

IELTS Writing Task 2 - Climate Change and Individual Responsibility

🎯 Topic Overview

Topic Statement: Some people believe that individuals can do little to improve the environment, and only governments and large companies can make a significant difference. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

- **Category:** Environment / Government & Policy
- **Question Type:** Agree/Disagree (Opinion Essay)
- **Time Allocation:** 40 minutes
- **Word Count:** 250-300 words

📚 Essential Vocabulary

Topic-Specific Terms

Word/Phrase	Vietnamese Meaning & IPA	Part of Speech	Example	Collocations
carbon footprint	lượng khí thải carbon /'ka:rəbən 'fʊtprɪnt/	n.	Individuals can reduce their carbon footprint through lifestyle changes.	reduce footprint, calculate footprint
sustainable practices	các hoạt động bền vững /sə'steɪnəbl 'præktɪsɪz/	n.	Sustainable practices must be adopted at all levels of society.	implement practices, promote practices
renewable energy	năng lượng tái tạo /rɪ'næŋg lʊərəng tə'eɪtəʊ/	n.	Investment in renewable energy has increased dramatically.	solar energy, wind energy
greenhouse gas emissions	khí thải nhà kính /'gri:nhaʊs gæs ɪ'mɪʃənz/	n.	Transportation accounts for 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions.	reduce emissions, monitor emissions
environmental degradation	suy thoái môi trường /ɪn'veɪrən'mentl ,degrə'deɪʃən/	n.	Industrial activities have accelerated environmental degradation worldwide.	prevent degradation, reverse degradation
ecological consciousness	ý thức sinh thái /'i:kə'lɒgɪkəl 'ka:nʃəns/	n.	Growing ecological consciousness has influenced consumer behavior.	raise consciousness, develop consciousness
fossil fuel dependence	sự phụ thuộc vào nhiên liệu hóa thạch /'fa:sl fju:əl liəu hɔ:ləθæk/	n.	Reducing fossil fuel dependence requires systemic	eliminate dependence, reduce

Word/Phrase	Vietnamese Meaning & IPA	Part of Speech	Example	Collocations
	dɪ'pendəns/		changes.	dependence
conservation efforts	nỗ lực bảo tồn /,ka:nser 'veɪʃən 'efərts/	n.	Individual conservation efforts can create ripple effects in communities.	coordinate efforts, support efforts
climate mitigation	giảm thiểu biến đổi khí hậu /'klaɪmət ,mɪtɪ 'geɪʃən/	n.	Climate mitigation requires both policy changes and individual action.	mitigation strategies, mitigation measures
waste reduction	giảm thiểu rác thải /weɪst rɪ'dʌkʃən/	n.	Waste reduction begins with conscious consumer choices.	promote reduction, achieve reduction
biodiversity loss	mất đa dạng sinh học /,baɪəʊdər'vɜ:rsəti lɔ:s/	n.	Biodiversity loss threatens ecosystem stability globally.	prevent loss, reverse loss

Academic Words

Word/Phrase	Vietnamese Meaning & IPA	Part of Speech	Example	Usage Notes
negligible	không đáng kể /'neglɪdʒəbl/	adj.	Critics argue individual efforts have negligible impact on global emissions.	Often used to minimize importance
aggregate	tổng hợp, tích lũy /'ægrɪgət/	v./adj.	The aggregate effect of individual actions can be substantial.	Used for cumulative effects
implement	thực hiện, triển khai /'ɪmplɪment/	v.	Governments must implement comprehensive environmental policies.	More formal than "put into practice"
mitigate	giảm nhẹ, làm dịu /'mɪtɪgeɪt/	v.	Individual actions alone cannot mitigate climate change effectively.	Technical term for reducing severity
catalyst	chất xúc tác, động lực /'kætəlɪst/	n.	Consumer demand can be a catalyst for corporate change.	Metaphorical use for causing change
paradigm shift	thay đổi mô hình tư duy /'pærədaɪm ſɪft/	n.	Solving climate change requires a paradigm shift in consumption patterns.	Major fundamental change
substantive	quan trọng, đáng kể /səb'stæntɪv/	adj.	Only substantive policy changes can address the crisis adequately.	More academic than "significant"

Word/Phrase	Vietnamese Meaning & IPA	Part of Speech	Example	Usage Notes
imperative	cấp thiết, bắt buộc /ɪm'perətɪv/	n./adj.	Environmental protection has become an imperative for survival.	Emphasizes urgency

Useful Collocations

- **environmental** + impact/protection/policy/awareness/sustainability
 - Example: Environmental awareness has increased significantly among younger generations.
- **sustainable** + development/living/future/growth/consumption
 - Example: Sustainable consumption patterns must replace current wasteful habits.
- **climate** + action/crisis/emergency/resilience/adaptation
 - Example: Climate action requires coordination between all sectors of society.
- **collective** + action/responsibility/effort/impact/consciousness
 - Example: Collective action amplifies the impact of individual environmental efforts.

Essay Structure

Introduction (50 words)

Background statement structure:

- The escalating [issue] has prompted debate about [key question]
- Vocabulary: environmental degradation, climate crisis, unprecedented
- Example: "The escalating climate crisis has prompted intense debate about whether meaningful environmental protection lies within individual capabilities or requires institutional intervention."

Thesis statement structure:

- While [acknowledge opposing view], I believe that [main position]
- Vocabulary: substantive, imperative, collective action
- Example: "While institutional changes are undeniably crucial, I disagree that individual contributions are insignificant, as collective individual actions can catalyze broader systemic transformation."

Body Paragraph 1 (80-100 words)

Main idea: Individual actions create cumulative impact and market pressure **Supporting points:**

- Point 1: Consumer choices drive corporate behavior change

- Point 2: Grassroots movements originate from individual initiatives **Example/Evidence:** Success of plastic reduction campaigns, organic food market growth **Suggested vocabulary:** aggregate, catalyst, sustainable practices, paradigm shift

Body Paragraph 2 (80-100 words)

Main idea: Limitations of individual action without systemic support **Supporting points:**

- Point 1: Industrial emissions dwarf personal carbon footprints
- Point 2: Infrastructure limitations prevent sustainable choices **Example/Evidence:** 100 companies responsible for 71% of emissions **Suggested vocabulary:** negligible, fossil fuel dependence, implement, substantive

Body Paragraph 3 (80-100 words)

Main idea: Synergy between individual and institutional action **Supporting points:**

- Point 1: Individual actions create political pressure for policy change
- Point 2: Behavioral changes normalize sustainability **Example/Evidence:** Solar panel adoption, electric vehicle market **Suggested vocabulary:** mitigate, ecological consciousness, conservation efforts

Conclusion (40-50 words)

Summary statement: Both individual and institutional actions are essential

Final thought/recommendation: Integrated approach maximizes environmental protection **Suggested vocabulary:** imperative, collective responsibility, paradigm shift

Ideas Bank

1. Arguments for Individual Impact:

- Consumer boycotts forcing corporate change
- Social movements starting from individual activists
- Lifestyle changes influencing social norms
- Cumulative effect of millions making small changes

2. Arguments for Institutional Priority:

- Scale of industrial pollution vs personal emissions
- Need for infrastructure investment
- Regulatory power to enforce standards
- Resources for technological innovation

3. Supporting Examples:

- Greta Thunberg's individual action sparking global movement
- China's policy reducing global solar panel costs
- Plastic bag bans following consumer pressure
- Tesla's impact on automotive industry

Sample Answer

The escalating environmental crisis has prompted intense debate about whether meaningful climate action lies within individual capabilities or requires primarily institutional intervention. While government policies and corporate reforms are undeniably crucial for large-scale environmental protection, I strongly disagree that individual contributions are insignificant, as collective individual actions can serve as powerful catalysts for broader systemic transformation.

Individual environmental actions, though seemingly small in isolation, create substantial aggregate impacts that extend far beyond personal carbon footprint reduction. When millions adopt sustainable practices such as reducing meat consumption, choosing public transportation, or supporting eco-friendly businesses, these choices generate significant market pressures that compel corporate behavioral changes. For instance, consumer demand for organic products has grown from a negligible market segment to a \$50 billion industry, demonstrating how individual purchasing decisions can reshape entire sectors. Moreover, grassroots environmental movements invariably originate from committed individuals whose actions inspire broader community engagement, creating the social momentum necessary for policy transformation.

Admittedly, the scope of environmental degradation requires substantive institutional intervention that surpasses individual capacity. Industrial activities and fossil fuel dependence account for the overwhelming majority of greenhouse gas emissions, with just 100 companies responsible for 71% of global emissions since 1988. Infrastructure limitations often prevent individuals from making sustainable choices, regardless of their ecological consciousness. Without government investment in renewable energy, public transportation, and waste management systems, individual conservation efforts remain constrained by systemic barriers.

However, the most effective approach recognizes the synergistic relationship between individual and institutional action. Individual behavioral changes create the political will necessary for governments to implement ambitious environmental policies, while also normalizing sustainable practices that accelerate adoption rates. The rapid growth of electric vehicle markets and solar panel installation illustrates how individual early adopters can catalyze technological transitions that eventually achieve mainstream adoption through supportive policies.

In conclusion, while institutional reforms remain imperative for addressing climate change at scale, dismissing individual contributions overlooks their role in driving systematic change. The environmental crisis demands a paradigm shift that integrates personal responsibility with institutional action, recognizing that meaningful progress requires engagement at every level of society.

Word count: 299 words

Band Score Analysis

- Task Achievement (Band 8-9):** Clear position with nuanced discussion, fully developed arguments
- Coherence and Cohesion (Band 8):** Excellent progression and paragraph organization
- Lexical Resource (Band 8-9):** Sophisticated vocabulary with precise topic-specific terms
- Grammatical Range and Accuracy (Band 8):** Complex structures with varied sentence patterns

Writing Phrases for Transitions

Phrase	Vietnamese Meaning & IPA	Example	Variations
admittedly	phải thừa nhận rằng /əd'mitidli/	Admittedly, individual actions alone cannot solve climate change.	It must be acknowledged, Granted
invariably	luôn luôn, không thay đổi /ɪn'veəriəblɪ/	Environmental movements invariably begin with individual commitment.	Consistently, Without exception
for instance	ví dụ /fɔ:r 'ɪnstəns/	For instance, recycling rates have improved through education campaigns.	For example, To illustrate
overwhelmingly	áp đảo, vượt trội /'əʊvər'welmɪŋli/	Evidence overwhelmingly supports the need for systemic change.	Predominantly, Decisively
in essence	về bản chất /ɪn 'esəns/	In essence, environmental protection requires multi-level engagement.	Fundamentally, Essentially
notwithstanding	mặc dù vậy /,na:twiθ 'stændɪŋθ/	Notwithstanding individual limitations, personal action remains valuable.	Despite, In spite of