* **[IELTS Writing Task 2: 'immigration' topic](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/07/ielts-writing-task-2-immigration-topic.html)**
* What are the benefits and drawbacks of immigration or multi-cultural societies?
* **Here is a paragraph giving some of the economic benefits of immigration:**
* From an economic perspective, immigration can be extremely positive.
* Many immigrants have skills that are needed in the country they move to.
* For example, countries sometimes lack key workers like doctors and nurses, and immigration is therefore encouraged.
* Immigrants who find work contribute to the economy of their new country with the skills they bring and the taxes they pay.
* At the same time, many immigrants send money to help family members in their home country, therefore helping to boost that economy too.
* ***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?***
* Humans are responsible for a variety of environmental problems, but we can also take steps to reduce the damage that we are causing to the planet. This essay will discuss environmental problems and the measures that governments and individuals can take to address these problems.
* Two of the biggest threats to the environment are air pollution and waste.
* Gas emissions from factories and exhaust fumes from vehicles lead to global warming, which may have a devastating effect on the planet in the future.
* As the human population increases, we are also producing ever greater quantities of waste, which contaminates the earth and pollutes rivers and oceans.
* Governments could certainly make more effort to reduce air pollution.
* They could introduce laws to limit emissions from factories or to force companies to use renewable energy from solar, wind or water power.
* They could also impose ‘green taxes’ on drivers and airline companies. In this way, people would be encouraged to use public transport and to take fewer flights abroad, therefore reducing emissions.
* Individuals should also take responsibility for the impact they have on the environment.
* They can take public transport rather than driving, choose products with less packaging, and recycle as much as possible. Most supermarkets now provide reusable bags for shoppers as well as ‘banks’ for recycling glass, plastic and paper in their car parks. By reusing and recycling, we can help to reduce waste.
* In conclusion, both national governments and individuals must play their part in looking after the environment.
* ***Note:***  
  This essay is exactly 250 words long. I've tried to make it as simple as possible, but it's still good enough to get a band 9.
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: studying abroad**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/08/ielts-writing-task-2-studying-abroad.html)
* ***More and more students are choosing to study at colleges and universities in a foreign country. Do the benefits of studying abroad outweigh the drawbacks?***
* Here are some ideas from my [ebook](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/ielts-ebook.html):
* ***Benefits of studying abroad:***
* Many students travel abroad to study at a prestigious university.
* The best universities employ lecturers who are experts in their fields.
* Qualifications gained abroad can open doors to better job opportunities.
* Living in a foreign country can broaden students' horizons.
* Overseas students are exposed to different cultures and customs.
* They can immerse themselves in a language.
* ***Drawbacks of studying abroad:***
* Living away from home can be challenging.
* Students have problems with paperwork such as visa applications.
* The language barrier can cause difficulties.
* Students have to find accommodation and pay bills.
* Many students feel homesick and miss their families.
* Some students experience culture shock.
* Which of the words or phrases above do you think would be considered band 7 or higher?
* [**"Band 7 Vocabulary"**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/08/band-7-vocabulary.html)
* When I say "band 7 vocabulary", I'm really talking about vocabulary that could help you to get a band 7 ***or higher***. Examiners are looking for "less common" words and phrases, correct and relevant collocations, and maybe some idiomatic language.
* I've written the following paragraph using some of the ideas from the lesson below. I've underlined the band 7 (or higher) vocabulary.
* ***Advantages of studying abroad:***
* 1,Many students choose to study abroad because there are greater opportunities in a particular foreign country.
* 2,Foreign universities may offer better facilities or courses.
* 3, They may also be more prestigious than universities in the student’s own country and have teachers who are experts in their fields.
* 4,Therefore, by studying abroad, students can expand their knowledge and gain qualifications that open the door to better job opportunities.
* 5, A period of study abroad can also broaden students’ horizons.
* 6,In the new country, they will have to live and work with other students of various nationalities. Thus, overseas students are exposed to different cultures, customs and points of view.
* (106 words)
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: crime topic**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-writing-task-2-crime-topic.html)
* Here is a "problem/solution" question, with some ideas for an essay below:
* ***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?***
* Causes of crime and re-offending:
* The main causes of crime are poverty, unemployment and lack of education.
* People who commit crimes often have no other way of making a living.
* The prison system can make the situation worse.
* Offenders mix with other criminals who can be a negative influence.
* A criminal record makes finding a job more difficult.
* Many prisoners re-offend when they are released.
* Possible measures to reduce crime and re-offending:
* Prisons should provide education or vocational training.
* Rehabilitation programmes prepare prisoners for release into society.
* Community service is another way to reform offenders.
* It makes offenders useful in their local communities.
* They might be required to talk to school groups or clean public areas.
* Offenders also need help when looking for accommodation and work.
* There are more ideas about topics like police, prisons, capital punishment and community service in my [ebook](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/ielts-ebook.html).
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: 'zoo' topic**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-writing-task-2-zoo-topic.html)
* ***Some people believe that it is wrong to keep animals in zoos, while others think that zoos are both entertaining and ecologically important. Discuss both views.***
* Here are some (band 7 or higher) vocabulary ideas. I've organised the vocabulary according to different perspectives.
* Positives of keeping animals in zoos:
* **Environmental perspective:** Zoos play an important role in wildlife conservation. They help to protect endangered species. They allow scientists to study animal behaviour.
* **Economic perspective:** Zoos employ large numbers of people. They provide job opportunities and income for the local area. The money raised can be used for conservation projects.
* **Personal perspective:** Zoos are interesting, educational and fun. They make a great day out for families. Children learn to appreciate wildlife and nature.
* Negatives of zoos:
* **Environmental perspective:** Zoos are artificial environments. Animals lose their instinct to hunt for food. It would be better to save endangered species by protecting their natural habitats.
* **Moral perspective:** Keeping animals in cages is unethical. We have no right to use animals for entertainment. Zoos exhibit animals with the aim of making a profit.
* Thinking about topics from different perspectives is a useful technique. It helps you to generate a variety of interesting ideas. I used this technique when thinking of ideas for my ebook, and I encourage my students to use it when planning their essays.
* Several students have asked me to help them with this IELTS question:
* ***Some people think that school children need to learn practical skills such as car maintenance or bank account management along with the academic subjects at school. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***
* Here are some suggestions (this is NOT an essay):
* **1. Introduce the topic then give your opinion**  
  I would write that it is true that children learn academic subjects at school, but not many practical skills. However, I would then disagree that schools should teach skills like bank account management and car maintenance.
* **2. First supporting paragraph**  
  I would write a paragraph about the importance of academic subjects like maths, science, languages etc. We live in a knowledge-based economy where independent thinking and problem solving are the most important skills. With timetables already full, schools do not have time to teach children anything else.
* **3. Second supporting paragraph**  
  I would argue that bank account management is a 'life skill' that anyone can learn by simply opening a bank account. Most adults have no problem managing their finances without being taught accounting lessons at school. Other skills like car maintenance are not really necessary. Most people take their cars to a qualified mechanic.
* **4. Conclusion**  
  Repeat the idea that schools are already doing a good job teaching the traditional academic subjects. If they start to teach practical skills, the study of important academic subjects will suffer.
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: globalisation**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-writing-task-2-globalisation.html)
* Here is an essay question on the topic of globalisation:
* ***It has been said that the world is becoming a global village in which there are no boundaries to trade and communication. Do the benefits of globalisation outweigh the drawbacks?***
* Yesterday's video contained some useful ideas, but here are some more ideas from my ebook:
* Positives of globalisation:
* Business is becoming increasingly international.
* A global economy means free trade between countries.
* This can strengthen political relationships.
* Globalisation can also create opportunities for employment.
* It encourages investment in less developed countries.
* It could reduce poverty in the developing world.
* Negatives of globalisation:
* Globalisation can also lead to unemployment and exploitation.
* Companies move to countries where labour is cheap.
* This creates redundancies, or job losses.
* Some companies exploit their employees in developing countries.
* Salaries are low and working conditions are often poor.
* Global trade also creates excessive waste and pollution.
* ***Note:***  
  The American English spelling is 'globalization'. You can use either spelling in the IELTS test.
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: advertising topic**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-writing-task-2-advertising-topic.html)
* Advertising is a very common topic in both the IELTS writing and speaking tests. Here are some ideas from my [ebook](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/ielts-ebook.html" \t "_self) that you could learn.
* **Positives of advertising:**
* Companies need to tell customers about their products and services.
* Advertisements inform us about the choices we have.
* The advertising industry employs many people.
* Advertisements are often funny, artistic or thought-provoking.
* **Negatives of advertising:**
* Advertisers aim to convince us that buying things leads to happiness.
* We are persuaded to follow the latest trends and fashions.
* Children can be easily influenced by advertisements.
* They put pressure on their parents by pestering or nagging.
* **Opinions:**
* Advertising should be regulated by governments.
* Advertisements that target children should be banned.
* Packaging for junk food should display clear health warnings.
* Overall, advertising is necessary but it needs to be controlled.
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: tourism**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/10/ielts-writing-task-2-tourism.html)
* ***Do the benefits of tourism outweigh the drawbacks?***
* Here are some ideas. I've organised the vocabulary according to different perspectives (different ways of looking at this issue).
* Positives of tourism:
* **Personal perspective:**
* Tourism is a popular leisure activity.
* Tourists can relax, have fun, 'recharge their batteries', experience different customs and cultures (sight-seeing, sunbathing, visiting monuments, tasting new cuisine).
* Travel opens our minds. It can broaden our horizons.
* **Economic perspective:**
* The tourism industry is vital for some countries. People rely on tourism for their income.
* Tourism attracts investment from governments and companies.
* It creates employment due to demand for goods and services (hotels, entertainment etc.).
* It helps to improve the standard of living.
* Negatives of tourism:
* **Environmental perspective:**
* Tourism can have a negative impact on the environment. Excessive building (roads, hotels etc.) destroys natural habitats and spoils the landscape.
* Tourism creates pollution and waste. It puts pressure on local resources such as food, water and energy.
* **Economic perspective:**
* Tourism may cause a rise in the cost of living. Prices of goods and services go up.
* Tourists buy second homes. All of this affects local people.
* **Cultural perspective:** Local traditions may be lost. Traditional jobs and skills die out (e.g. farming, fishing). Local people are forced to work in the tourist industry.
* Thinking about topics from different perspectives can help you to generate better ideas. This technique isn't perfect for every topic, but it can be really useful.
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: technology**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/10/ielts-writing-task-2-technology.html)
* Here is a question that a student asked me about:
* ***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.***
* I'd write a 4-paragraph essay:
* Introduction: introduce the topic and give your view
* One view
* The other view (that you agree with)
* Conclusion: repeat your view
* Some ideas:
* Technology could increase the gap between rich and poor.
* Rich people have smartphones, laptops, wireless broadband Internet etc.
* People in developed countries can now work from home or from anywhere in the world. They can do their shopping online and have things delivered to their homes.
* Technology improves their quality of life.
* On the other hand, many people in poorer countries, who did not have normal telephones, now have mobile phones.
* Also, the Internet is spreading to all parts of the world. In the past, only people in developed countries had access to world-class libraries, but now the Internet gives everyone access to the same information. This will lead to greater equality.
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: city problems**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/11/ielts-writing-task-2-city-problems.html)
* ***More and more people are migrating to cities in search of a better life, but city life can be extremely difficult. Explain some of the difficulties of living in a city. How can governments make urban life better for everyone?***
* Here are some band 7 vocabulary ideas from my [ebook](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/ielts-ebook.html" \t "_self) for describing city problems:
* Life in cities has its drawbacks.
* The cost of living is higher than in rural areas.
* Housing is usually much more expensive.
* Homelessness and poverty are common in cities.
* There is a gap between the rich and poor.
* Life in cities can be extremely stressful.
* There are problems like traffic congestion and crime.
* Cities lack a sense of community.
* People do not even know their neighbours.
* Cities are sometimes described as “concrete jungles”.
* Can you suggest any solutions to these problems? Watch yesterday's video for some ideas.
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: governments**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/11/ielts-writing-task-2-governments.html)
* A lot of IELTS Writing questions ask you to give opinions about what governments should do in relation to an issue. Governments can have an influence on almost everything: environment, crime, television, advertising, work etc.
* As part of your IELTS preparation, you should think about what governments can do in relation to IELTS topics. Here are some ideas from my ebook:
* Governments provide public services like healthcare and education.
* They introduce new laws.
* They raise money by taxing working people.
* They can spend money on campaigns to educate people.
* They can raise people's awareness of issues.
* They can create new jobs.
* They can provide resources for schools, hospitals etc.
* They can support people who are living in poverty or unable to work.
* So, if the question asks you to suggest what governments should do to reduce obesity, you could write this:
* "In my opinion, governments should spend money on campaigns to educate people about the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet. Perhaps they should also introduce new laws to ban the advertising of junk food to children."
* Think about some other IELTS topics. What do you think governments should do?
* [**IELTS writing Task 2: health topic**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/11/ielts-writing-task-2-health-topic.html)
* ***Despite huge improvements in healthcare, the overall standard of physical health in many developed countries is now falling. What could be the reason for this trend, and what can be done to reverse it?***
* Here is a paragraph about causes of poor health:
* Lifestyle is a major cause of poor health in developed countries. Most people now travel by car rather than walking, and machines now perform many traditional manual jobs. As a result, people tend to work in offices where little physical activity is required. At home, people are also less active; most adults relax by watching television, while children play video games rather than doing outdoor sports. Technology has therefore made our lives more comfortable but perhaps less healthy.
* Can you suggest any solutions to these lifestyle problems?  
  PS. There are more ideas for this topic in my [ebook](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/ielts-ebook.html" \t "_self).
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: 'minority languages' essay**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/03/ielts-writing-task-2-minority-languages-essay.html)
* Today, I'd like to share a 'band 9' sample essay for the question below.
* ***Several languages are in danger of extinction because they are spoken by very small numbers of people. Some people say that governments should spend public money on saving these languages, while others believe that would be a waste of money.***  
  ***Discuss both these views and give your opinion.***
* It is true that some minority languages may disappear in the near future. Although it can be argued that governments could save money by allowing this to happen, I believe that these languages should be protected and preserved.
* There are several reasons why saving minority languages could be seen as a waste of money.
* Firstly, if a language is only spoken by a small number of people, expensive education programmes will be needed to make sure that more people learn it, and the state will have to pay for facilities, teachers and marketing. This money might be better spent on other public services.
* Secondly, it would be much cheaper and more efficient for countries to have just one language. Governments could cut all kinds of costs related to communicating with each minority group.
* Despite the above arguments, I believe that governments should try to preserve languages that are less widely spoken.
* A language is much more than simply a means of communication; it has a vital connection with the cultural identity of the people who speak it. If a language disappears, a whole way of life will disappear with it, and we will lose the rich cultural diversity that makes societies more interesting.
* By spending money to protect minority languages, governments can also preserve traditions, customs and behaviours that are part of a country’s history.
* In conclusion, it may save money in the short term if we allow minority languages to disappear, but in the long term this would have an extremely negative impact on our cultural heritage.
* (258 words)
* [**IELTS Writing Task 2: 'dependence' question**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/03/ielts-writing-task-2-dependence-question.html)
* The following question was used in several countries last Saturday. I've listed some ideas below.
* ***Some people think that in the modern world we have become more dependent on each other, while others think that people are now more independent.***  
  ***Discuss both views and give your own opinion.***
* First view: we have become more dependent
* Life is more difficult and expensive, and we are less self-sufficient
* Young people rely on their parents for longer
* Unemployed people receive state benefits
* Our jobs are much more specialised, and we need to work in teams
* Second view: we are more independent
* We rely on machines more than we depend on each other
* The Internet allows us to solve problems without needing help
* Families are more dispersed, and therefore provide less support
* Education gives us the freedom to make our own choices
* By linking these points together and supporting them with examples, you could easily write two good paragraphs.
* **IELTS Writing Task 2: 'job satisfaction' topic**
* ***As most people spend a major part of their adult life at work, job satisfaction is an important element of individual well-being.***  
  ***What factors contribute to job satisfaction?***  
  ***How realistic is the expectation of job satisfaction for all workers?***
* The following paragraph answers the second part of the question (How realistic..)
* It is difficult to imagine a world in which everyone is truly satisfied with their job. Most people work in order to earn a salary, and they would probably not choose to spend eight or more hours each day doing their jobs if they did not need the money. The need to earn money to pay mortgages, bills and everyday living costs is of much greater concern than job satisfaction. In fact, I would argue that the majority of people dislike their jobs and are unhappy about their salaries, working hours, workloads, or their bosses.
* (95 words)
* ***Note:***  
  What "band 7 vocabulary" can you find in the paragraph above?
* ELTS Writing: 'gender and university' essay
* Universities should accept equal numbers of male and female students in every subject. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Here are some ideas:
* 1. Introduction: We decided to completely disagree with the question statement. You don't need to
* explain both sides of the argument. Just give your opinion in the introduction, and then support it in the main body paragraphs.
* 2. Paragraph 2: One reason why we decided to disagree is that it would not be practical or realistic to have exactly the same number of males and females on every course. Some courses have mainly male applicants, while others are more popular with females.
* 3. Paragraph 3: Another reason we disagreed is that it would not be fair to base admission to
* courses on gender. Universities should select candidates based on their qualifications, skills, experience etc.
* 4. Conclusion: Repeat the idea that selecting according to gender is not the best way to ensure
* equal opportunities for men and women at university.
* In my opinion, men and women should have the same educational opportunities. However, I do not agree with the idea of accepting equal proportions of each gender in every university subject.
* Having the same number of men and women on all degree courses is simply unrealistic.
* Student numbers on any course depend on the
* applications that the institution receives.
* If a university decided to fill courses with equal numbers of males and females, it would need enough applicants of each gender.
* In reality, many courses are more popular with
* one gender than the other, and it would not be practical to aim for equal proportions. For example, nursing coursestend to attract more female applicants, and it would be difficult to fill these courses if fifty per cent of the places needed to go to males.
* Apart from the practical concerns expressed above, I also believe that it would be unfair to base
* admission to university courses on gender. Universities should continue to select the best candidates for each course according to their qualifications. In this way, both men and women have the same opportunities, and applicants know that they will be successful if they work hard to achieve good grades at school. If a female student is the best candidate for a place on a course, it would be wrong to reject her in favor of a male student with lower grades or fewer qualifications.
* In conclusion, the selection of university students should be based on merit, and it would be both impractical and unfair to change to a selection procedure based on gender.