# Listening Tips and Tricks – **40 Mins**

1. Read questions carefully within given time. Make sure you are able to see all your questions within your screen.
2. Make sure you highlight noun and verbs using “right click” of your mouse and select highlight option.
3. In table type questions: Follow column Headings and row headings to track listening.
4. Any point of time if you missed something, don’t worry and move to your next question proactively.

# Reading Tips and Tricks: -- **60 Mins**

## Heading Match Questions

1. Get a quick look on headings and try to get the topic.
2. Try to read first and last two lines of each paragraph then check your headings.
3. Look for question marks “?”
4. Look for if author is saying something like “I must say”.
5. You must copy paste to avoid spelling mistakes.
6. Look for paraphrasing words(beginning of, starting of)

# Writing Tips and Tricks: **TASK 2 – 40 Mins**

## Type of Topics:

1. [Opinion](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/02/ielts-writing-task-2-agree-disagree-lesson/) (Agree or Disagree)
2. [Advantages and Disadvantages](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/05/24/ielts-advantages-and-disadvantages-lesson/)
3. [Problem and Solution](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/05/08/ielts-problem-and-solution/)
4. [Discussion](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/18/writing-task-2-discussion-essay-lesson/) (Discuss both view)
5. Two-part Question

Look for Complete Structure:

<https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/03/ielts-writing-task-2-essay-structures/>

## **IELTS Essay Structures**

Knowing how to structure your IELTS Writing Task 2 essay is an essential skill that can make the difference between the getting and not getting the band score you deserve. With that in mind, we have outlined the most common IELTS Writing Task 2 structures below.

Nearly all of my Task 2 essay follow this basic structure:

The sentences you put in each paragraph will depend on what type of question you get.

The five most common IELTS Writing Task 2 questions are:

1. [Opinion](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/02/ielts-writing-task-2-agree-disagree-lesson/) (Agree or Disagree)
2. [Advantages and Disadvantages](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/05/24/ielts-advantages-and-disadvantages-lesson/)
3. [Problem and Solution](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/05/08/ielts-problem-and-solution/)
4. [Discussion](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/18/writing-task-2-discussion-essay-lesson/) (Discuss both view)
5. Two-part Question

Below I will outline examples and a structure approved by experienced [IELTS](https://www.ielts.org/) teachers and examiners for each type of question. This will help you write a clear, coherent answer and hopefully boost your IELTS band score. I also include an example answer for each type of question so you can see what the structure looks like in a real essay.

**Please note that these are general structures and they may vary slightly depending on the particular question.**

Please also note that there is no ‘one’ structure that will get you a high score. There are many types of structures that can get you a high score. These are just the ones I think are most effective and easiest to learn.

**For more detailed guidance on each type of question please visit the lessons below. I have provided a link at the end of each section.**

## **Opinion Questions (Agree or Disagree)**

**Typical Question Words**–

What is your opinion?

Do you agree or disagree?

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Direct question.

**Example Question**–

Some people believe that unpaid community service should be a compulsory part of high school programmes (for example working for a charity, improving the neighborhood or teaching sports to younger children).

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

### **Structure**

[**Introduction**](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/05/how-to-write-introduction-ielts-writing-task-2/)

Sentence 1- [Paraphrase](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/31/paraphrase-ielts/)Question

Sentence 2- Thesis Statement (It is agreed…/It is disagreed…/This essay agrees/disagrees…)

Sentence 3- Outline Sentence (I am going to elaborate….)

**Main Body Paragraph 1**

Sentence 1- Topic Sentence

Sentence 2- Explain Topic Sentence

Sentence 3- Example

**Main Body Paragraph 2**

Sentence 1- Topic Sentence

Sentence 2- Explain Topic Sentence

Sentence 3- Example

[**Conclusion**](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/06/14/ielts-writing-conclusions/)

Sentence 1- Summary and opinion

### **Sample Answer**

It is argued that volunteering should be made part of the school curriculum. This essay agrees with that suggestion completely because of the benefits it brings to pupils. The essay will first look at how voluntary work can help students develop soft skills and then discuss how these extracurricular activities are valued by universities and employers.

Education should not be limited to strictly academic pursuits and those in education should also develop life skills, such as teamwork, empathy and self-discipline, and one of the best ways to hone these aptitudes is through community service. Serving those less fortunate than ourselves teaches us many lessons including how to work with people from other backgrounds and the value of hard work. For example, I personally volunteered to spend 6 weeks in Africa teaching disadvantaged children and this led to a much higher work ethic when I returned to my studies.

Many colleges and companies are also increasingly looking for this type of experience. Most school leavers have the same grades and charitable works can help set you apart from the herd. For example, Cambridge and Oxford receive thousands of applications from straight-A students every year and can only accept a small percentage of applicants. What you have done outside the classroom is often the thing that differentiates you from everyone else and gets you that coveted spot.

In conclusion, teenagers should be made to partake in unpaid work as part of their schooling because it will help them learn things they wouldn’t ordinarily learn from their teachers and it will also boost their chances of getting into third level education.

**For more detail on how to answer agree or disagree questions please visit our**[**opinion essay lesson**](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/02/ielts-writing-task-2-agree-disagree-lesson/)**.**

**Need help writing essays like this? Check out our**[**ESSAY CORRECTION SERVICE**](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/07/23/essay-correction-service/)**.**

## **Advantages and Disadvantages Questions**IELTS-Essay-Structures IELTS Writing Task 2 Essay Structures

**Typical Question Words**

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages and give your own opinion.

**Example Question**

Computers are being used more and more in education.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages and give your own opinion.

### **Structure**

**Introduction**

Sentence 1- Paraphrase Question

Sentence 2- Outline Sentence

**Main Body Paragraph 1**

Sentence 1- State One Advantage

Sentence 2- Expand/Explain Advantage

Sentence 3- Example

Sentence 4- Result

**Main Body Paragraph 2**

Sentence 1- State One Disadvantage

Sentence 2- Expand/Explain Disadvantage

Sentence 3- Example

Sentence 4- Result

**Conclusion**

Sentence 1- Summary

Sentence 2- Opinion

### **Sample Answer**

It is argued that technology is playing an every increasing role in schools and universities. This essay will firstly, discuss student freedom as one of the main advantages of this and secondly, outline decreasing levels of face to face contact as one of the main disadvantages.

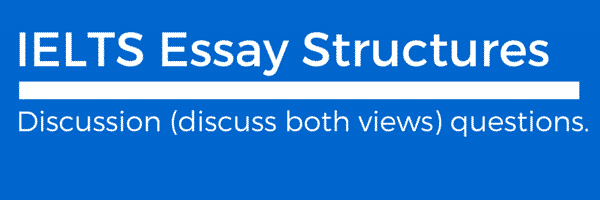
One of the principle advantages of an increase in the use electronic devices in education is the autonomy it provides students. Students have the freedom to focus on whatever topic or subject they want and study it in depth through the internet. A prime example of this is the amount of online university courses available to students, covering a myriad of subjects, that up until recently were unavailable to most learners. This has resulted in more people studying third level degrees than ever before, at a pace and schedule that suits them.

The main disadvantage associated with increasing use of technology in education is the decrease in face to face interaction between students. Students spend more time looking at computer screens by themselves than interacting with each other. For instance, the recent explosion in smartphone use has been at the expense of genuine human interaction. This results in soft skills, such as verbal communication and empathy, being affected.

In conclusion, the benefits technology brings to education, such as student autonomy, must be weighed against the drawbacks, such as negative effects on human interaction. Overall, the educational benefits outweigh the disadvantages because human beings will always want human contact and most people will not solely use IT for education.

**For more detail on how to answer advantage and disadvantage questions please visit our**[**advantage and disadvantage lesson**](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/05/24/ielts-advantages-and-disadvantages-lesson/)**.**

## **Discuss Both Views Question (Discussion Essay)**



**Typical Question Words**

Discuss both points of view and give your opinion.

**Example Question**

Computers are being used more and more in education. Some people say that this is a positive trend, while others argue that it is leading to negative consequences.

Discuss both sides of this argument and then give your own opinion.

### **Structure**

**Introduction**

Sentence 1- Paraphrase Question and/or state both viewpoints.

Sentence 2- Thesis Statement

Sentence 3- Outline Sentence

**Main Body Paragraph 1**

Sentence 1- State first viewpoint

Sentence 2- Discuss first viewpoint

Sentence 3- Reason why you agree or disagree with viewpoint

Sentence 4- Example to support your view

**Main Body Paragraph 2**

Sentence 1- State second viewpoint

Sentence 2- Discuss second viewpoint

Sentence 3- Reason why you agree or disagree with viewpoint

Sentence 4- Example to support your view

**Conclusion**

Sentence 1- Summary

Sentence 2- State which one is better or more important

### **Sample Answer**

There is an ever increasing use of technology, such as tablets and laptops, in the classroom. It is often argued that this is a positive development, whilst others disagree and think it will lead to adverse ramifications. This essay agrees that an increase in technology is beneficial to students and teachers. This essay will discuss both points of view.

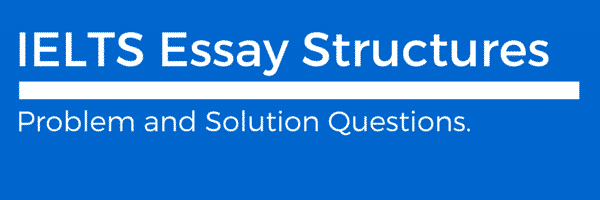
It is clear that the Internet has provided students with access to more information than ever before. Moreover, learners have the ability to research and learn about any subject at the touch of a button. It is therefore agreed that technology is a very worthwhile tool for education. Wikipedia is a prime example, where students can simply type in any keyword and gain access to in-depth knowledge quickly and easily.

However, many disagree and feel that technology deprives people of real human interaction. Human interaction teaches people valuable skills such as discourse, debate and empathy. Despite this, human interaction is still possible through the internet and this essay disagrees technology should be dismissed for this reason. For instance, Skype and Facebook make it possible for people to interact in ways that were never before possible.

While the benefits of technology, particularly the internet, allow students to tap into limitless sources of information, some still feel that people should be wary of this new phenomena and not allow it to curb face to face interaction. However, as long as we are careful to keep in mind the importance of human interaction in education, the educational benefits are clearly positive.

**For more detail on how to answer discussion questions please visit our**[**discussion essay lesson**](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/18/writing-task-2-discussion-essay-lesson/)**.**

## **Problem and Solution Questions**



**Typical Question Words**

Problem and solution.

Cause and solution.

**Example Question**

Students are becoming more and more reliant on computers.

What are some of the problems associated with reliance on computers, and what are some of the possible solutions?

### Structure

**Introduction**

Sentence 1- Paraphrase Question

Sentence 2- Outline Sentence

**Main Body Paragraph 1**

Sentence 1- State Problem

Sentence 2- Explain problem

Sentence 3- Result

Sentence 4- Example

**Main Body Paragraph 2**

Sentence 1- State Solution

Sentence 2- Explain Solution

Sentence 3- Example

**Conclusion**

Sentence 1- Summary

Sentence 2- Recommendation or Prediction

### **Sample Answer**

Learners are becoming ever more dependent on technology, such as the Internet and mobile devices. This essay will discuss one of the main problems associated with dependence on computers and suggest a viable solution.

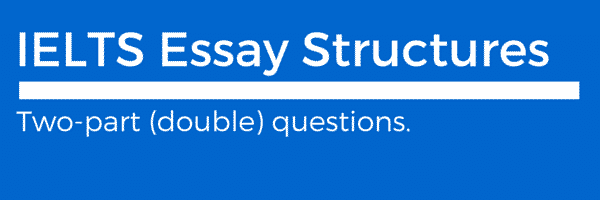
The principal problem with over-reliance on technology, such as tablets and computers, is plagiarism. Students often use search engines to answer a question and simply copy the text from a website, rather than thinking about the question. This practice is not only prohibited in schools and universities but also stunts a student’s intellectual development. For example, many teachers complain that students copy web pages straight from Wikipedia word for word rather than giving a reasoned answer to their questions.

A solution to this worrying problem is asking students to email their answers to teachers and teachers using anti-plagiarism software to detect copying. Moreover, students would be made aware of this practice and this would inspire them to answer questions using their own words, rather than someone else’s. For instance, many universities already use this kind software to scan course work for plagiarism and it could be extended to include all homework, by learners in both secondary and tertiary education.

In summary, one of the main problems with over-use of technology in education is plagiarism and this can be solved through the use of plagiarism detection software. It is predicted that more and more students’ will email their work to their teacher and this work will be scrutinised for plagiarism.

**For more detail on how to answer problem and solution questions please visit our**[**problem and solution lesson**](https://www.ieltsadvantage.com/2015/05/08/ielts-problem-and-solution/)**.**

## **Two-Part Questions**



**Typical Question Words**

There will normally be a statement and they will then ask you to answer to separate questions.

**Example Question**

As most people spend a major part of their adult life at work, job satisfaction is an important element of individual wellbeing.

What factors contribute to job satisfaction?

How realistic is the expectation of job satisfaction for all workers?

### Structure

**Introduction**

Sentence 1- Paraphrase Question

Sentence 2- Outline Sentence (mention both questions)

**Main Body Paragraph 1**

Sentence 1- Answer first question directly

Sentence 2- Explain why

Sentence 3- Further explain

Sentence 4- Example

**Main Body Paragraph 2**

Sentence 1- Answer second question directly

Sentence 2- Explain why

Sentence 3- Further explain

Sentence 4- Example

**Conclusion**

Sentence 1- Summary

### **Sample Answer**

As the majority of adults spend most of their time at work, being content with your career is a crucial part of a person’s health and happiness. This essay will first discuss which elements lead to job satisfaction and it will then address the question of how likely it is that everyone can be happy with their job.

The two most important things that lead to someone being satisfied at work are being treated with respect by managers and being compensated fairly. If those more senior than you respect you as a person and the job you are doing then you feel like you are valued. A fair salary and benefits are also important considerations because if you feel you are being underpaid you will either resent your bosses or look for another job. There two factors came top of a recent job satisfaction survey conducted by Monster.com, that found that 72% of people were pleased with their current role if their superiors regularly told them they were appreciated.

With regards to the question of happiness for all workers, I think this is and always will be highly unlikely. The vast majority of people fail to reach their goals and end up working in a post they don’t really care about in return for a salary. This money is just enough to pay their living expenses which often means they are trapped in a cycle of disenchantment. For example, The Times recently reported that 89% of office workers would leave their jobs if they did not need the money.

In conclusion, being satisfied with your trade or profession is an important part of one’s well-being and respect from one’s colleagues and fair pay can improve your level of happiness, however, job satisfaction of all workers is an unrealistic prospect.

# Writing Tips and Tricks: **TASK 1 – 20 Mins**

There are two possible letters they will ask you to write:

* A formal letter
* An informal letter

There are lots of teachers and websites that talk about ‘semi-formal’ letters. You do not have to worry about these. Do not over-complicate things by studying a third type of letter, formal and informal are all you need.

## IELTS General Writing: Strategy

The General Training Task 1 test always follows the same format. You will be given the scenario and then asked to write about three bullet points.

This is a typical General Training Task 1 format:

**Scenario**

**Write a letter to [X]. You should include:**

* **Bullet point 1**
* **Bullet point 2**
* **Bullet point 3**

For example**:**

**You live in a room in college which you share with another student. However, there are many problems with this arrangement and you find it very difficult to work.**

**Write a letter to the accommodation officer at the college. In the letter,**

**• describe the situation**  
**• explain your problems and why it is difficult to work**  
**• say what kind of accommodation you would prefer**

This predictable format allows us to follow a strategy that ensures we cover all of the various points and that we answer the question.

The strategy is as follows:

**Dear [X]**

**Paragraph 1- State purpose of the letter**

**Paragraph 2- First bullet point**

**Paragraph 3- Second bullet point**

**Paragraph 4- Third bullet point**

**Sign off**

**Your name**

**Take a look at the answer below to see this strategy in action.**

***A friend of yours is going on holiday soon and has asked you to recommend a destination.***

***Write a letter to your friend and recommend a good place for a holiday that you have visited before.***

* ***say where you went,***
* ***where you stayed,***
* ***what you can do there and***
* ***what the food was like.***

Dear Annie

I hope you’re well. I’ve got a great place for you to visit when you get some time off work.

I went to Shanghai in China a fortnight ago and it was just perfect. It only takes about 3 hours from where you live.

We stayed in a little boutique hotel called the Dragon Inn. It wasn’t the biggest hotel, or the most expensive, but I really loved the personal service and the family who run it were so hospitable.

There are loads of things to do, but my favorite has to be the Bund. You can stroll along there in the evening and admire the view or grab a coffee and watch the world go by.

I also have to mention the delicious cuisine. You really should try the dim sum if you go there; it was the best I’ve ever had.

Anyway, let me know if you have any questions about your trip.

Best wishes

Chris

# **Planning a Formal Letter**

People don’t normally plan letters but in the IELTS test you really should. In fact, I have met very few students who wrote a band 9 letter and didn’t make a plan before writing.

As you can see above, all task 1 questions on the General Training paper follow the same format. They will first tell you the situation (the reason why you are writing) and then give you three bullet points that you have to cover. This is good news for us because it means we can follow the same structure every time.

Here is the formal letter structure I tell all of my General Training IELTS students to follow.

**Dear Sir/Madam**

**Paragraph 1- Say why you are writing to them. (I am writing with regard to…)**

**Paragraph 2- Bullet point 1 and supporting details**

**Paragraph 3- Bullet point 2 and supporting details**

**Paragraph 4- Bullet point 3 and supporting details**

**I look forward to hearing from you.**

**Yours faithfully**

**[Your Full Name]**

That’s it. It will take you only a few minutes to write this out in the exam and then all you have to do is think of the supporting details.

When thinking of supporting details don’t worry about being entertaining or even thinking of the best ideas you can, just make sure they are relevant.

# Useful Language

Below is a selection of useful language for you to use in a formal letter. The phrases you choose will depend on the context of the question.

### Beginning

* I am writing this letter with regard to…
* I am writing to bring to your attention…
* I am writing to inform you that…
* I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with…..

### Requests and Suggestions

* I would be grateful if you would…
* I would like you to…
* I am entitled to request that you….
* I was wondering if it would be at all possible to….
* I would like to suggest that….

### Ending

* I look forward to hearing from you.
* I look forward to receiving your response.
* I await your prompt service.
* I thank you for your consideration.
* Please respond at the earliest convenience.

# **Band 9 Sample Formal Letter**

**On a recent holiday you lost a valuable item. Fortunately, you have travel insurance to cover the cost of anything lost.**

**Write a letter to the manager of your insurance company. In your letter**

* **describe the item you lost**
* **explain how you lost it**
* **tell the insurance company what you would like them to do**

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to inform you that I recently lost my digital camera while on holiday in Vietnam.

The camera is a black Canon 70d and cost $1550 when I bought it new last month. It has a resolution of 20 megapixels, a Canon 67 millimeter lens and was in a brown leather case with my name on it.

I lost it when I was having coffee with my husband in the backpacker area of Ho Chi Minh City. I believe the coffee shop was called Highlands Coffee and it was on Pham Ngu Lao Street. We had been at the coffee shop for around 45 minutes when I noticed it was missing.

I am entitled to make a claim for the value of the above mentioned item and request that you send me details on what I need to do to in order to proceed.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully

John Smith

Important vocabulary you can use

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| In spite of | Apart from | In conclusion | The principal advantages or disadvantages of |
| A prime example | High unlikely | Plethora of | However |
| Which is (for complex sentences) | In order to |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |