

Step 2: note down any ideas about the topic

The examiner will mark your Writing Task 2 based on specific criteria. One of these is **Task Response**. To achieve a good Task Response score, you must

- explain your own opinions on the topic
- support your opinions (e.g. with personal examples or your knowledge of the world)
- include **only relevant** ideas
- write 250 words.

2.4 You will lose marks if you include ideas that are not relevant to the question. Look at these ideas that a candidate noted to answer the question in 2.2. Cross out **four** ideas that are not relevant to the task and should not be included.

- 1 Instant communication (e.g. emails/text messages) means that it is difficult to escape from work.
- 2 The internet makes it easier to do your homework.
- 3 In my company, computers have replaced many staff and have caused more unemployment
- 4 A friend of mine uses a social-networking site a great deal but we rarely see her.
- 5 Virtual friends made on the internet cannot be compared to our actual friends and family.
- 6 I learned to type using a computer program, these programs make it easy to understand computers and make learning fun
- 7 My cousin travelled for a year but kept in touch with his family every day.
- 8 With more and more technological advances, our society will continue to develop faster and faster.
- 9 Through the internet, we can share memories with people who are far away.

2.5 Check your answers, then look back at your own ideas from 2.3. Are there any you need to cross out?



Study Tip Articles that contain opinions can help give you ideas to use in the Writing tasks. The letters page of a newspaper usually contains people's personal opinions about different topics. Read them and decide whether you agree or disagree. Decide what your own opinion is.

Step 3: organise your ideas into paragraphs

It is important to produce a balanced answer that looks at both sides of the question equally. It is also important to organise your ideas into separate paragraphs.

- 2.6** Decide which of the remaining ideas from 2.4 can be put together into the same paragraph. Put the ideas from 2.4 into the correct box below.

For: the internet helps us to stay connected:	Against: the internet isolates us

Step 4: check that you have enough ideas

If you do not have enough ideas for both sides of the question, then your ideas will not be fully developed.

- 2.7** Which side of the argument do we need to add more to?

- 2.8** Which of the following ideas would be best to add?

- A The business world benefits from the immediate contact provided by the internet.
- B The internet has both advantages and disadvantages.

3 Getting started – writing an introduction

Once you have your ideas planned out, you can begin to write. Your answer must be clearly developed, and so it needs a clear start. The best way to start is by restating the question **in your own words**.

- 3.1** Match introductory sentences A–D below to Writing Task 2 statements 1–6 in 1.2.

- A Each year, there are more and more cars on our streets creating congestion and causing delays. There are several ways that local governments can try to solve these problems.
- B Unless we are born into wealth, we all need to find a way to earn a living. For many, our working life takes up most of our waking hours and this can make us very unhappy indeed.
- C As a society, we have a duty to teach our young people. However, there are some lessons that we need to learn for ourselves.
- D Marketing involves teaching as many people as possible about a product. There is no better way to reach people than through television, popular culture and the internet.

Test Tip Your answer will also be marked on **coherence** (are your ideas clearly linked?). You need to make sure your ideas are organised into separate paragraphs. To help group your ideas together logically, make notes under different headings that show both sides of the discussion. These can then form the middle paragraphs of your answer.

3.2 In this introduction for the Writing Task in 2.2, too many words have been copied from the question. Improve the introduction by replacing the underlined phrases. Use the words from the box.

keep in touch	however	anywhere in the world
obsession	stay at home	see their friends

Test Tip

You will lose marks if you copy words from the question. Make sure to paraphrase the ideas.

The internet is a wonderful tool that helps us to stay connected with each other no matter where we are. On the other hand, some websites encourage us not to socialise.

Once you have restated the question, the rest of your introduction could

- 1 give your interpretation of the words or ideas used in the question
- 2 explain what you intend to write about
- 3 give a brief reaction to the question
- 4 summarise the question or topic through a new question

3.3 What suggestions above (1–4) do sentences A–D relate to?

- A Does the internet really help us to develop relationships?
- B We need to consider both the benefits and the drawbacks of the internet.
- C I think the word ‘tool’ is important here. In my view it shows how impersonal this contact is.
- D These statements summarise my own mixed feelings towards the internet.

3.4 Look at sentences 1–4 below and decide which would make a good final sentence for the introduction.

- 1 It seems clear that the internet brings a lot of problems.
- 2 Is the internet a positive or a negative influence on our lives?
- 3 How can we ensure that the internet does not cause widespread problems?
- 4 Let us consider the arguments for and against computers.



Study Tip Don't learn whole answers and expect to use them in the exam. You will receive a very low score if you do this. Candidates who receive a higher band score in writing are able to show **flexible** use of language. The more you practise writing and reading, the more flexible your writing will become.

7 Writing Task 2 – Expressing your ideas clearly

In this unit you will practise:

- linking your ideas
- being accurate with vocabulary
- avoiding repetition
- using the correct style
- expressing a personal view
- reaching a conclusion

1 Linking ideas – cohesion

Cohesion means linking your ideas together clearly. Without cohesion, you will have a list of sentences, rather than a connected paragraph or essay.

1.1 The following words and phrases are all used to connect sentences and ideas together. Put them into the correct place in the list, according to how they are used.

that is because of however in spite of
furthermore in addition on the other hand
consequently while so despite such as
as a result whereas for instance
not only ... but also although also in fact

- Connecting similar ideas: *similarly*,
- Connecting different ideas: *but*,
- Clarifying an idea: *in other words*,
- Giving examples: *for example*,
- Giving a reason or conclusion: *therefore*,

1.2 Choose the correct words.

- 1 Advertisements provide vital revenue for the entertainment industry. *Consequently / Despite*, without adverts we could lose certain forms of entertainment altogether.
- 2 Nowadays, the internet has become an indispensable business tool. *Although / In fact*, we would find it very difficult to get through a working day without it.
- 3 The internet brings the world into our home. *Also / However*, we sometimes want to shut out the outside world from time to time.
- 4 Schools can give our children academic knowledge. *Whereas / Furthermore*, at school, children can learn social skills.
- 5 Many people today spend time on social networking sites. *As a result / For example*, Facebook and Twitter are both used around the world to help people stay connected.

Test Tip

The examiner will assess the **Coherence and Cohesion** of your answer. They will judge how your ideas are organised and how you link information. Planning before you write is the best way to make sure your ideas are organised in a logical way.

1.3 Which connectors in the box could also be used to link the ideas in 1.2?

In addition	On the other hand	In other words
For instance	As a result	

2 Lexical Resource – avoiding repetition

To achieve a high band score in the IELTS Writing paper, you need to show a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structure.

You can avoid repeating words by

- using a synonym
- using a pronoun to refer back to an idea (*This + noun / These + plural noun*)
- using a group noun (*This/these type(s) of / kind(s) of + noun*)

For example

Settlers introduced several new animals, such as the cat. This predator preyed on the local wildlife.

Settlers often introduce new crops and animals to an area. This type of activity can be disastrous.

2.1 Extracts 1–5 repeat the same vocabulary. Improve them by replacing the underlined phrases with a suitable synonym from the box and the appropriate pronoun.

funding	system	natural resources	facilities
method	technology		

- 1 We depend on oil, coal and gas for the majority of our energy needs. However, oil, coal and gas will one day run out.
- 2 Remote and rural areas may initially seem like idyllic places to live but they often lack hospitals, shops and schools. Living without easy access to hospitals, shops and schools can make life very difficult indeed.
- 3 Governments sometimes try to encourage innovation by offering grants. This isn't always effective because special grants are often difficult to obtain.
- 4 Some teachers ask students to simply copy down texts from a blackboard. But copying down texts does not help students to become independent or flexible in their use of language.
- 5 In my country, cars driving through the city centre are charged a toll. Charging a toll has been a success because the traffic has decreased considerably.

Test Tip

Just like Writing Task 1, your Writing Task 2 answer will be assessed based on the lexical resources or vocabulary you use. This means that you need to avoid repeating words from the question and use as wide a variety of words and phrases to discuss the topic as you can.

Using the correct style

The language you choose must be as accurate as possible and must suit this formal task.

2.2 Sentences 1–6 contain one example of incorrect style. Find the mistakes and correct them.

- 1 Children with no access to education are most likely gonna end up in manual jobs.
- 2 Two of the major problems we are facing today are global warming & increased pollution.
- 3 A lot of our modern conveniences are contributing to our unhealthy lifestyle, e.g. we often use a car instead of walking to the local shops.
- 4 Some businesses think it is OK to simply dump toxic waste and pay the necessary fine.
- 5 Kids of any age need the right type of guidance.
- 6 I find that the internet helps me a lot when I travel. I can use it to book flights, find a hotel, get maps, etc.

Test Tip Writing

an essay like this is a formal situation and so your language must be formal or neutral as well. Never use notes or bullet points. You will lose marks if you use abbreviations or language that is too casual.



Study Tip Think about your own language when you are studying English. Make a note of important differences such as vocabulary or grammar. Noticing these will help you to avoid making the mistakes that are common for people with the same first language as you.

2.3 Some words are commonly confused. Circle the correct word or phrase in each sentence.

- 1 I don't think it is necessary for children to *learn / study* about ancient history.
- 2 I do think it is important for us to try to *understand / know* different cultures.
- 3 Before I travel to a new country, I always take the time to *find out about / know* the local customs and rules.
- 4 It is almost impossible to get a good office job without up-to-date computer *skills / knowledge*.
- 5 I don't think we will be able to *stop / solve* this problem in our lifetime.
- 6 I believe today's younger generation are more attracted by flexible working hours than by the thought of earning *money / wages*.
- 7 Sadly, not all *employers / employees* receive sick pay and holiday pay.
- 8 A great deal of *advertising / advertisement* is now done as we surf the internet.

3 Expressing a personal view

Remember that your Writing Task 2 answer should give your own **views on or attitude to** the topic. One way to show this is by using

- A adverbs such as *personally* or *probably*.
- B modals such as *might* or *could*.
- C phrases such as *in my view*.
- D verbs such as *appear to be* or *seem to be*.

These can also help to stress your ideas or change them from a simple fact to a personal opinion.

For example

Travelling is dangerous. → *Travelling can be dangerous.*

Most people agree with me. → *I think most people would agree with me.*

3.1 Match these examples to suggestions A–D.

- 1 As far as I'm concerned, we have not done enough to address the problem.
- 2 Perhaps the current strategy will work.
- 3 People seem to spend a lot more time at work than with their families nowadays.
- 4 Following a vegetarian diet can help you save money.

3.2 Underline the words or phrases in sentences 1–9 that show opinion and attitude. Then rewrite them using the words in brackets.

- 1 Perhaps this is because today's teachers are not trained as well as they used to be. (might)
This might be because today's teachers are not trained as well as they used to be.
- 2 Personally, I don't think this is a good idea. (view)
- 3 I certainly wouldn't like to have to do a job I didn't enjoy.
(personal)
- 4 I think this could be a bad idea. (probably)
- 5 In my view, life is much more complicated for young people nowadays. (can)
- 6 Personally, I think every situation is different. (opinion)
- 7 Nowadays, young people probably use their mobile phones for multiple tasks. (generally)
- 8 In my opinion, schools are more crowded than in the past. (seem)
- 9 My city is less crowded now and people generally enjoy walking through the streets. (appear)

Writing skills

Try to avoid repeating '*I think*' or '*I know*' too often. The following verbs can be used instead: *realise, feel, believe, imagine, can see*.

3.3 Match the words in bold in sentences 1–8 with the most appropriate definition, A–C.

- A this is my strong belief
 - B this is my understanding of the situation
 - C this is a guess, I don't really know for sure
- 1 **I feel** it's important for everyone to play an active role in reducing this type of pollution.
 - 2 **I realise** that it could be difficult to cut costs like this.
 - 3 **I can see** that for people who have a disability, the internet provides an essential lifeline.
 - 4 **I suppose** that allowing adverts to be placed on a football pitch might help reduce the cost of tickets.
 - 5 **I believe** that if we all made a positive effort then we could make real progress.
 - 6 **I imagine** that people with high-powered jobs find it difficult to escape from work.
 - 7 **I am convinced** that there is a connection between computer use and obesity.
 - 8 **I suspect** that the rich are not as happy as we think they are.

Reaching a conclusion

To finish off your writing, you need to write a conclusion. Your conclusion should be a brief summary of your argument and ideas and is often a good place to give your own opinion.

3.4 These concluding sentences all contain a mistake. Find the mistakes and correct them.

- 1 In conclusion, I completely disagree this view.
- 2 As far as I am concern, this is a problem without any real solution.
- 3 To summarise, even there is a clear downside to our dependence on technology, I honestly feel we have to find a way to cope with it because the internet is definitely here to stay.
- 4 In conclude, there are both negatives and positives to this system, but the negatives seem to far outweigh the positives.
- 5 In my point of view, education is a vital part of every child's life.

Writing skills

8 Writing Task 2 – Checking and correcting

In this unit you will practise:

- developing your ideas clearly
- checking and correcting
- grammatical accuracy
- using correct punctuation
- assessing your language level

1 Developing your ideas clearly

When you have completed your writing, make sure you allow at least three or four minutes to check and read through your answer. First check your ideas against your plan.

- Did you include all of your ideas?
- Are your ideas organised and connected logically?

1.1 Read the answer to this Writing Task on the following page.

'The internet allows us to stay connected with each other no matter where we are. On the other hand, it also isolates us and encourages people not to socialise.'

To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

1.2 Before checking the spelling and grammar, consider the ideas and organisation of the answer.

- 1 Look at underlined words 1–10 in the answer. What ideas do these words refer back to? Why does the writer use them?
- 2 Find a word or phrase that is used to
 - a introduce what you want to talk about first
 - b introduce a contrasting idea
 - c add a supporting idea
 - d show you are giving an example
 - e show you are giving a personal opinion
 - f explain the result of an action or situation
 - g introduce a summary of the ideas in the answer
- 3 Write the plan the candidate might have used before beginning to write.

Test Tip

The examiner will assess the **Grammatical Accuracy** of your answer. They will judge how accurate your sentence structures are, and also whether you have shown a **range** of structures and not limited yourself to basic ones. Make sure you vary your sentences in the exam.

The internet is a wonderful tool that helps us to keep in touch wherever we are. However, I do think that some people can find ^{it} quite addictive. Progress often comes at a price, and there are many who are concerned about the impact the internet has on our daily life.

First, let us consider the benefits the internet brought. Undoubtedly, the greatest of ^{these} is the ease with which ^{it} allows us to make contact with people anywhere in the world. Nowadays, the business world makes use of this every day. Without the internet, companies would find it extremely difficult to expand or meet the needs of ^{their} customers. This same ability to keep in touch extends into our personal lives. For example, when my cousins were backpacking around the world ^{they} were able to reassure their family and friends that all was well and also share memories almost immediately, using social networking sites.

Progress comes at a price, however, and there is another side to the coin. ^{This} convenience that the internet brings means that our work is only ever a mouse click away. Consequently, many people find it difficult to ever escape from work. In addition, the websites that encourage us to keep in touch may, ironically, lead to anti-social behaviour in some users. ^{These} people end up with more virtual friends than actual friendships. In reality, ^{their} feeling of connectedness may only be an illusion as ^{they} become more and more isolated in their homes.

To summarise, I completely agree that, although there are clear benefits to the internet, there are also certain risks. Having said that, I believe that ^{these} can be minimised through education. As far as I'm concerned, something that can bring the world into the home of a person who is disabled and essentially housebound, is more indispensable than intrusive.



Study Tip We use handwriting less and less these days, so make sure that you practise writing quickly and neatly. Ask others to read your writing to make sure it is legible. There may not be time in the exam to write and then rewrite your answer. It is better to spend time planning and then checking at the end.

2 Grammatical Accuracy

To achieve a high band score in the IELTS test, you need to show a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures and use them accurately.

2.1 Look again at the answer and find

- 1 four common spelling mistakes.
- 2 five problems with verbs.
- 3 a phrase that is repeated (decide which one to delete).