		verbalise / verbalize (v)	They had a verbal agreement but no contract.	

Topic 4: Crime



Essay topics

Many criminals re-offend after they have been punished. Why do some people continue to commit crimes after they have been punished, and what measures can be taken to tackle this problem?

In many countries, an increase in crime has been blamed on violent images on television and in computer and video games. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

In most countries, prison is the most common solution when people commit a crime. However, if they were to receive better education, it could prevent them from becoming criminals. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

In many cities, the use of video cameras in public places is being increased in order to reduce crime, but some people believe that these measures restrict our individual freedom. Do the benefits of increased security outweigh the drawbacks?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about rules.

What are some common rules in your country (e.g. driving rules, public transport rules)?

Do you usually follow the rules?

Do you think young people or older people follow the rules more?

Is it important for people to follow rules?

Let's talk about TV shows about crime.

Are TV shows about crime popular in your country?

Do you like watching TV shows about crime?

Have you ever watched a documentary about crime?

Do you think men or women prefer TV shows about crime?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a good law you know about.

You should say:

What it is

How you know about it

What people think about this law

and explain why you think that it is a good law.



Describe a new law you would like to introduce in your country.

You should say:

What it would be

How easy it would be to introduce it

How popular it would be

And say what the benefits of the new law would be.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about rules and regulations:

What are the most common rules or laws that people break in your country?

How can this law-breaking be tackled?

How important is it to follow rules in your society? (eg road rules, public transport rules...)

Do children or adults break rules more often? Why?

Now, let's talk about crime and punishment:

Do you think it's better to put criminals in prison or to rehabilitate them in the community?

Should each criminal receive the same sentence or should each crime be considered individually?

In the future, how do you think technology will influence crime? (eg computers)

Resources



Causes of crime, BBC Bitesize

To prevent reoffending, how about giving former prisoners support?

Edward, J. The Guardian



The crime gene, Law Report, ABC

Perfect Evidence, This American Life



How Norway reinvented prison, Bloomberg

The importance of rehabilitation for prisoners, Community Restorative Centre

LANGUAGE

Sample Essay

Topic:

Many criminals re-offend after they have been punished. Why do some people continue to commit crimes after they have been punished, and what measures can be taken to tackle this problem?

Crime is a pervasive problem in most countries around the world. Despite penalties such as incarceration and fines, many criminals are likely to re-offend. In this essay, I will outline two main reasons for this and suggest some ways to reduce recidivism.

Criminals commit offences after punishment for several reasons. One major factor is their background. If a person comes from a criminal family, for instance, or has friends involved in drugs and burglaries, it can be difficult for them to escape this world. In addition to their upbringing and environment, substance abuse may increase the likelihood of a person returning to crime. Indeed, the majority of crime in Australia stems from drug and alcohol addiction. If these issues and addictions are left untreated, it is inevitable that the offender, seeking money or a high, will return to a life of crime after serving their time.

Despite the seriousness of the reoffending problem, there are a number of possible ways to remedy the situation. The key factor is the treatment of the underlying issues. In many cases, this may mean addiction rehabilitation in prison or in the community. In other cases, providing education programs or training can enhance employability, which would dramatically reduce their risk of re-offending. Offering work placements or providing job-hunting assistance after jail or community service would also help to improve former criminals' prospects.

In conclusion, the reasons behind reoffending are complex. Although it can be a vicious cycle, driven by background and addiction problems, it can be reduced by effective intervention initiatives and greater support in the community.

Vocabulary - Crime

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
commit (v)	to do something illegal or that is considered wrong			If you commit a crime, you may be arrested.	
criminal (n)	someone who commits a crime		crime (n) criminality (n)	The criminal escaped from prison.	
inmate (n)	prisoner			Inmates in the prison have access to a library and computer room.	
homicide (n)	murder		homicidal (adj)	He was found guilty of homicide.	
incarceration (n)	keeping someone in prison		incarceration (n) incarcerate (v)	Incarceration rates continue to rise.	
judge (n)	a person in charge of a trial in course and who decides how to punish a guilty person		judgement (n)	The judge ordered him to serve thirty hours of community service.	
jury (n)	a group of people who listen to a trial and decide if the person is guilty or not			The jury was unable to reach a decision.	
justice (n)	behaviour or treatment that is fair and morally correct		justice system (n)	He campaigned for justice for the victims of the attack.	
law (n)	an official rule in a country			He broke the law, and he was punished.	
mugging (n)	an attack in a public place in which money, etc is stolen from someone		mug (v) mugger (n)	Several witnesses saw the mugging but were unable to catch the offender.	
offender (n)	someone who has committed a crime		offend (v) reoffend (v) offense (n)	The police found the offender hiding in a park.	
prison (n)	a place where criminals are kept as punishment		imprison (v) imprisonment (n)	He spent six years in prison for the robbery.	
recidivism (n)	the act of continuing to commit crimes even after having been punished		recidivist (n)	Homelessness is a major factor in recidivism.	
rehabilitate (v)	return something to a good condition		rehabilitation (n)	Some prisons provide rehabilitation programs for drug and alcohol addiction.	

Topic 5: Culture and Society



Essay topics

Differences between countries become less evident each year. Nowadays, all over the world people share the same fashions, advertising, brands, eating habits and TV channels. Do the advantages of this trend outweigh the disadvantages?

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?

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 would cause a loss of culture. What is your opinion?

In the developed world, average life expectancy is increasing. What problems will this cause for individuals and society? Suggest some measures that could be taken to reduce the impact of ageing populations.

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about festivals.

What are the important festivals where you come from?

How do people celebrate these festivals?

Do young people or older people enjoy these festivals more?

Do you think people will still celebrate these festivals in the future?

Let's talk about birthdays in your country.

At what age do people begin to celebrate birthdays?

How do people in your country celebrate birthdays?

Do you eat special food on birthdays?

Do you celebrate the birthdays of important people in your society? (leaders, heroes)

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a party you went to recently.

You should say: Why the party was held
 Who attended the party
 What did people do at the party
and say what you thought about the party.



Describe an important yearly event held in your country.

You should say: What the event is called
 Why it is held
 How people celebrate it
and say how you feel about this event.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about cultural traditions.

What are the most important traditions that people in your country follow (e.g. eating habits, greetings, holidays)

Do young people still learn about traditions and customs? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?

How important is it for a culture to maintain its traditions, in your view?

In the future, will it be possible for countries to preserve their cultural traditions?

Resources



Humans were not centre stage': how ancient cave art puts us in our place, Ehrenreich, B. The Guardian

The longevity dividend: how ageing populations could boost productivity, Flynn, M. The Conversation



The rise of Netflix - an empire built on debt, Asthana, A. The Guardian

The urban explorer, Garnett, Dr B. The Guardian



What was it like to grow up under China's one child policy? Wang, N, TED Talk

Who really wins from globalisation? GEDProject



Topic:

In the developed world, average life expectancy is increasing. What problems will this cause for individuals and society? Suggest some measures that could be taken to reduce the impact of ageing populations.

In developed countries, people are living longer than ever. In this essay I will discuss some of the challenges this brings and propose ways in which the consequences of a rise in the number of older citizens can be mitigated.

While the addition of a decade or more onto our lives can be wonderful, there are inevitably challenges that will arise for the individual. One of these is the onset of debilitating diseases such as alzheimers and diabetes. These diseases not only make it difficult to continue to enjoy a normal life but also put a great strain on other members of the family who may have to bear much of the burden of care financially and/or physically. Another issue is the financial strain the elderly themselves can be under. If they retired at the age of 65 but live beyond 90, they may well find that their savings run out and they become either destitute or reliant on state or family care.

Clearly, society as a whole is impacted as well. As an increasing proportion of a country's resources end up being dedicated to the care of the elderly, much needed funds are taken away from other areas of society such as schooling and security. In the UK, for example, the budget for aged care has risen by millions of pounds, though it is still not enough to provide adequate care for pensioners. Meanwhile, schools and law enforcement have had their budgets slashed, to the detriment of education standards and public safety.

In order to adapt to this new reality, several steps can be taken. The most obvious one would be to increase the age of retirement. Rather than force people to give up work at 65, which could eventually place them in dire financial circumstances, healthy individuals should be encouraged to continue working longer. This would mean more taxes paid, and less money flowing out into pensions. A second simple measure would be to prioritise preventative healthcare. In other words, rather than wait for aged people to develop illnesses, the government should subsidise exercise programs, nutrition classes, and even fund practitioners to conduct home visits in order to keep elderly people active members of society for longer.

In conclusion, we can see clearly that both individuals and society are struggling to find a way to deal with increasing life expectancy. Increasing the retirement age and providing early health services are just two ways the authorities can work to reduce the pressure of ageing populations.

Vocabulary – Culture and Society

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
culture (n)	the way of life for an entire society		cultural(adj) cultured (adj)	There was such lot of culture in the city: theatre, cinema, jazz, opera, art and much more.	
cultural diversity (n)	differences between cultures			Cultural diversity makes travel a rich experience.	
culture shock (n)	confusion or anxiety when exposed to different culture			On her first trip to India it took her a few days to get over the culture shock.	
custom (n)	a way of behaving or a belief that has been established for a long time		customary (adj)	It's the custom in my country to get married in white.	
currency (n)	money used in a particular country			You can take out foreign currency at the airport before you travel.	
developed (adj) (country)	a country with a lot of industrial activity and where people generally have high incomes			Many developed countries are facing problems with obesity.	
developing (adj) (country)	a country with little industrial and economic activity and where people generally have low incomes			Freer trade could reduce poverty in developing countries.	
civilisation (n)	when a society has reached an advanced stage of development		civilised (adj) civilise (v) civilising (adj) civil (adj)	Many great civilisations collapsed because of environmental changes.	
global (adj)	all over the world		globally (adv)	New technologies have helped to develop a global culture.	
globalisation (n)	local phenomena transformed into global ones			An example of globalisation is the integration of global economies.	
interconnected	with different parts or things connected or related to each other		interconnectedness (n)	The world has become more interconnected as a result of the Internet.	
lingua franca (n)	a language used for communication between groups of people who speak different languages			English is the lingua franca in many business settings.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
multicultural (adj)	including people who have many different customs and beliefs		multiculturalism (n)	It has become a very multicultural city, thanks to immigration and tourism.	
policy (n)	a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed officially			The tourism industry was affected by changes to the economic policy.	
poverty (n)	the condition of being extremely poor		the poverty line (n)	Two million people in the city live in poverty.	
stereotype (n)	a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong		stereotypical (adj)	She doesn't conform to the stereotype of an English woman.	
taxpayers (n)	a person who pays tax			Taxpayers had to contribute to the new sports stadium.	
tolerance (n)	willingness to accept behaviour and beliefs that are different from your own		tolerant (adj) intolerance (n) tolerate (v)	The country is known for its tolerance of different beliefs and religions.	
trade (n)	the activity of buying and selling, or exchanging, goods and/or services between people or countries		trade (v)	The two countries signed a new trade agreement.	
trend (n)	a general development or change in a situation or in the way that people are behaving		trendy (adj)	There was an upward trend in house prices.	

Topic 6 : Education



Essay topics

Only formal examinations, written or practical, can give a clear picture of students' true knowledge and ability at university level. Continuous assessment like course work and projects are poor measures of student ability. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

In many countries, schools have severe problems with student behaviour. What do you think are the causes of this? What solutions can you suggest?

Many people say that the only way to guarantee a good job is to complete a course of university education. Others claim that it is better to start work after school and gain experience in the world of work. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about high school.

What subjects did you like in high school?

Was there anything you didn't like about high school?

Do you still keep in touch with friends from high school?

Have you ever been back to visit your old high school?

Let's talk about learning new things.

Do you enjoy learning new things?

What new thing have you learned recently?

What new thing would you like to learn in the future?

Do you think most people enjoy learning new things?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a subject you would like to study in the future.

You should say: What it is

How long it would take to study it

Where you would study it

and say why you would like to study this subject.



Describe a teacher who you liked at school.

You should say: What this teacher taught
 What qualities this teacher had
 Whether other students liked her/him
and say how this teacher helped you.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about education.

Do you think education is only for young people?
Do you think education should be free?
How important is education in the workforce?
Do you think companies should pay for their staff to study?
How has the internet changed education?
In the future, will it be easier or harder to gain a qualification?

Resources



Chinese students top the PISA rankings but some Shanghai parents are turning away from the school system, Soong, H. *The Conversation*
Italy to put sustainability and climate at the heart of school curriculum, Rodal, K. *The Guardian*



Universities are making us ill - the student mental health crisis, Shackle, S. *The Guardian*



Empowering 1 million school girls in India, Husain, S. *TED Talk*
A new way to get every child ready for kindergarten, Miner, C. *TED Talk*

Sample Essay



Topic:

In many countries, schools have severe problems with student behaviour. What do you think are the causes of this? What solutions can you suggest?

Many schools around the world are facing a variety of challenges. In a number of countries, students are causing their schools serious problems because of the way they behave. In this essay, I will outline why this is happening and suggest two possible ways to curb bad behaviour.

One of the main factors driving this problem is lack of discipline at school. Whereas in the past, schools and teachers maintained extremely strict rules regarding everything from hairstyles to handwriting neatness, now there are few boundaries and expectations. Indeed, just this month, a Sydney school teacher was physically attacked by three students, and not one of them was suspended, let alone expelled. Without explicit and firmly enforced rules, such incidents serve to further encourage other students to play up as there seems to be no consequences.

The other contributing factor related to parents. Those who are excessively lenient at home, allowing their children to set their own rules and essentially run wild, must also be held accountable when their child behaves badly at school. The problem is, even if the teachers report and punish the bad behaviour, many parents refuse to accept the matter, preferring instead to undermine the school's authority, and further fuel their child's delinquency.

Clearly, in order to manage the problem, it must be tackled both at school and at home. On an institutional level, school authorities need to get tough on bad behaviour. That means they need to set rules regarding uniforms, homework, classroom conduct, and other important areas. If the rules are broken, the teachers must have the power to discipline by, for instance, giving a detention or banning the student from school social events. On the home front, parents too need to set up and get tough. Without expectations and limitations around behaviour, they are setting their child up for a life of trouble.

In conclusion, both schools and parents are, to varying degrees, culpable when it comes to problems with students. With a concerted joint effort, however, steps can be taken to improve standards and, ultimately, help students succeed in society.

Vocabulary – Education

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
basic education (n)	primary and lower secondary education			A person who receives a basic education is better equipped for life.	
compulsory (adj)	(of something) that must be done; necessary by law or a rule		compulsorily (adv)	Art classes are compulsory until high school in some countries.	
curriculum (n)	formal plan for teaching and learning		curricular (adj) curricula (n, plural)	Activities which are not part of the curriculum are called extra curricular activities.	
drop out (v)	to stop going to classes before finishing a course		dropout (n)	He dropped out of the course after just one semester.	
education (n)	process of teaching or learning and knowledge acquired		educate (v) educational (adj) educator (n) educated (adj)	Receiving a full education is a fundamental human right.	
enroll (v)	put one's name down for a course		enrolment (n)	She enrolled at university to do a BA in architecture.	
extracurricular (adj)	an activity or subject that is not part of the usual school or college course.			His mother signed him up for a range of extracurricular activities including soccer and piano.	
faculty (n)	department in a university			Leeds University is famous for its engineering faculty.	
graduate (v)	complete a level of education eg. high school or university		graduate (adj) graduate (n) graduation (n)	When she graduated from university she was only 23.	
illiteracy (n)	condition of being unable to read or write		illiterate (adj) literate (adj) literacy (n)	Illiteracy is one of the key factors which holds back a country's development.	
lecture (n)	lesson at university often with a large audience		lecturer (n) lecture in (v)	Her lectures were always well attended.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
literature (n)	written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value			My passion from literature comes from my Grade 6 English teacher.	
major in (v)	choose the main subject at university		major (n) double major	She majored in physics but ended up doing a masters in oceanography.	
master's (n)	post graduate course eg MA, MEd, MSc			Completing a master's degree no longer guarantees employment.	
plagiarism (n)	the process or practice of using another person's ideas or work and pretending that it is your own		plagiarise / plagiarise (v) plagiarist (n)	She was expelled from the course for plagiarism.	
tertiary (adj)	relating to education in colleges and universities			She completed her tertiary studies in Canada.	
thesis (n)	extended piece of research and writing as part of an MA or PhD			It took him three years to complete his doctoral (PhD) thesis.	
tutorial (n)	meeting with a professor either individually or in a small group		tutor (n) tutoring (n)	I attended all of my tutorials and they were the best part of my university course.	
undergraduate (n)	student studying for their first degree		undergraduate (adj) eg. course undergrad (n) (informal)	Being an undergrad(uate) was the best time of my life.	
vocational (adj) course	course which teaches skills for a specific job		vocation (n)	He's halfway through a vocational course in hospitality.	

Topic 7: Entertainment



Essay topics

Many people prefer to watch foreign films rather than locally produced films. Why could this be? Should governments give more financial support to local film industries?

In most developed countries shopping is not only about buying the goods you need, it is also perceived as entertainment. Is it a positive or negative development?

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. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about going to the cinema.

How often do you go to the cinema?

Do you think young people or older people prefer going to the cinema?

Would you like to go to the cinema more in future?

Why do some people prefer to watch movies at home?

Let's talk about entertainment at home.

How do people in your country entertain themselves at home?

What do you like to do in the evening for entertainment at home?

Is home entertainment different today than in the past?

How do you think people will entertain themselves at home in future?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a way you like to spend your leisure time.

You should say: what you do
 who you do this with
 where you do this

and say why you like to spend your leisure time like this.

Describe a popular way people in your country spend their leisure time.

You should say: what it is
 how often they do it
 what you think about it
and say why you think it is popular.



Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about TV.

How has the kind of TV shows we watch changed in recent years?

Do you think the quality of TV is getting better or worse?

What rules (if any) do you think parents should have regarding their children and TV?

Now that we can watch TV shows online, will traditional TV still exist in the future?

Let's talk about free (leisure) time

What are some ways that people spend their free time?

In your country, has the way people spend their leisure time changed much?

Why do some people work most of the time and have very little leisure?

How can this lack of leisure time have an impact on individuals and society?

Resources



Video games can change your brain, Science Daily

The art of writing for children, Williams, S. The Conversation



Hulver, J. **Inside the booming business of background music**, The Guardian

Snapes, L. **How Robyn transformed pop**, The Guardian



What streaming means for the future of entertainment Shear, E. TED Talk

The transformative power of video games, Narula, H. TED Talk

Sample Essay



Topic:

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. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Over many thousands of years, humans have used the time when they are not working in different ways. These days, there are two main views as to how our leisure time should be employed, either actively or for rest. In this essay, I will discuss both perspectives and give my opinion, which is that both views are valid.

Many feel that cognitively stimulating activities should be pursued during leisure time. The idea behind this, which is well-supported by scientific research, is that when we use our minds, we keep the synapses or connections in our brains in good condition. Games like sudoku, crosswords, puzzles or more high-tech activities on apps or websites have indeed been proven to keep our minds alert and sharp, and even ward off dementia. Although the claims some of the creators of these make that they can change the very structure of our brains or enlarge its capacity may well be exaggerated, there is enough reliable evidence that they can benefit our minds.

The other view, however, is that leisure time ought to be devoted to mental rest. Given the overwhelmingly long work hours expected nowadays, along with the stress of being eternal contactable, thanks to our phones, there is good reason for people to advocate switching off. Indeed, there is plenty of research to show how healing and beneficial a walk in nature can be or how calming and renewing it is to simply sit quietly in meditation or contemplation using our mental faculties as little as possible. A study of Buddhist monks too showed that when they were deep in meditation, their cells regenerated more rapidly and their bodies' ageing processes slowed down.

Personally, I see the value in both uses of leisure time. Following periods of extreme stress, problem-solving, or meetings with lots of people, spending time alone doing nothing can be hugely re-energising. Similarly, after spending a day doing monotonous work or without much mental stimulation, a good book or challenging puzzle can have the same impact. There is no point, in my view, in declaring one form of leisure better than another.

In conclusion, I think that it is true to say that both an active leisure time and one of relaxation are good for us. In the former, the mind benefits from stimulation and in the latter from being used very little.

Vocabulary – Entertainment

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
acclaim (n)	public approval and praise		acclaimed (adj)	The movie opened to critical acclaim.	
amateur (n) (adj)	doing something as a hobby and not as your job		amateurish (adj)	He's only an amateur photographer, but his work is brilliant.	
amuse (v)	a feeling of delight at being entertained		amusement (n) amusing (adj) amusement park	There are many ways you can amuse yourself. Going to the movies is a good one.	
applaud (v)	show appreciation by clapping hands		applause (n)	Applaud if you like the show but don't boo if it's bad.	
art gallery (n)	building where art (paintings, sculpture etc) are on show			Art galleries in many cities are free to enter.	
artist (n)	painter, musician, singer, comedian, dancer etc.		artistic (adj) artistry (n)	The artist won an award for his painting.	
ballet (n)	a type of dancing		ballerina (n) ballerino (n)	The ballet was first performed in 1980.	
blockbuster (n)	a book or film that is very successful			After he starred in the blockbuster, he took on smaller roles.	
boo (v)	expression of dislike made with the voice		booing (n)	The politician was booed at the end of his speech.	
cast (n)	all the actors in a film or play		cast (v)	The movie was terrible despite the A-list cast.	
console (n)	a computer system specially made for playing video games			She got the latest gaming console for her birthday.	
critic (n)	someone whose job is to give their opinion about something, especially films, books, music, etc.		criticise (v) critical (adj)	The movie critic wrote a scathing review.	
documentary (n)	a film or television or radio programme that gives facts and information about a subject		document (v)	The documentary followed a family of elephants for three years.	
narrator (n)	the character who tells you what is happening in a book or film		narration (n) narrative (n) (adj) narrate (v)	He played the narrator in the stage version of the film.	

Topic 8: Environment



Essay topics

With deforestation, urban development and illegal hunting, many animal species are becoming endangered and some are even facing extinction.

Do you think it is important to protect animals? What can be done to deal with this problem?

Many people think it is very important to protect the environment but they make no effort to do it themselves. Why do you think this is the case? What actions should individuals take to protect the environment?

Explain some of the ways in which humans are damaging the environment. What can governments do to address these problems? What can individual people do?

Nowadays environmental problems are too big to be managed by individual persons or individual countries. In other words, it is an international problem. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about spending time in nature.

How often do you spend time in nature?

Are there natural places where you live (e.g. gardens, forests)?

What do you enjoy doing when you spend time in nature?

Would you like to spend more time in nature?

Let's talk about helping in the environment.

Are you interested in the environment?

Do you do anything to try and help the environment?

How do people in your area feel about the environment?

What would you like to do to help the environment in the future?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a place near water where you enjoy spending time.

You should say: What it looks like

 Where it is

 What you do there

and say why you enjoy spending time there.



Describe a park you like to visit.

You should say: Where it is
 What it looks like
 What you do in the park
and say why you like to spend time there.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about environmental problems.

Where you live, what local environmental issues are people concerned with?
What are some of the biggest environmental problems your country is facing?
Do you think governments are doing enough to reduce environmental damage?
What can individuals do to help the environment?
How important is international cooperation when it comes to dealing with environmental problems?
In the future, will it be possible to repair the environment?

Resources



The solution to the plastic waste crisis? The Guardian
How much does flying contribute to climate change? The Conversation



Saving the Ocean, part 1, Off Track, ABC Radtion National
When the ice melts. The catastrophe of vanishing glaciers. Jamail, D. The Guardian



How empowering women and girls can help stop global warming,
Wilkinson, K. YouTube
The Amazon belongs to humanity - let's protect it together, Yawanawa, T
and L TED Talks



Sample Essay

Topic:

Many people think it is very important to protect the environment but they make no effort to do it themselves. Why do you think this is the case? What actions should individuals take to protect the environment?

It is abundantly clear today that our environment is under threat. There are many who believe in the importance of looking after it but take no action themselves to do this. In this essay I will suggest why this is happening and propose ways in which anyone can give our environment some of the protection it needs.

The main reason why people take no action to take care of their environment is because they are largely cut off from it. Let us take the example of half of our world's population who are now living in urban areas. They often reside in high rise air-conditioned apartments, travel to work on trains and buses and rarely leave the city. Their offices are cooled too so, being mostly unaffected by pollution, global heating and other symptoms of our disregard for our environment, they have few daily reminders of the need to do anything to protect it. Although they recognise that their world needs their help, they are not sufficiently affected or inconvenienced by decades of failure to care for it.

There are so many ways in which people could act in support of their environment. The two I would propose take a lead from the saying, 'Think globally, act locally'. Because it is usually overwhelming for an individual when she thinks about how to protect the planet, the first action to take is to lobby elected officials such as members of parliament and local councillors to share her concerns, ask what environmental policies are in place and find out what her state and country representatives are doing to protect the environment. On a local level, in every city around the world there are groups actively engaged in caring for and improving their neighbourhood which anyone can join. From street gardens which supply free produce to citizens to groups campaigning for greener transport options, from food cooperatives which grow food on rooftops and in underground car parks to those working to better recycle plastic waste, there are numerous ways the individual can take action to look after the local environment.

Given the pressures of life, it is not surprising that people fail to act on their belief that it is important to protect the environment. Holding those we elect to account to take action and joining local initiatives to enhance the area we live in are two ways people can respond to their understanding of how important it is to look after the world we live in.

Vocabulary – Environment

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
air pollution	harmful chemicals and particles in the air			Air pollution can damage lungs for life.	
alternative (adj)	other		alternate (adj) alternate (v)	Alternative energy sources include wind, solar, water and biomass.	
atmosphere (n)	mass of air surrounding the earth		atmospheric (adj)	The earth's atmosphere extends up 100km above sea level.	
biodegradable (adj)	organic waste other organisms can break down			Biodegradable products are increasingly available.	
biodiversity (n)	variety of life on this planet		biodiverse (adj)	It is important to maintain biodiversity for a healthy planet.	
biomass (n)	a source of fuel made from plant materials			Fuel from biomass can power vehicles and machines.	
carbon credit (n)	unit of CO2 bought to reduce greenhouse gas emissions			Carbon credits are bought by companies to help them meet their CO2 reduction targets.	
carbon footprint (n)	measure activities have on the environment			We use bicycles instead of a car to reduce our carbon footprint.	
deforestation (n)	reduction of trees due to burning or logging		deforested (adj) deforest (v)	Deforestation can have a serious impact on the environment.	
dumping (n)	disposal of waste illegally		dump (v)	The dumping of waste is forbidden by law.	
ecosystem (n)	group of organisms which depend on one another and their environment			The introduction of foreign animals or plants can damage an ecosystem.	
emissions (n)	gases or particles released into the air		emit (v)	Diesel car emissions contribute greatly to city pollution.	
flora and fauna (n)	plants and animals			A healthy environment has a diversity of flora and fauna.	
fossil fuels (n)	fuels formed in the ground over a long time - mostly coal, gas and oil			The burning of fossil fuels causes the earth's atmosphere to heat up.	
habitat (n)	area lived in by a group of animals or plants			Many habitats have been destroyed by deforestation.	

Topic 9: Family



Essay topics

Children are influenced by their friend's opinions. In what ways are children affected by their friends? How can parents make sure this influence is positive?

Parents often buy their children many toys. What are the advantages and disadvantages of children having a large number of toys?

Young people spend less of their free time with their family nowadays. What are the reasons for this? Are there more negative or positive sides to it?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about families.

Do you have a big or small family?

What do you enjoy doing with your family?

Have you ever been on holiday with your family?

Will you see your family more or less in the future?

Let's talk about children.

Do you spend much time with children?

What do you enjoy doing when you spend time with children?

Do children today play with the same toys as children in the past?

Is technology good for children, do you think?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a family (not your own) which you know well.

You should say: Who are the members of the family
 How long you have known this family
 How often you see this family
and say why you like this family.



Describe two members of the same family.

You should say: How you know them
 In what ways they are similar
 In what ways they are different
and say how you feel about the two people.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about parenting.

Do you think it has become easier to be a parent?
How important is it for parents to be strict?
What kinds of punishments are best for children, do you think?
How has technology affected family life?
Will our idea of 'the family' change in the future?

Let's talk about the influence of families.

Do you think most children take after their parents?
How much influence do you think biology or genes have on our personalities?
Is the bond between families always stronger than between friends?

Resources



Teenagers with at least one close friend cope better with stress than those without, Evans-Whipp, T. & Gasser, C. The Conversation
How we stay together, Spring, A. The Guardian
Why so many young Swedes live alone, Savage, M. BBC



The designer who changed children's playgrounds for ever, Hume-Browne, M. The Guardian
How babies learn and why robots can't, Beard, A. The Guardian



Family hope and resilience on the migrant trail, Lowenstein, J. TED Talk
When do kids start to care about other people's opinions? Botto, S.
TED Talk

Sample Essay



Topic:

Young people spend less of their free time with their family nowadays. What are the reasons for this? Are there more negative or positive sides to it?

The youth of today has more choice and freedom than ever before. When they are not working or studying, many of them see less of their families than they used to. In my view, there are very few advantages to this development, some causes of which I will explore in this essay.

To begin with, there are a number of reasons teenagers and those in their twenties are with their families less during their leisure time, the main one being the need for them to work. A good example of this is in Indonesia where studies have shown that an increase in the cost of living has forced parents to ask their children who are still at school to work in the evenings and on Sundays and persuade those already in work to do overtime or work two jobs. Although this brings in much needed funds, it comes at a huge cost, depriving families of important time to relax and spend time together and causing stress and ill health through over work and lack of sleep.

Families these days are also unable to enjoy each other's company as they used to because young people are under increasing pressure. They are compelled to study and train in their spare time in the hope of securing a place at the best university or college or, if already in work, develop further skills to ensure they keep their positions and are favourably considered for promotion. This pressure to succeed in studies and work is huge as demonstrated by research by the London School of Economics, which revealed a huge increase in hours worked in unpaid internship positions both for those still students and for young graduates hoping to persuade a company to employ them. Again, the loss of precious time with families cannot compensate for the advantages which ensue although promotion may be achieved or jobs secured by this practice.

In conclusion, once that time with family has passed it cannot be regained. Clearly, whatever positives there are for young people from increased income or better job opportunities they cannot outweigh the negative impacts of spending less time with their families.

Vocabulary – Families

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
adoption (n)	parenting a child who is not biologically the adopting parent's		adopt (v) adoptive (adj) father/mother	She was adopted at six months and met her birth mother when she was 10.	
ancestor (n)	relative who is no longer living		ancestral (adj)	Her ancestors came from China centuries ago.	
bachelor (n)	male who has never been married			Having never married, he remained a bachelor for his whole life.	
care-giver (n)	person who looks after one or more family members		caring (adj) carer (n) care for (v)	When her mother passed away she became her father's main care-giver.	
childhood (n)	years from birth to when a child becomes an adult			Her family were very poor and she had a difficult childhood.	
de facto (wife or husband) (adj)	in practice			They live together but are not married. As de facto husband and wife they have the same rights as couples who are married.	
descendant (n)	relative who is no longer living.		descended from (adj)	One of her descendants was a Polish princess.	
divorce (v)	legally end a marriage		divorced (adj) divorce (n)	They divorced when they realised their marriage was not working.	
engaged (adj)	promised in marriage		engagement (n)	They have been engaged to be married since June.	
extended (adj) (family)	more than two generations of a family			Extended families are normal in many cultures with grand parents and even great grandparents living in the same house as parents and children.	
grow up (v)	become an adult		grown up (n) (adj)	When he grows up he says he wants to be a lawyer. He's only five!	
household (n)	people living in the same house, usually family		householder (n)	The average size of a household in the UK is 2.4 people.	
infant (n)	very young child between about 3 months and 1 year old		infancy (n)	She could speak a lot even when she was an infant.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
inherit (v)	to receive money or property on the death of a family member or friend		inheritance (n)	As the only child ,he inherited the family fortune when his father died.	
nuclear (adj) (family)	family consisting of parents and children			The nuclear family is now common in western countries.	
orphan (n)	child whose parents are dead		orphanage (n) orphan (v) orphaned (adj)	She became an orphan at five when her parents died.	
partner (n)	husband or wife, or equivalent in a de facto marriage			She's been his partner for 20 years though they never got married.	
related (adj)	connected by blood		relative (n) relation (n)	They are related. She's his second cousin.	
sibling (n)	brother or sister			He has three siblings: two sisters and a brother.	
single parent (n)	male or female parent with no partner			He's been a single parent of two children since his wife died two years ago.	
spouse (n)	wife or husband			Spouses may have more rights in law than de facto husbands and wives.	
twins (n)	two children born at the same time		twin brother twin sister	Identical twins are sometimes difficult to tell apart.	

Topic 10: Food and farming



Essay topics

All people should be vegetarian. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Some people claim that genetically modified (GM) food can be dangerous while others feel that it may bring enormous benefits to the world. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Junk food advertising has a harmful effect on society and should be banned. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about food.

What's your favourite food?

Is there any food you don't like?

Did you learn to cook as a child?

Should children learn to cook at school?

Let's talk about plants.

What plants do farmers in your country grow?

Have you ever given a plant as a gift?

Do you have plants in your house?

Would you like to have more plants in the future?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a traditional meal that is popular in your country.

You should say: what dishes make up this meal
 what ingredients are used to make these dishes
 when this meal is usually eaten

and say why people like it.



Describe a plant you like which grows in your country.

You should say: what it looks like
 where it grows
 what it is used for

and say why you like it.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about farming.

Is farming an important occupation where you come from?

How has farming changed in the last 50 years?

Are people in your country interested in knowing where their food comes from?

Do you think the way we grow food will change much in the future?

Let's talk about fast or junk food.

Why is fast food so popular?

In your country, is fast food easy to buy?

What are some of the benefits and dangers of eating fast food?

In the future, do you think fast food will become a larger part of people's diet? Why?

Should governments inform people about what is healthy to eat?

Should the advertising of fast food to children be controlled? Why?

Resources



World's best sushi restaurant loses 3 Michelin stars, The Guardian

Smith, G. **New rules of holiday eating**, The Guardian



Why do people hate vegans? Reynolds, G. The Guardian

The price of plenty. How beef changed America, Specht, J. The Guardian



The future of food: To GMO or not to GMO? Bates Ramirez, V.

Singularity Hub

The future of good food in China, Matilda Ho, Ted Talks

Sample Essay



Topic:

Junk food advertising has a harmful effect on society and should be banned. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Over the past decades, quick convenient food, often called fast or junk food, has become readily available, leading to serious problems including obesity, heart disease and high blood pressure. Many people hold the view that it is the advertising of this food that is responsible for these issues, and therefore ought to be stopped. While I do not support a complete ban on this form of marketing, I do feel that stricter regulations and greater transparency are needed.

Although an outright ban on fast food promotion may seem appealing, it would not be a sensible move. For starters, companies would suffer huge financial losses if they were unable to promote their products. Magnum Ice Creams, for instance, runs TV and billboard campaigns when they launch a new product, and if they were prevented from doing so, far fewer consumers would even know the new treat existed. This would inevitably lead to a reduction in revenue, possibly a fall in the company's stock prices, retrenchments and so on. The consumers have a right to know what is on the market, so, clearly, the solution need not be so drastic.

The alternative is to impose stricter laws regarding when and how advertising happens. This is particularly important when it comes to children. McDonald's is just one example of a company that deliberately advertises during children's shows, and actively seeks to push their marketing into schools and clubs. If the government limited the amount of junk food advertising during typical children's viewing hours on TV, and also banned it inside school gates, the problem of excessive consumption by youngsters could be tackled. Regarding the ad itself, authorities should also require that companies are upfront about the health risks of their product. A Coca Cola ad, for example, should contain the sugar quantity. Alerting people, especially parents, to the real nutritional value of junk foods through honest information in advertising, would form part of a public education program which could have, over time, a significant positive impact on the health of our societies.

There is now incontrovertible evidence that eating junk food harms our health. In my view, banning all promotion is an over-reaction, but limiting children's exposure, and informing consumers of what they are buying are better ways to manage the problem.

Vocabulary – Food & farming

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
addictive (adj)	substance a person is physically or psychologically dependent on		addict (n) addicted to (v) addiction (n)	Coffee can be addictive because of the caffeine in it.	
agriculture (n)	cultivation of the land		agricultural (adj)	In developed countries agriculture employs less than 5% of the work force.	
appetite (n)	desire to eat food sometimes because of hunger		appetizer (n)	When I was pregnant, my appetite increased.	
arable (adj)	arable land is suitable for, or used for, growing crops			The amount of arable land is decreasing.	
balanced (adj) diet	containing all that is needed to stay healthy		balance (n) balance (v)	Eat a balanced diet of healthy food and you'll fall ill less often.	
calorie (n)	energy contained in food		calorific (adj)	Reducing the calories you consume can help to lose weight.	
carbohydrate (n)				Foods such as potatoes and rice are high in carbohydrates.	
crops (n)	plants grown for food			They plant their crops in the spring before the rains come.	
cultivate (v)	grow		cultivation (n)	Rice is cultivated as a staple food in many countries.	
cuisine (n)	a way of eating typical of a country or region			A country's cuisine is a key feature of its culture.	
drought (n)	a severe shortage of rain			Many farmers went out of business during the drought.	
erosion (n)	loss of soil caused by water or wind		erode (v)	Poor farming methods lead to erosion.	
edible (adj)	able to be eaten		inedible (adj)	There are many plants that are not edible for humans.	
harvest (v)	pick or cut a food crop		harvest (n)	It takes about three days to harvest their rice crop.	
ingredient (n)	food which is part of a dish or recipe			I don't have all the ingredients I need to cook this dish.	
irrigate (v)	bring water to crops		irrigation (n) irrigator (n)	We have to irrigate our crops during the dry season.	



Topic 11: Global Issues

Essay topics

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?

The money given to help poor countries does not solve the problem of poverty, so rich countries should give other types of help instead. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

The exploration and development of safe alternatives to fossil fuels should be the most important global priority today. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about languages.

What languages do you speak?

How did you first learn English?

Do you think all children should learn a second language?

Is reading the newspaper a good way to improve your language?

Let's talk about living in cities.

Have you lived in a city?

Do you think cities are good places to live in? Why?

Do you think cities are expensive to live in? Why?

Will you live in a city in the future?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe someone you know who works overseas.

You should say: Where this person works
 Why this person chose to work in another country
 What work this person does

and say how you feel about working overseas.



Describe an overseas trip you would like to make with a friend.

You should say: Where you would go
 What you would do
 Who you would like to go with
and say why you would like to go there.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about globalisation.

Do you think your country is influenced by other countries (in terms of fashion, food, customs etc)?

What has been the impact of international tourism?

What stores or products from other countries are popular in your country?

How has the internet changed the way countries see each other?

Do you think some cultural traditions will be lost in the future?

What are the most significant global issues facing us?

What can governments do to improve relations between countries?

Resources



New report - world awash with fossil fuels - time to cut off supply

Christoff, P. The Conversation

80% of household water is wasted. - we need to get it back Ryan, R.

The Conversation



Saving the ocean - Kiribati ABC Radio National

The anthropocene epoch. Have we entered a new phase of planetary history?

The Guardian



World fashion industry going green The Guardian

How to bring affordable electricity to Africa Mutiso, R. Ted Talks

LANGUAGE

Sample Essay



Topic:

The exploration and development of safe alternatives to fossil fuels should be the most important global priority today. To what extent do you agree and disagree?

The use of fossil fuels as a source of energy has been increasing since the industrial revolution began. There is a view that the most important step we can take today is to prioritise research and development into other forms of energy which are safe. In my view, I completely agree that we need to halt extraction of fossil fuels while also investing more heavily in greener energy sources.

The first step in curbing the damage caused by fossil fuel use must be to phase out extraction and use. That is, mining, fracking, deep sea drilling and other methods need to be stopped in order to end the damage such activities cause to ecosystems and the atmosphere. Indeed, ending oil drilling alone would greatly reduce the risk of environmental disasters such as the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico which had a catastrophic and far-reaching impact on marine life, air and water quality. The burning of coal and use of petrol, oil and gas in industry and transport also contributes to the greenhouse gases that are causing climate change and poor air quality globally. Clearly, steps need to be taken to eliminate these sources of energy and promote alternatives.

To replace fossil fuels, greener energy sources must be further developed. Currently, although solar, wind and hydro power systems are available, they are not yet able to provide the vast quantities required to keep nations supplied with their energy requirements. Solar panels, for instance, are still prohibitively expensive for many households and businesses to install. Wind power too has limitations in terms of energy production and reliability; it only works when the wind blows. Unless these alternatives are improved, and made more affordable, it will simply not be possible to end fossil fuel use. Investment, not only by governments, but also by organisations and individuals, is crucial to bridge this gap.

In conclusion, improving ways of producing energy other than by the use of fossil fuels is of paramount importance today. Given that it is currently not possible to rely fully on green energy, greater investment is urgently needed.

Vocabulary - Global Issues

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
biodiversity loss (n)	the extinction of animals and plants worldwide and in smaller ecosystems		diversity (n) diversify (v)	Deforestation and global heating are two of the main causes of biodiversity loss.	
clean energy (n)	energy which does not pollute or damage the environment		green energy alternative energy	Using clean energy in homes and factories helps to reduce pollution.	
conflict (n)	fighting between two or more groups of people or countries			The new policy caused a lot of conflict between party members.	
deforestation (n)	conversion of forests to farms, ranches or urban use		deforest (v) reforestation (n)	Deforestation can be mitigated by planting trees, which is a good way to also increase biodiversity.	
disease (n)	medical condition showing particular signs or symptoms		diseased (adj)	The poor, sick and elderly are more prone to diseases such as flu and diabetes.	
famine (n)	a long period when people living in a particular area do not have enough food, and many of them suffer and die			A famine can be caused by droughts, floods, and political upheavals.	
globalisation (n)	increasing the number of connections between parts of the world		globalised (adj)	Globalisation has helped to reduce poverty but has also increased inequality.	
global heating (warming)	rise in the average temperature of the world's climate system		CO2 greenhouse gases	Global heating occurs when air pollutants in the atmosphere trap heat from the sun.	
global (adj) issue	a problem or risk which adversely affects the global community and environment		globe (n)	The UN listed global issues it considers most pressing and in need of addressing in 2015.	
human trafficking	a form of slavery in which people are controlled and exploited against their will		traffic (v) trafficker (n) slavery (n) enslave (v)	The fight against human trafficking is being taken on by more and more governments.	
malnutrition (n)	malnutrition is caused by eating a diet with too many or too few nutrients, which can cause health problems		malnourished (adj)	Malnutrition is a significant global issue; even in developed countries millions of people are malnourished.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
natural disasters (n)	a natural event such as a flood, earthquake, or tsunami that kills or injures a lot of people			The 2011 tsunami was one of the most serious natural disasters Japan has ever experienced.	
pollution (n)	chemical substances or noise, heat or light that have adverse effects		polluted (adj) pollutant (n) polluting (adj) pollute (v)	Air pollution in cities is known to cause many diseases in particular among young people.	
population (n)	the world population is the total number of people now living		populous (adj) overpopulated (adj) population density	After 200,000 years the world population reached 1 billion and then in 200 years more this total reached 7 billion.	
poverty (n)	the state of being very poor		poor (adj) impoverished (adj) live in poverty live below the poverty line	Many millions of people live in poverty in the UK.	
refugee (n)	person who has left his country and cannot return because of fear of persecution		refugee camp (n)	Thousands of refugees from Africa cross the sea to seek asylum in Europe.	
renewable energy (n)	energy from a source which is unlimited eg. solar, wind, wave, thermal		renewables (n) renewable (adj)	Many countries are investing in renewable energy to reduce the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.	
rising sea levels (n)	produced by warming ocean temperatures and melting ice		flooding (n) flood (n) inundation (n)	Many low lying areas are becoming uninhabitable because of rising sea levels.	
urbanisation (n)	a population shift from rural to urban areas		urbanised (adj) urban (adj)	Urbanisation has steadily increased worldwide so that more than 50% of the global population now live in cities.	
water shortages/ scarcity	the lack of fresh water to meet demand		scarce (adj)	In 2019 water scarcity was listed as one of the largest global risks over the next decade.	

Topic 12: Health



Essay topics

Despite huge improvements in healthcare, the overall standard of physical health in many developed countries is now falling. What are the reasons for this and how can the problem be tackled?

Some people claim that using tobacco has brought several social problems and smoking should be banned. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Childhood obesity is a serious problem in many countries. What are the causes of it and how can the problem be managed?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about keeping healthy.

Do you think you are a healthy person?

What do people your age do to stay healthy?

Would you like to change your lifestyle to be healthier?

Should schools teach children about health?

Let's talk about exercise.

Do you do any exercise?

Did you exercise much when you were a child?

What kind of exercise do people in your country like to do?

Do you think it's important for workers to do exercise?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe someone you know who is healthy.

You should say: Who this person is

Why you think this person is healthy

What this person does to stay healthy

and say how you feel about this person's good health.



Describe something you would like to do to stay healthy

You should say: What you would like to do
 Why you would like to do it
 How you would feel if you did it
and say whether you think it will be possible to do it soon.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about healthcare.

In what different ways do people look after their health?
What help can people receive if they want to be healthy?
Do you think it is difficult to stay healthy?
Do you think that governments spend enough on helping people to be healthy?
What role do schools have in helping children become healthy adults?
In the future, how could we become healthier?

Resources



How to deal with smartphone stress., Ridout, S. The Conversation
How sugar taxes punish the people Fessenden, S. The Conversation
Will a ban on snacking on public transport really help combat obesity? Wilson, C. The Guardian



The Mysteries of Sleep, BBC
Women in medical leadership ABC Radio National



What makes muscles grow? Jeffrey Siegel, TED Talk
How an obese town lost a million pounds, Mick Cornett TED Talk

Sample Essay



Topic:

Childhood obesity is a serious problem in many countries. What are the causes of this and how can the problem be managed?

Our changing lifestyles have had a far-reaching effect on our health. Today, many young children are chronically overweight as a result. In this essay, I will outline some causes of childhood obesity and suggest ways the problem can be addressed.

While obesity has several causes, poor diets and insufficient exercise appear to be key drivers of this serious disease. A move to a convenience food diet both in schools and at home has resulted in many youngsters eating mostly nutrient-low foods, which are high in sugars and fats and low in fibre. Our bodies are unable to process these foods efficiently so fat accumulates until our body mass index is high enough for us to be diagnosed as obese. Exercise is well known to assist the body in getting rid of fat but the reality today for many children is that they take almost none. Spending more time sitting at school or on devices, and being driven everywhere in cars, it is difficult for many children to avoid becoming overweight. This combination of a sedentary lifestyle and a junk food diet is, indeed, a dangerous one.

Challenging though this problem of childhood obesity is, there is much that can be done to manage it. Addressing the two causes which I outlined above would be good but the matter may not be so simply overcome. Because the causes of this disease are deeply rooted and complex it would seem that a broad educational strategy could work well. This would involve governments funding programs, in schools and in communities, which are designed to help young people and their parents to understand the causes of obesity and then to assist them to make whatever changes are needed to deal with these. In addition, governments would need to address the so-called food deserts found in many urban areas within which healthy nutritious food is hard to obtain, the majority of food outlets being fast food restaurants and 7/11s. If parents struggle to buy good food, education is unlikely to have a long term impact on the health of their offspring.

To conclude, there is no doubt that it is crucial to deal with obesity among young people. As it is often caused by poor diet and insufficient exercise, educating children and their parents about the importance of both, as well as ensuring healthy food is available to all, will go a long way towards solving this problem.

Vocabulary – Health

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
acute (adj)	critical, severe			A heart attack is an acute medical condition.	
alternative (adj)	other			Chiropractic and herbal medicine are alternative therapies.	
chronic (adj)	continuing for a period time			Obesity and diabetes are chronic medical conditions.	
consultation (n)	a meeting with a medical practitioner		consult (v) consultant (n)	She had a 30 minute consultation with a heart specialist.	
CT scan (n)	a special type of X-ray			She had a CT scan .	
disease (n)	illness, sickness		diseased (adj)	Malaria is a serous disease.	
emergency (n)	situation requiring immediate action		hospital accident and emergency unit/department	He had an emergency operation which saved his life.	
general practitioner (GP)	a non-specialist doctor			After 30 years as a GP she retired.	
heal (v)	get better		healer (n) (un)healthy (adj)	He cut his leg and it healed in a week.	
immunisation (n)	protection against disease		immune (adj) immunity (n)	Immunisation against diseases can prevent you from contracting them.	
longevity (n)	living a long life			A good diet contributes to longevity.	
medication (n)	medicine usually prescribed by a medical practitioner		medicine (n) medicinal (adj)	The doctor told him to take the medication before every meal.	
nutrition (n)	substance usually food which sustains life		nutritious (adj) nutrient (n)	Good nutrition is particularly important for growing children.	
obese (adj)	extremely overweight		obesity (n)	Obese people ave a higher risk of heart disease.	
operate on (v)	surgical procedure		(perform an) operation (n)	The surgeon operated on her and removed a kidney stone.	
pain (n)	mild to severe discomfort		painful (adj)	She suffered from severe back pain after the accident.	

Topic 13: Media



Essay topics

The tendency of news media to focus on problems and emergencies rather than good news has a negative effect on individuals and society. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Many people believe that media coverage of celebrities is having a negative effect on children. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Some people think that newspapers are the best way to learn news. However, others believe that they can learn news better through other media. Discuss both views and give your opinion

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about newspapers.

Do you ever read the newspaper?

Do you prefer to read the newspaper online or on real paper?

Why do some people not like reading the newspaper?

Do you think we will still have newspapers in the future?

Let's talk about the news.

How do you usually find out about the news?

Are you interested in keeping up to date with the news?

Do you think older people or younger people are more interested in the news?

Do you think we can always believe the news?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe which media people in your country use to keep in touch with friends.

You should say: What they are
 Why they use them
 How useful they are

and say how you feel about using these media.



Describe an interesting story you saw in the news.

You should say: What the story was
 Where you heard/saw the story
 When it happened

and explain why you think this news story was interesting.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about famous people.

What kinds of people are most famous in your country?

Why do you think people are so interested in the private lives of celebrities?

Do you think there should be stricter rules regarding how celebrities are treated in the media?

Has it become easier to become famous? Will it be easier in the future?

Let's talk about the news media.

How has the way we access the news changed?

Do you think these changes have been positive or negative?

Why do people often use social media to get their news?

How can people know what news sources to trust?

Resources



Lynch, M.P. **Do we really understand 'Fake News'?** The New York Times

Saldanha, N. **An 8-year old made \$22 million on youtube** The Conversation



What drives our addiction to social media? The Guardian
New things in the world of news, ABC Radio National



When online shaming goes too far, Jon Ronson, TED Talk

This is how social media is made to be addicting, Life Noggin

Sample Essay



Topic:

The tendency of news media to focus on problems and emergencies rather than good news has a negative effect on individuals and society. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

In modern times, thanks to our smartphones and the 24/7 media cycle, we seem to be constantly bombarded by the news and, unfortunately, most of it is about disasters, attacks and tragedies. It has been argued that this negative focus within the media has a detrimental effect not only on individuals but on society as a whole. Personally, I strongly agree.

In terms of individuals, the effects of this overwhelming amount of bad news in the media manifest in changes to our wellbeing and behaviour. First of all, mental health can suffer. When a person is continually absorbing news about crime, accidents and terrorism, for instance, they may begin to feel anxious and fearful. In serious cases, they may even suffer agoraphobia or panic attacks as a result. The sheer volume of bad news can also lead to feelings of hopelessness or even depression. The other issue is the changes in behaviour that stem from fear. After seeing hours and hours of footage of plane crashes or tsunami destruction, many people may feel reluctant to travel or simply try something new. This is a direct result of the media's bad news saturation.

Obviously, such impacts also have a knock-on effect throughout society. As fear grows among individuals, so too does animosity, distrust, intolerance and, ultimately, conflict. Take terrorism reports as an example. When incidents such as 9/11 or the 2015 Paris attacks occur, the media runs footage constantly, and the coverage continues for day, sometimes months. In the aftermath of these events, public panic grows, and minority groups, unrelated to the incident, often suffer attacks and marginalisation. From an economic perspective, this fear-mongering can also lead to financial loss as people, crippled by anxiety, go out less and travel less frequently.

In conclusion, while it is true that terrible things happen on a daily basis, it is the media's obsession with such tragedy that is problematic. This focus on negativity inevitably has serious effects on individuals' mental health and lifestyles, as well as the cohesion of communities.

Vocabulary – Media

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
advertising (n)			ad (n) advert (n) advertise (v) advertiser (n) advertisement (n)	Targeted advertising is used more and more on social media.	
bias (n)	the fact of preferring a particular subject or thing		biased (adj)	Reporters should not show any political bias.	
blog (n) - short for web log	web site maintained by individuals containing their writing, graphics, videos etc.		blog (v) blogger (n)	I read her blog on fitness every day.	
broadcast (v)	distribution of audio or video programs to an audience		broadcast (n) broadcaster (n)	Many radio programs broadcast the news 24/7.	
censor (v)	prevent information from dissemination often for political reasons		censor (n) censorship (n)	The government censored all information about the conflict.	
citizen journalist (n)	an ordinary person without special training who records or writes about news stories, for example on the internet		citizen journalism (n)	Citizen journalists documented the protest via social media.	
column (n)	recurring article in a newspaper or magazine		columnist (n)	She's written a weekly column for the New York Times for 10 years.	
editorial (n)	leader (US) or leading article (UK) which expresses the view of the editor or publisher		editor (n)	I don't always agree with the editorial but it gives me a perspective on a key current topic.	
investigative journalism (n)	uses detective-like reporting methods		investigative journalist	The Washington Post is famous for its investigative journalism	
journalism (n)	craft of communicating news via various media			Good journalism informs us accurately and makes us think.	
journalist (n) see also reporter below	person who gathers and disseminates information about current events etc.		journalistic (adj)	A journalist's job can be dangerous.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
mass media (n)	'tools' used to communicate with large numbers of people			Mass media, such as TV, radio, film and newspapers, has a powerful influence on what people think.	
media event	event staged for media coverage			Most events involving politicians are media events.	
paparazzi (n)	photographers who follow celebrities to take photos to sell to magazines / newspapers		to be papped (v) (slang)	Many people feel that paparazzi were responsible for the death of Princess Diana.	
(the) press (n)	media including TV, radio, newspapers, wire services			Members of the press travel with the US president on important trips.	
press conference (n)	meeting with reporters			The PM called a press conference to announce his new policy	
propaganda (n)	dissemination of selective or false information to advance a political agenda		propagandise (v)	During the war governments used propaganda films to ensure the people's support.	
reporter (n)	journalist who creates reports for publication			A crowd of reporters were waiting outside the pop star's house.	
scrutinise (v)	to examine something very carefully in order to discover information		(under) scrutiny (n)	The media scrutinises the behaviour of public figures, especially politicians.	
tabloids (n)	small format newspaper		tabloid (adj) tabloid journalism	Tabloids give us sensationalist news and use lots of illustrations.	

Topic 14: Money



Essay topics

Many people say that we now live in 'consumer societies' where money and possessions are given too much importance. Others believe that consumer culture has played a vital role in improving our lives. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Successful sports professionals can earn a great deal more money than people in other important professions. Some people think this is fully justified while others think it is unfair. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Some people believe that money is the most important factor for achieving happiness. However, others believe that happiness has nothing to do with money. What is your opinion?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about money.

Are you good at saving money?

When did you first start earning money?

Are you saving for something special at the moment?

Do you think children should learn about money in school?

Let's talk about borrowing and lending money.

Why do people borrow money in your country?

Have you ever borrowed money? Why?

Have you ever lent money to a friend?

What problems can be caused by lending money to a friend?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe something you saved money to buy.

You should say: What it was

Why you wanted to save up for it

How long it took to save the money

and say how you felt when you bought it.



Describe a time when you lent money to someone.

You should say Who you lent the money to
 Why you lent money to this person
 If this person paid the money back
and say how you felt about lending the money.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about money.

In your country, what do most people spend their money on?

Money can't buy happiness. Do you agree?

What would a society without money look like?

Banks make too much money. Do you agree?

Very wealthy people should pay more taxes.

Wealthy nations should do more to help those which are less well off. Do you agree?

Resources



Baltazar, M. **I saved \$1000 a month by changing my diet.**, Money Magazine
Synda, J. **Men feel stressed if their female partners earn more,**The Conversation



Cohen, D. **The money saving expert - the most trusted man in Britain,** The Guardian

Rice, X. **The Aldi effect - how one discount supermarket transformed the way Britain shops,**



The dirty secret of capitalism - a new way forward, Hanauer, N. TED Talk
Poverty, money and love, Jackley, J. TED Talk

Sample Essay



Topic:

Successful sports professionals can earn a great deal more money than people in other important professions. Some people think this is fully justified while others think it is unfair. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

In the past few decades there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of money earned by those who excel in the sport they play. Today these professionals are able to take home many times what top professionals in other fields do and there are conflicting views as to whether this is right. In this essay, I will examine both views and explain why I think it is entirely fair.

The belief that it is not fair that is understandable. Why should the skills someone is born with give them such an advantage? The world of sport these days is heavily sponsored by companies looking for ways to promote their products and these lucky few who excel at their chosen sport receive extra income on top of their salaries. It does indeed seem unjust that sports professionals, who are already well paid, can earn this extra income which makes them far richer than their peers. These may have spent years studying for a qualification as, for instance, a solicitor or doctor, and then further time on an average salary gaining experience before they are well paid at the age of 30 or more. Meanwhile, young sports professionals are earning huge sums of money at the age of 25.

Although many people consider this to be unfair, I believe it is not. This is mainly because it is not just the skills successful sports professionals possess which make them wealthier than others who have important jobs. This view is based on the understanding that these skills have to be developed and nurtured before the person who possesses them can rise to the top of their sport. There are many examples of extremely talented sportsmen and women who have failed to become elite athletes in their sport. Either through lack of application, injury, poor management or simply bad luck, they merely do well. Those who join the tiny group of super sports professionals have not just relied on their skills, important as these are, but have worked extremely hard to make the most of them. It is surely fair that they should be rewarded for their hard work, even if they earn many times what other important professionals do.

In conclusion, in a world where how much professionals are paid is a reflection of how important they are seen to be, it is understandable that there is jealousy towards those who have benefited from their innate skills to earn a great deal more than these professionals. I believe it is entirely justified that sportsmen and women who make the most of their skills are well reimbursed even if they earn a lot more than other professionals.

LANGUAGE

Vocabulary - Money

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
afford (v)	have enough money to buy		affordable (adj)	I can't afford to buy a car.	
ATM (n)	automatic teller machine			When I want money, I withdraw it from the ATM next to the bank.	
bargain (v)	negotiate the price		bargain (n)	We bargained and agreed on a price of \$100.	
breadwinner (n)	person who works to support a family			He's the sole breadwinner in his family.	
budget (n)	a plan to manage how much money you spend		budget (v)	We draw up a budget every month to make sure we have enough money to last.	
debt (n)	money owed		debtor (n)	He was in debt to the bank for 3 million dollars.	
discount (n)	reduction in price		discount (v)	I bought the TV at a discount because it was last year's model.	
donate (v)	give money eg. to a charity		donation (n) donor (n)	She donates \$100 each month to a charity.	
earn (v)	make money by working or investing		earnings (n)	How much do you earn before tax?	
finance (v) fund (v)	provide money for		finances (n) financial (adj) financier (n) fund (n)	The government finances/funds all medical costs.	
invest (v)	use money to make a profit		investor (n) investment (n)	The best way to invest money is in land and property.	
mortgage (n)	money borrowed to buy property, a house or land		mortgage (v)	I took out a mortgage with the bank to buy my house.	
profit (n)	money made when something is sold for more than was paid for it		profit (v) profitable (adj) profiteer (v)	The company made a profit of \$4 million.	
rebate (n)	reduction or return on money paid			The government promised a tax rebate for small businesses.	

Topic 15: Science/Technology



Essay topics

The Internet has transformed lives and economies but it is turning the world into a global village. Soon everybody will think and behave in the same way. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Some people think that computer games are bad for children, while others believe that they are useful. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of computer games.

Some people believe that the range of technology available to individuals today is increasing the gap between rich people and poor people, while others say that technology has the opposite effect. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about mobile phones.

How often do you use your mobile phone?

What do you usually use your phone for?

What was your first mobile phone like?

Do you think you will use your phone more or less in the future?

Let's talk about science.

Did you enjoy science lessons at school? Why?

Do you think everyone should study science in primary/elementary schools? Why?

Do you read about science now?

How can people find out more about science?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe an electronic device (computer, mobile phone, video game etc.) that you bought recently.

You should say:
What it looks like
Why you bought it
What you use it for
and say why you find it useful.



Describe a website or app that you regularly use.

You should say: How you first learned about it
 What you use it for
 How it helps your life
and say whether you would recommend it to others.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about technology and children.

What kinds of technological devices do children enjoy playing with?
Is this different from when you were a child?
What are some benefits of technology (e.g. ipads, video games) for children?
Are there any drawbacks?
How can parents ensure their children aren't being negatively affected by technology?

Let's talk about science.

What are the benefits of teaching science?
Are science lessons popular in schools in your country?
Which scientists are well known in your country?
How can science help us with the challenges we face?
Do you think studying science will be more popular in the future/

Resources



[Africa bridging the digital divide](#), BBC

[This is what the future of robots might do to humanity](#), Forbes

[Playing video games can ease loneliness during the coronavirus pandemic](#),
The Conversation



[Cleaning up our air](#), The Guardian

[The air conditioning trap. How cold air is heating the world](#), The Guardian



[What will technology look like in 100 years](#), Life Noggin

[Cryptographers quantum computers and the war for information](#), Ted Talks

LANGUAGE

Sample Essay



Topic:

Some people think that computer games are bad for children, while others believe that they are useful. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of computer games.

Access to various technological devices, including computers, is now commonplace among children. Some say that games played on these devices are detrimental to young people while others think the opposite. I believe these games can have both positive and negative outcomes for children, depending on several factors, and in this essay I will explore these two aspects.

Certainly, when games are age-appropriate and children are supervised, there can be many benefits for youngsters. One key positive outcome is the enhancement to problem-solving skills and creativity. Indeed, many games are designed to challenge young minds by, for instance, simulating a current problem in the world. Greenpeace has recently designed such a game for children called Our World which presents a range of different situations to which players respond and then see the effects of their actions. Another point to mention is that gaming can have significant social and psychological impacts. Multiplayer online games like World of Warcraft enable players to interact, cooperate or compete. Participation in these communities has been shown to boost confidence and reduce feelings of isolation that many young people may feel.

There are, however, legitimate concerns when it comes to certain games. Those that seemingly promote violence and law-breaking, such as Grand Theft Auto, can have negative impacts on those who play them. This is especially true of young children who are yet to learn the distinction between real life and virtual worlds, and may end up committing violent acts themselves. Another downside of some computer games is their addictive nature. There are many stories of young people who become so completely involved in playing that they lose all sense of time and forget to eat or sleep. The impact on their health and on their studies can become severe, even leading to them dropping out of school or being hospitalised.

In conclusion, I believe that all the technology at our disposal can be used for good or ill and computer games are no exception. Young children who play them can derive educational and developmental benefits from them, or can be drawn into a dependent and unhealthy relationship, which provides no clear positive outcomes. It is up to their guardians to ensure the outcome is positive.

LANGUAGE

Vocabulary – Science/Technology

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
AI - artificial intelligence	the ability of a computer to act like a human			We are seeing an increasing use of AI in applications such as robotics and computer games.	
application (n) also called 'app'	an end-user program eg. multi media or data base, which is designed to carry out a specific task			The development of application software has revolutionised how we use our computers and other devices.	
back up (v)	save data to the cloud or to another device such as an external hard drive		backup (n)	It's advisable to back up your important files regularly.	
blog (n)	website showing postings from author in time order		blog (v) blogger (n) blogosphere (n) weblog (n)	Her daily blog now has more than two million followers.	
cyberspace (n)	electronic system which allows computer users around the world to communicate with each other		cyber crime cyber bullying	Our global computer network in cyberspace facilitates online communication.	
database (n)	collection of data arranged for ease of search and retrieval		data (n) data mining (v)	Databases are now commonly located in the cloud and can hold terabytes of data.	
desktop (n)	a computer's home screen which contains files		desktop (adj)	Don't save important files on your desktop as they are not backed up.	
device (n)	a piece of equipment that's used for a particular purpose			Mobile phones are particularly useful devices.	
download (v)	transfer data from a server to a computer		download (n)	Downloading movies on broadband networks is usually fast.	
e-learning or electronic learning	education using electronic devices and digital media			The company used an e-learning platform to roll out its new training package.	
encryption (n)	conversion of data or information into a code to prevent unauthorised access		encrypt (v)	Many social media apps use end-to-end encryption.	
FAQs (n) Frequently Asked Questions	questions, and their answers, on websites etc which are often asked			FAQs can be useful but I prefer looking on Youtube.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
firewall (n)	application designed to stop unauthorised users from gaining access			Many companies have firewalls to prevent their servers from being hacked and confidential information stolen.	
hack (v)	to use a computer to illegally get into someone else's computer and read information stored there		hacker (n)	The website was hacked and thousands of people had their information stolen.	
install (v)	to put software into a computer		installation (n)	You need to install the software to access this file.	
savvy (adj)	having knowledge and ability		tech-savvy computer-savvy	She is very savvy when it comes to computers.	
software (n)	programs you use to make computers do different things			It is advisable to keep the software on your computer up to date to protect it from viruses.	
speech recognition	capability of an electronic device to recognise human speech		speech-to-text software	Speak into your mobile and the speech recognition technology will send your message as a text.	
URL (n) Uniform Resource Locator	address of a web page		website (n)	Can you text me the URL of your blog site?	
virus (n)	a program which can cause damage to systems and data		infected by a virus virus protection viral (adj)	Having the most up-to-date version of an operating system protects against viruses.	

Topic 16: Space



Essay topics

Some governments spend a lot of money on exploring space. Some feel that this investment is justified while others think that money should be spent on public services like healthcare and education. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

In the last century, the first man to walk on the moon said: "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind". However, some people think that space travel makes little difference to our daily lives. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Some scientists think that there are intelligent life forms on other planets and messages should be sent to contact them. Other scientists think it is a bad idea and would be dangerous. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about stars and the night sky.

Do you ever look at the sky at night?

Is it easy to see the stars where you live?

Do many people enjoy star-gazing (looking at the stars) in your country?

Have you ever seen something interesting in the sky at night?

Let's talk about science fiction movies.

Do you like watching science fiction movies?

Are science fiction movies popular where you come from?

Why don't some people like watching science fiction movies?

Do you think you will watch a science fiction movie soon?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a story about space (real or fictitious) that you have read about or seen in a film or on TV.

You should say: When you read or saw the story

 What happened in the story

 Whether the story has any significance today

and explain how you felt about reading or seeing this story.



Describe an important achievement in space.

You should say: What it was
 Why it was important
 What it achieved
and say how you feel about space exploration.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about space exploration.

Why do you think people want to explore space?
Do you think it's a good idea for governments to spend money on space exploration?
How important is space research in your country?
What qualities do you think a person needs to be an astronaut?
Do you think it will be possible for humans to live on another planet one day?

Resources



Wilson, C. **Zero gravity made some astronauts blood flow-backwards.** New Scientist

What happens when satellites break? Science Daily



The future of space, Prof. Alan Duffy, ABC Radio National

Surprisingly big black hole might have swallowed a star from the inside out, Soria, R. The Guardian



What it's like to live on the international space station. Cady Coleman, TED Talk

Rockets, National Geographic on YouTube

Were aboriginal Australians the world's first astronomers? BBC



Sample Essay

Topic:

Some governments spend a lot of money on exploring space. Some feel that this investment is justified while others think that money should be spent on public services like healthcare and education. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

In the last century, billions of dollars have been spent on the exploration of the universe. Although some support this investment, others feel that this money is squandered and should instead be spent tackling Earth's many problems such as public health and education. In this essay, I will examine both views and explain why I agree that the government should cease funding space programs.

Those who advocate this state-funded research argue that the future of humankind may depend on such a discovery. If we found an earth-like planet nearby, for instance, they claim that our species could mine its resources or even colonise and potentially migrate there, once our own planet becomes uninhabitable. Indeed, projects are already underway investigating the feasibility of life on Mars, among other places. Thus, to these supporters, the government's money is well-spent on exploring outer space as it could ultimately save us.

Others, however, myself included, do not support this ongoing exploration. Indeed, in the last few decades, countries like the USA have spent over \$100 billion sending astronauts, rovers and rockets out into the galaxy and the results have been negligible. If this money had been spent instead on improving literacy or sanitation in the third world, or on researching vaccines and treatments for deadly diseases, our lives would be much better than they currently are. Given that private businesses such as Tesla and Virgin are now pouring money into space research, governments no longer need to waste their money on this fruitless pursuit.

In conclusion, humanity's thirst for knowledge is unquenchable. It is time, however, for private corporations to invest, and for governments to take responsibility for their real duty here on earth.

Vocabulary - Space

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
astronaut (n)	person who works in space			The International Space Station can accommodate six astronauts.	
astronomer (n)	person who studies space		astronomy (n)	Astronomers have been studying space for at least 5000 years.	
atmosphere (n)	gases which surround a planet		atmospheric (adj)	Earth's atmosphere makes it possible for humans to live.	
comet (n)	small icy body in the solar system			Comets have tails when they pass close to the sun.	
constellation (n)	group of stars			Many constellations are visible to us in the night sky.	
eclipse (n)	event when the moon obscures the sun or the opposite			During a total eclipse of the sun the earth is dark.	
galaxy (n)	a grouping of millions of stars			Scientists estimate there are a billion galaxies in the universe.	
gravity (n)	a force which brings objects together		gravitational (adj) gravitational force gravitation (n)	Gravity keeps the earth orbiting the sun.	
jettison (v)	to get rid of something you do not want or need			The spacecraft jettisoned its boosters when it was clear of earth.	
laboratory (n)	place where scientific research is conducted			A laboratory in space can conduct experiments in zero gravity conditions.	
manoeuvre (v)	to move into position		manoeuvre (n)	The astronauts manoeuvred the capsule to dock with the space station.	
meteorite (n)	solid piece of rock or metal which hits the surface of a planet			The meteorite burned brightly as it passed through the earth's atmosphere.	
NASA (n)	The North American Space Agency			NASA funds the International Space Station with several other countries.	
orbit (n)	gravitationally curved path of a planet around a star		orbit (v)	Earth's orbit around the sun takes one year to complete.	

Topic 17: Sport



Essay topics

Some sports are considered extremely dangerous, but many people still like them. Why do people take part in dangerous sports? Give some suggestions on how to deal with these dangers.

Professional sports people are often idolised by young children. Some people think that they therefore have a responsibility to be good role models at all times for children. Do you agree or disagree?

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

Because of the pressure of new subjects such as business studies, many schools have dropped sport or physical education (PE) from the curriculum. How important is sport or PE in a young person's education?

Ensuring that children have regular physical exercise should be the responsibility of parents, and therefore schools should not waste valuable school time having sports lessons as part of the curriculum. To what extent do you agree?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about sport.

What sports are popular in your country?

Did you play any sport as a child?

Why do some people dislike sport?

When did you last watch a sporting competition?

Let's talk about swimming.

Did you learn how to swim when you were a child?

Is swimming a popular activity in your country?

Why don't some people enjoy swimming?

Would you like to swim more or less in the future?

LANGUAGE



Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a sport you would like to learn to play.

You should say: What it is
 How you would learn this sport
 What kind of skills you would learn
and say why you would like to learn it.

Describe a sports person you're interested in.

You should say: Who she/he is
 What sport she/he plays
 How you first heard about her/him
and say why you are interested in her/him.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about sports stars.

What makes a sports person a 'star'?
What qualities does a person need to become a sports star?
Do you think sports stars earn too much money?
How important is it for a sports person to be a good role model?
Why do advertisers use sports people to sell their products?

Let's talk about international sporting competitions.

Is your country well-known for any particular sports?
What are some benefits for countries who host international sporting competitions (like the Olympics, the World Cup)?
Are there any drawbacks to hosting these events?
How can international sporting events improve relationships between countries?

Resources



Vegan runners - can a plant-based diet provide what you need?, Finn,

A. The Guardian

Why people love risky sports, Brody, J. Houston Chronicle



Fitness and body shape + blind tennis, ABC Radio National Sport

The golden nugget affair. The Uluru Camel Cup race, ABC Radio National



Cambodia's first disabled women's wheelchair basketball team,

National Geographic

Are athletes really getting faster, better, stronger? David Epstein, TED Talks



Sample Essay

Topic:

Some sports are considered extremely dangerous, but many people still like them. Why do people take part in dangerous sports? Give some suggestions on how to deal with these dangers.

People around the world participate in a wide variety of sporting activities, from traditional ones like cricket and tennis to more modern and extreme activities such as snowboarding and mixed martial arts. While all sports carry some risk of injury, these extreme sports can have serious, even fatal, consequences when things go wrong. Nevertheless, they are growing in popularity for several reasons and, thankfully, there are measures that can be taken to mitigate the risks.

The main reason why people enjoy taking part in dangerous sports is the emotional high they can bring about. When a person flies through the air on their skis or summits a mountain without ropes, they experience a surge of dopamine, the feel-good chemical which, in many cases, can become addictive. For some extreme sports enthusiasts, their appetite for this feeling increases over time as they conquer more and more goals. In other words, they are motivated to keep climbing, boxing or rafting in order to chase the high.

Another motivating factor for some is the sense of accomplishment they feel. This sensation is common to all sports but is heightened when the sport itself is high-risk. Surfers, for instance, may dream of riding a huge pipeline, and when they do it, it means they have not just survived an extremely dangerous situation but also that they have attained a level of skill that few other people in the world have.

It is important, however, that steps are taken to minimise the risks involved in these sport. First and foremost, participants need to educate themselves, be it on how to monitor waves and wind for surfers, or how to fall from a horse in the most careful way. In some cases, this extends to using suitable equipment and safety gear. In addition to the individual's responsibility, there are also guidelines that should be put in place by authorities. When it comes to Olympic sports, for example, there are strict rules in sports like wrestling and boxing that reduce the risk of head and spinal injuries.

In conclusion, driven by dopamine and the idea of success, people will always pursue extreme sports. If complying with regulations and acting responsibly, participants should be able to enjoy these activities without putting themselves in grave danger.

Vocabulary – Sport

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
amateur (n)	a person who plays a sport or game without being paid		amateur (adj)	She was an amateur golfer for 10 years before turning pro.	
applause (n)	clapping to show approval and support		applaud (v)	The noise of applause filled the stadium.	
champion (n)	an individual or team that wins a competition		championship (n) champion (adj)	She is the under 18 swimming champion of Malaysia.	
competition (n)	event in which individuals or teams play each other to win a prize		compete (v) competitor (n) competitive (adj)	There are 24 teams playing in the competition.	
contestant (n)	an individual who takes part in a game or competition		contest (v)	She was a contestant in last year's world chess championship.	
cross training (n)	training in a sport which is not your usual one			Cross training is designed to improve overall performance in your main sport.	
defeat (v)	win against another individual or team		defeat (n)	The better team defeated us.	
defender (n)	player in team sports who has a role to stop the other team scoring		defend (v) defence (n) defensive (adj)	The defender stopped the attacker from scoring a goal.	
disqualify (v)	stop a player or team taking part in a competition because they broke a rule		disqualification (n)	The athletics team was disqualified for drug violations.	
extreme sports (n)	sports such as free rock climbing where the risks of injury are high			Extreme sports have become very popular and often have large TV audiences.	
fan (n)	supporter		fanzine (n)	I'm a fan of the Raiders.	
foul (n)	an act that violates the rules of a sport or game		foul (v) foul play	He was given a red card for his foul on the attacking player.	
performance enhancing drug (n)	drug designed to increase a sportsperson's natural ability			He was banned from the Olympics for the use of performance enhancing drugs.	
professional (adj) (n) (pro)	a player who is paid for playing a sport or game		pro golfer pro surfer professionalism (n)	Professional darts is now a very popular game on TV.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
referee (n) ref (informal)	chief official who makes sure the game is played by the rules		referee (v) refereeing (n)	The referee makes the final decision on whether a goal has been scored or not.	
spectator (adj) sport	describes a sport that many people like to watch		spectator (n) spectate (v)	Some people think that synchronised swimming is not a great spectator sport.	
sporting (adj)	showing or calling for fair play			In a sporting gesture, she helped the opposition player to her feet.	
sportive/sporty (adj)	interested and usually good at sports			Not all children are sportive/sporty but they still enjoy playing games at school.	
sportsmanship (n)	fairness in following the rules of a game		sportswoman (n) sportsman (n) sportsmanlike (adj) unsportsmanlike (adj)	Sportsmanship is usually forgotten in the desire to win at all costs.	
sports medicine (n)	treatment of injuries resulting from sports activities			Increased participation in sports has meant that sports medicine has become a popular course to study.	
umpire (n)	an official at games such as cricket, hockey and baseball		umpire (v)	The umpire can call on the video umpire when he's not sure a batsman is out or not.	

Topic 18: Transport



Essay topics

Despite improvements in vehicle technology, there are still large numbers of road accidents. Explain some of the causes of these accidents and suggest some measures that could be taken to address the problem.

Some people think that strict punishments for driving offences are the key to reducing traffic accidents. Others, however, believe that other measures would be more effective in improving road safety. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

It is predicted that in the future cars will be driven by computers. What are the reasons behind this? Would it be a positive or negative development?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about getting to school or work.
How do you usually get to school/work?
Would you like to get to school/work faster?
What do you do while you're travelling to school/work?
Is it becoming harder or easier to get to school/work?

Let's talk about public transport.
What is the public transport like where you live?
Do most people take public transport to get to work or school?
How could your local public transport be improved?
Will you use public transport more or less in the future?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a popular type of transport in your country.

You should say: What it is
 Why it is popular
 Who uses this form of transport
and say what you think about it.



Describe a car you would like to buy.

You should say: What it is
 How you know about it
 Why you like it
and say how likely you are to buy this car in the future.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about cars.

Do most people own a car where you live?
Why do many people drive even if there is public transport available?
What problems do cars cause?
How can people be encouraged to drive less?
Do you think people will use driverless cars in the future?

Let's talk about travel by air.

Why is air travel so popular?
Will people travel more or less by air in the future?
What problems does air travel cause?
What benefits does air travel bring?
What alternatives are there to air travel?

Resources



Canadian ultra high speed tube train, Ramsay, C. Global News CA
4 visions for the future of public transport The Conversation
Scooters bikes urban mobility lessons from Paris Ratinho, T. The Conversation



Cars and the future of transport, Download This Show, ABC Radio National
Why are cars killing more and more pedestrians? Baker, P. The Guardian



Road Safety in the 21st Century, BBC
Why buses represent democracy in action, Enrique Penalosa, TED Talk



Topic:

Despite improvements in vehicle technology, there are still large numbers of road accidents. Explain some of the causes of these accidents and suggest some measures that could be taken to address the problem.

In recent times we have seen a huge increase in the number of people who drive. Even though their vehicles are more sophisticated than ever, many people are injured or killed on our roads. This essay will consider why there are so many accidents and suggest ways they could be reduced.

Advanced technology undoubtedly makes driving safer but, in many cases, accidents occur through driver error. This may be for several reasons, one of which is inattention at a critical moment caused perhaps by a call on the phone or a conversation with a passenger. Indeed, in the USA, distracted driving is the number one cause of road accidents. In Australia, the problem has become so serious that it is now illegal to use a mobile phone when in charge of a vehicle, even if it is stationary. Another cause of injuries and fatalities on the road is inexperience. In the UK, the number collisions involving 18 to 25-year-olds is more than double those where the driver was over 30.

Whether it is because of lack of attention or a small number of years driving on the road, there are ways these and other problems can be mitigated. The first measure that can be taken is to require all newly qualified drivers to attend a driving skills course. Designed to raise drivers' awareness of dangers in various road situations and teach them how to deal with emergency scenarios, courses like these have been shown to dramatically reduce the accident rate among young drivers. Placing restrictions on new drivers for two to three years has also been successful in many countries in bringing down the frequency of accidents. In Australia, a new driver is restricted in several ways; their speed is limited, they can only take one passenger at a time, and they cannot drink any alcohol nor drive after 10pm. Such initiatives have had considerable success in cutting road accidents.

To conclude, the number of deaths and injuries on our roads caused by inattentive or inexperienced drivers will never be entirely eliminated but it need not be so high. Compulsory driver training for new drivers and restrictions on their driving are two ways of lowering the number of road accidents.

Vocabulary – Transport

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
car dependence (n)	having to use a car		car-dependent (adj)	In many cities in the USA car dependence is common.	
cargo (n)	the goods carried by a ship, aircraft, or other large vehicle			The ship was carrying a cargo of wood.	
carpooling (n)	arrange to share cars for a regular journey often to work		carpool (v) carpool (n)	Carpooling cuts down congestion and pollution.	
commute (v)	travel from home to work and back		commute (n) commuter (n)	It took her so long to commute that she started to work from home.	
congestion (n)	traffic jams		congested (adj)	Congestion on our roads is a failure of city planning.	
congestion tax	tax on drivers usually in inner city areas		congestion zone	The city council introduced a congestion tax.	
containerise (v)	package and transport in a shipping container		container (n)	The most efficient way to transport freight is to containerise it.	
cycle lane	section of a road for the use of cyclists only			Cycle lanes which are completely separated from traffic are safer.	
fare (n)	cost of a journey		airfare (n) bus fare train fare	Airfares went up by more than 20% last year.	
freight (n)	goods carried by a vehicle, ship or airplane		freighter (n) airfreight (n)	Sending freight by air is fast but costly.	
light rail (n)	urban overground railway			You can catch the light rail from the suburbs into the centre of the city.	
peak hour (n)	the time when a lot of people are travelling to or from work and so roads and trains are very busy			Try to avoid this road during peak hour.	
rapid transit (n)	urban public transport system using underground or elevated trains			At peak hour there is a train every two minutes on Singapore's rapid transit system or MRT.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
rely on (v)	to need a particular thing or the help and support of someone or something in order to continue, to work correctly, or to succeed		reliance (n) reliant (adj)	Most people rely on their car as their primary means of transport.	
round trip (n)	travel to a place and back			The Sydney to Melbourne round trip is about 2000km.	
route (n)	established way of travel		route (v)	The city transport app will help you plan your route.	
shuttle (n)	public transport which goes back and forth between two points		shuttle (v) space shuttle (n)	I took the airport shuttle bus to get to the international terminal from domestic.	
transport infrastructure (n)	the basic structure and organisation of transport			Investment in transport infrastructure has many benefits.	
travel agent (n)	a company which arranges personal travel		travel agency (n)	The travel agent Thomas Cook went bankrupt in 2019.	
vehicle (n)	something like a car or bus that takes people from one place to another, usually using roads		vehicular (adj)	He lost control of the vehicle in the rain.	

Topic 19: Travel



Essay topics

In many countries, tourism is a major part of the economy, but it also causes environmental damage and ruins the places it exploits. It is argued that tourists should pay an additional tax to compensate for this damage. Do you agree?

Some people think the advantages of international tourism outweigh its disadvantages. To what extent do you agree?

It is said that travel broadens the mind. What can we learn by travelling to other countries? Should we first explore our own countries?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about travel.

Do you like travelling?

Have you travelled outside your country much?

Do you think older or younger people travel more? Why is this?

What problems can people face when they're travelling?

Let's talk about air travel

Have you ever travelled by plane?

Why do some people dislike travelling by plane?

How should people prepare for plane travel?

Would you like to travel by plane in the future?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a journey you would like to make.

You should say: Where you would go

 How you would travel

 What you would see on the journey

and say why you would like to make this journey.



Describe a memorable trip you have had.

You should say: Where you went
 Who you went with
 How you travelled
and say why the trip was memorable

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about tourism.

What are some popular tourist destinations in your country?
Why do you think people enjoy travelling outside their own country?
What can people learn from travelling to another country?
How important is it for tourists to respect local customs?
Will tourism change much in the future, do you think?

Let's talk about travel and the environment

What impact can mass tourism have on the environment?
Do you think travellers should pay a 'green tax' to the country they visit?
How can tourists have a positive impact on the environment when they travel?
Should some natural areas (forests, Arctic areas, coral reefs etc.) be off-limits to tourists?

Resources



What are the negative effects of tourism on the environment?

Oishimaya Sen Nag, World Atlas

Eco-tourism, BBC Bitsize



Travel voluntourism. Do western do gooders actually do harm?

Rosenberg, T. The Guardian

How Tripadvisor changed travel - podcast Kinstler, L. The Guardian



Visit Europe in the winter off season, Smarter travel

Tales of an ice-bound wonderland Paul Nicklen Ted Talk

Sample Essay



Topic:

In many countries, tourism is a major part of the economy, but it also causes environmental damage and ruins the places it exploits. It is argued that tourists should pay an additional tax to compensate for this damage. Do you agree?

In the past two decades there has been an explosion in the number of people who are able to travel to places of interest and beauty. One of the results of this has been that the locations these tourists visit have been spoiled and even destroyed. I am partially in agreement with the view that tourists should pay a charge to repair the damage they bring about but feel that those responsible for looking after tourist attractions should also play their part in caring for them.

I support the practice of requiring visitors to help those who are responsible for maintaining tourist attractions with a monetary payment. When a town, city or place of beauty receives thousands of visitors every year the cost of, for instance, cleaning, disposal of rubbish, an increased number of staff and provision of services can be high, which places a strain on budgets. This is largely because the income that is at the disposal of, say, a town's management is limited to what is made available from the taxes citizens pay. Venice charges all tourists an entrance fee to the city, which mitigates to some extent the impact of its millions of visitors annually, but has so far failed to fully protect this city from those who come to enjoy it. This is a good example of why other strategies need to be adopted.

More can be done than just collecting fees from visitors. For any tourist destination to continue to be viable, not only for visitors, but also for those who live there or nearby, there must be a clear policy set and funded by central government in consultation with town or city councils as to how this rapidly increasing influx of visitors is going to be managed. In Germany, for instance, Berlin had the backing of the national government to control the letting of apartments through Airbnb so that owners of property in the city were only permitted to let out single apartments within their homes rather than their whole house. This had two positive effects: the price of accommodation for Berliners was kept at an affordable level and visitors to the city had the experience of living with a local.

In conclusion, the growing numbers of tourists travelling the world is producing problems to which there are no easy answers. One welcome strategy has been to charge tourists a visitor fee, but I believe closer cooperation between central government and those who are responsible for managing matters on the ground would prove productive.

Vocabulary – Travel

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
accommodation (n)	a place to stay, eg. a hotel, a youth hostel		accommodate (v)	What kind of accommodation are you looking for?	
activity (n)	something to do often as part of a holiday		active (adj)	This holiday offers a lot of activities such as diving, water skiing and horse riding	
affordable (adj)	within a person's budget		afford (v)	Overseas travel is now affordable to millions of people.	
agency (n)	a company which sells another company's products eg a travel agency		agent (n)	We usually book our travel through a travel agency.	
airfare (n)	the cost of travel by airplane		bus fare coach fare ferry fare	The cost of airfares is kept down through competition.	
amenities (n)	facilities			The hotel's amenities include a pool, bar and private beach.	
attraction (n)	a special feature		attractive (adj) attract (v)	The resort's best attractions are its beach and cocktails.	
book (v)	reserve or pay for		booking (n) overbook (v)	I've booked and paid for your tickets.	
budget (adj)	low priced		budget (n) budget (v)	We can only afford a budget holiday this year.	
B&B (n)	Bed and breakfast accommodation			Staying in B&Bs is one of the best ways to get to know the local people.	
cruise (n)	a holiday on board a boat (usually a yacht or ship)		cruise (v)	Cruises have become very popular with the over 60s.	
destination (n)	a place tourists etc. go to			Venice is a very popular tourist destination.	
discount (n)	a reduction in price		discount (v)	You can usually get a discount for children under 5.	
experience (v)	discover		experience (n)	Experience the real Viet Nam on a two week cycling tour.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
getaway (n)	short holiday break			Weekend getaways are very popular.	
hospitality (n)	friendly welcome		hospitable (adj)	Cuban hospitality is legendary.	
itinerary (n)	travel plan			Our itinerary takes in the city's markets, museums, art galleries and best restaurants.	
leisure (n)	time when not working		leisurely (adj) the leisure industry	The leisure industry is an important source of revenue for many countries.	
picturesque (adj)	attractive view or place			We stayed in a picturesque cottage in the Alps.	
pollute (v)	make dirty		pollution (n)	Cruise ships pollute cities and oceans.	
safari (n)	travel usually to see animals in a natural setting		go on safari (v)	We went on safari and saw lots of wild animals.	
trek (v)	walk, often long distances		trek (n) trekking (n)	We trekked in the Himalayas for two weeks.	
trip (n)	journey, travel			She's on a three week business trip to Brazil.	
worldwide (adj)	global, all over the world			Travel is a worldwide phenomenon.	

Topic 20: Work



Essay topics

Nowadays employment options are changing and employees cannot rely on having the same job and working conditions throughout their life. What are some possible causes? Suggest some ways to plan for the future under these circumstances.

Some say job security is more important than job satisfaction. What is your opinion?

Nowadays many jobs are more stressful and the working day is longer. What are the reasons for this? What can employers do to help employees?

Speaking

Part 1 questions:

Let's talk about jobs.

What are some common jobs for young people in your country?

When did you get your first job?

What did you like about your first job?

What job would you like to have in the future?

Is there any job you would **not** like to have?

Let's talk about new jobs.

How do people look for a new job in your country?

Why do people change jobs?

What problems can people have when they start a new job?

How can people prepare for a new job?

Part 2 Topic Talks:

Describe a job you would like to have.

You should say: What the job is

 Why you would like to have this job

 What kinds of skills are needed for this job

and say how you would feel if you had this job.

LANGUAGE



Describe a job that is popular in your country.

You should say: What you know about it
 Why it is popular
 What kind of people are good at this job

and say whether you would like to have this job.

Part 3 questions:

Let's talk about work.

Do you think most people work too many hours these days?

It seems difficult to have a good work/life balance. Why do you think this is?

Why do some people love their work and others don't?

More and more people are working part time jobs. Is this a good thing?

More women have a paid job today than in the past. Is this a good thing? Why/why not?

In your country, is it easy for young people to find a job? Why/why not?

Resources



This laundry is changing the vicious cycle of unemployment and mental illness.

Elmes, A. The Conversation.

A complex system is not to blame for corporate wage theft Forsyth, A. The Conversation

Asylum seekers can't find work in Australia Hiruy, Walo and Hutton, The Conversation



Life spent diving on coral reefs Roberts, C. The Guardian

This working life - how and why we work BBC



Why being nice to your coworkers is good for business Porath, C. Ted Talks

The happy secret to better work Achor, S. TED Talks

The way we think about work is broken Schwartz, B. TED Talks

LANGUAGE

Sample Essay



Topic:

Nowadays many jobs are more stressful and the working day is longer. What are the reasons for this? What can employers do to help employees?

Expectations on workers have changed greatly over the last few decades. Today they often have to work longer hours in situations which are increasingly emotionally and physically confronting. This essay will outline why this is and suggest how employers can assist those who work for them to deal with these challenges.

There are many reasons for this increased stress at work. One is the competitive nature of many workplaces. With an emphasis on productivity and shareholders' returns, employers often require more of their staff than is reasonable or even humanly possible. McDonalds is one example of this where staff are forced to work long hours just to make a living wage in order to satisfy the demands of customers and the bosses they work for. Another stress employees experience is driven by the company policy of hiring inexperienced staff who are cheaper, and letting go of those who have been in the company for longer. Schools have been known to follow this practice because experienced teachers are much more expensive to employ than newly trained ones. The anxiety this may create for employees can be severe.

While changing the practices noted above may not be wholly within the power of an employer, there is much they can do to make working conditions less stressful. One way is for employers to always be willing to listen with an open mind to issues that staff may be having. In a school, for instance, the employer would ensure that the person directly responsible for managing teachers conducted regular meetings in which anything could be raised and that any issues not resolved in such meetings were followed up speedily and with care. For a working environment to be as welcoming and productive as it can be, employers should also be equally the representatives of those they employ as they are representatives of those who have the ultimate say in the business, such as investors and shareholders. An employer who is willing to push back against their demands that, for example, staff need to work longer hours by suggesting that a four day week would in fact raise production levels, would, indeed, help those who work for him.

Many employees face difficult working conditions and unsociable hours, which causes stress. Employers can relieve this stress by making sure staff are consulted and by being willing to support them when unreasonable demands are being made of them.

Vocabulary – Work

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
apprentice (n)	a person who trains in a skill for at least 2/3 years		apprenticeship (n) apprentice (v)	He's an apprentice to an electrician.	
bonus (n)	extra money paid to an employee			All workers will be paid a bonus at the end of the year.	
commute (n)	the journey from home to work and back each day			My daily commute took so long that I work at home these days.	
commute (v)	to travel from home to work and back		commuter (n)	I takes me three hours to commute to work each day.	
contract (n)	a work agreement		contractor (n)	I signed a contract to work for two years.	
CV (n) (curriculum vitae)	a record of qualifications and work experience		resume (n)	When I applied for the job I had to submit a CV/resume.	
employed (adj)	in work		(in) employment (n)	I'm employed by the government.	
flexitime (n)	flexible work hours - start and finish times can be varied		flexible (adj)	We have flexitime in this company. As long as you work 7 hours a day you can start and finish when you like.	
foreman (n)	a manager in eg. construction or manufacturing		site (n) eg. building or construction site	He is a site foreman in charge of a team of 30 workers.	
intern (n)	a person who works, often without pay, to gain experience		internship (n)	She worked as an intern for six months and was then offered a job with the company.	
living (n)	a way of earning money			What do you do for a living? I'm a doctor.	
occupation (n)	a general word meaning job, work profession. Commonly used in forms.			What's your occupation? I run a creative design business.	
overtime (n)	extra work which is often paid at a higher rate			We had to finish the order so the foreman asked us to work overtime.	
pension (n)	money paid to an employee after she stops working		pensioner (n)	She retired at 60 and lives on a pension of \$500 per week.	
raise (n)	an increase in pay			Every December we get a raise in our pay.	

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Translation	Related words	Example	My example
retire (v)	to stop working usually after 60 or 65 years old		retirement (n) retiree (n)	He liked his job so much he didn't want to retire.	
sack (v)	terminate someone's employment			The company sacked all its employees.	
salary	what is earned working for an employer			My salary is \$1500 per month.	
shift (n)	a fixed number of hours worked		shift work day shift night shift	There are 3 shifts each 24 hours in this factory.	
trade (n) (v)	the exchange of products or produce		trader (n) trading (adj) eg. trading partner	Trade with China was worth 6 billion dollars in 2018	
unemployed (adj)	out of work		employer (n)	I've never been unemployed/out of work.	
vacancy (n)	a job position which has not been filled.		vacant (adj)	We have several job vacancies you could apply for.	
wage	payment per hour for work			My wages are paid weekly and I receive \$25 an hour.	