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Day 1

The IELTS Writing Test

1. Length of Time

The Writing test consists of two tasks. Candidates of both Academic and General Training modules are given one hour to complete both Task 1 and Task 2 in about 20 minutes and 40 minutes respectively. The Writing test comes after the Listening and Reading tests with a ten-minute break in between for relaxation.

2. Test Format

While all candidates take the same Listening and Speaking tests, they sit different Reading and Writing tests, depending on whether they have selected the Academic Module or the General Training Module. These two do not carry the same weight and are not interchangeable. Overall, Tasks 1 of the two modules are quite different, but Tasks 2 are alike.

Task 1 of the General Training Module

Task 1 of this module asks candidates to write a letter of a minimum of 150 words in response to a situation or problem. Typical situations centre round complaining about something, requesting information, asking for help, making arrangements and/or explaining a situation. All of these are fairly similar tasks which can be written in informal, semi-formal, or formal styles.

Task 1 of the Academic Module

Task 1 of this module asks candidates to write a descriptive report of at least 150 words on some graphic or pictorial information in their own words, usually for a university lecturer. The tasks may include describing trends in a graph or links in a process, comparing and contrasting between two different sets of data.

Task 2 of both modules

Tasks 2 of both the Academic Module and the General Training Module are the same. Candidates are asked to write a short essay of a minimum of 250 words in about 40 minutes. The essay is usually a discussion of a subject of general interest. Candidates have to present and justify an opinion about something, offer solutions to a problem, or speculate about future trends.

Task 2 is not an easy part of the exam. It is more academic and demanding; therefore, it lasts longer than Task 1.

Let us now look at the requirements and writing task types of the two modules.

Academic Module

Requirements

You must complete two writing tasks. You will have 60 minutes to complete both tasks.

You should spend about 20 minutes on Task 1 and write at least 150 words.

You should spend about 40 minutes on Task 2 and write at least 250 words.

Task types

Task 1

You will have to look at a diagram, a table or a short piece of text and then present the information in your own words.

Your writing will be assessed on your ability to:

- organise, present and compare data;
- describe the stages of a process;
- describe an object or event; and
- explain how something works.

You will also be judged on your ability to:

- answer the question without straying from the topic;
- write in a way which allows your reader to follow your ideas;
- use English grammar and syntax accurately; and
- use appropriate language in terms of register, style and content.

Task 2

You will have to present an argument or discuss a problem.

Your writing will be assessed on your ability to:

- present solutions to a problem;
- present and justify an opinion;
- compare and contrast evidence and opinions; and
- evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument.

You will also be judged on your ability to:

- communicate an idea to the reader in an appropriate style;
- address the problem without straying from the topic;
- use English grammar and syntax accurately; and
- use appropriate language in terms of register, style and content.

General Training Module

Requirements

You must complete two writing tasks. You will have 60 minutes to complete both tasks.

You should spend about 20 minutes on Task 1 and write at least 150 words.

You should spend about 40 minutes on Task 2 and write at least 250 words.

Task types

Task 1

You will have to write a short letter in response to a given problem or situation.

Your writing will be assessed on your ability to:

- engage in personal correspondence;
- elicit and provide general factual information;
- express needs, wants, likes and dislikes; and
- express opinions.

You will also be judged on your ability to:

- answer the question without straying from the topic;
- write in a way which allows your reader to follow your ideas;
- use English grammar and syntax accurately; and
- use appropriate language in terms of register, style and content.

Task 2

You will have to present an argument or discuss a problem.

Your writing will be assessed on your ability to:

- provide general factual information;
- outline a problem and present solutions; and
- present and justify an opinion.

You will also be judged on your ability to:

- communicate an idea to the reader in an appropriate style;
- address the problem without straying from the topic;
- use English grammar and syntax accurately; and
- use appropriate language in terms of register, style and content.

3. Marking Criteria

The writing tasks assess whether a candidate meets the requirements based on his or her ultimate goal of taking the test. However, the Academic Module expects the more formal requirements of a higher education establishment as is generally demanded in an academic context.

The IELTS Writing tasks are scored based on how the candidate responds on these four marking criteria:

1. Task Response – how accurately the task is addressed.
2. Coherence and Cohesion – how organised the writing is.
3. Lexical Resource – how large the stock of vocabulary is.
4. Grammatical Range and Accuracy – how varied and accurate his/her grammar is.

You can refer to the appendices at the back of the book to see a chart of detailed band descriptors for the writing tasks.

Generally, your task will be marked from 1 to 9 on the four areas mentioned above. Task 2 writing is more important than that of Task 1; hence, to calculate the final writing mark, more weight is assigned to the Task 2 mark than to the Task 1 mark. To get a good overall mark though, both tasks have to be well answered. So, do not hold back on Task 1, or give yourself too little time to answer it properly.

4. Skills for the Writing Module

The following study hints will help you in the weeks leading up to the IELTS test.

4.1. Grammatical range and accuracy

You should take this marking criterion into consideration. You are expected to be able to use a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy. The aspects of grammar include correct grammar, unity and coherence, brevity and appropriateness, varieties and complexities of sentence structures, and correct use of punctuation.

4.1.1. Correct grammar

The IELTS writing requires the standard written form of the language. You must, therefore, be able to use your English precisely and accurately.

Let us now review some common problems that non-native writers have made when writing in English.

a. Sentence fragments

A sentence fragment fails to be a sentence in the sense that it cannot stand by itself. It does not contain even one independent clause. There are several reasons why a group of

words may seem to act like a sentence, but not have the wherewithal to make it as a complete thought.

Examples:

The doctor worked round the clock. Operating on the boy. (It lacks a subject and a finite verb.)

As Vietnam has entered the WTO. The local entrepreneurs are faced with both challenges and opportunities. (It has no main clause.)

There are many students want to pass the IELTS test. (There are two finite verbs.)

These sentences can be corrected as follows:

The doctor worked round the clock, operating on the boy.

As Vietnam has entered the WTO, the local entrepreneurs are faced with both challenges and opportunities.

There are many students who want to pass the IELTS test./Many students want to pass the IELTS test.

b. Run-on sentences

A run-on sentence consists of two or more main clauses that are run together without proper punctuation. We often speak in run-on sentences, but we make pauses and change our tone, so people can understand us. But when we write, no one can hear us; thus, sometimes we must break our sentences into shorter units so that they do not sound run-on.

Examples:

Rodin is a world-famous artist his sculptures can be found in many museums and art galleries. (It has no punctuation.)

“Sesame Street” has been called the longest street in the world, it can be seen in so many parts of the world. (It is wrongly punctuated.)

These sentences can be corrected as follows:

Rodin is a world-famous artist. His sculptures can be found in many museums and art galleries./Rodin is a world-famous artist, whose sculptures can be found in many museums and art galleries.

“Sesame Street” has been called the longest street in the world. It can be seen in so many parts of the world./“Sesame Street”, the longest street in the world, can be seen in so many parts of the world./“Sesame Street”, which has been called the longest street in the world, can be seen in so many parts of the world.

c. Dangling participles

Dangling participles are tricky words or phrases that change the meaning of a sentence so that we do not say exactly what we intend. The dangling participle is an error in sentence structure whereby a grammatical modifier is associated with a word other than the one intended. For example, a writer may have meant to modify the subject, but word order makes

the modifier seem to modify an object instead. Such ambiguities can lead to unintentional humour or difficulty in understanding a sentence.

Examples:

Having conducted a comprehensive investigation, some analysis is being done to find the cause of the problem.

Turning round the corner, an old church appeared in front of us.

These sentences can be corrected as follows:

Having conducted a comprehensive investigation, we are doing some analysis to find the cause of the problem.

Turning round the corner, we saw an old church in front of us./When we turned the corner, an old church appeared in front of us.

d. Subject-Verb disagreement

One of the most common and simple errors in English grammar is the disagreement between subject and verb. You cannot put in a verb in its plural form for a singular subject and vice versa.

For example, you cannot write:

The endless credits at the beginning and end of the film confuses the audience.

The president, accompanied by his wife and two children, are going on a holiday.

Salt is one of the traditional methods that is used to preserve meat.

Instead, you should write:

The endless credits at the beginning and end of the film confuse the audience.

The president, accompanied by his wife and two children, is going on a holiday.

Salt is one of the traditional methods that are used to preserve meat.

4.1.2. Unity and coherence (within a sentence)

Unity means oneness – oneness of thought and purpose. In order for a sentence to have unity: 1) its ideas must be closely related; 2) the relationship of its statements must be clear; and 3) the statements must compose only one thought.

Coherence refers to a certain characteristic or aspect of writing. Coherence in writing means that all the ideas in a sentence flow smoothly from one idea to the next thanks to the effective use of connectors. With coherence, the reader has an easy time understanding the ideas that the writer wishes to express.

The following sentences lack unity and coherence:

The committee first received many proposals from the local people and then an investigation began. (This sentence lacks unity because the ideas are not closely related.)

He brushed his teeth, put on his coat and driving his car to work. (The verbs are not parallel.)

Having finished the typing, she gave it to her boss for signature. (The referent is ambiguous.)

Bac Kan is an inland province. Quang Ninh is a coastal province. (It lacks a connector to make it coherent.)

These sentences can be corrected as follows:

The committee first received many proposals from the local people and then began an investigation.

He brushed his teeth, put on his coat and drove his car to work.

Having finished the typing, she gave the letter to her boss for signature.

Bac Kan is an inland province while Quang Ninh is a coastal province.

In addition, the wrong use of tenses, pronouns, singulars, or plurals will violate coherence.

Examples:

They want to achieve self-fulfilment in their career. However, if you don't work hard, you will lag behind others. (The pronouns are inconsistent.)

In the film, the secret agent goes to his office where he found his papers stolen. He knows that someone wanted to kill him, so he takes refuge with a waitress. (The tenses are inconsistent.)

Everyone should set goals for what he wants to be. People can be guided consciously or unconsciously by the idea they have. (There is disagreement in persons.)

4.1.3. Brevity and appropriateness

Brevity means writing concisely and avoiding redundancy.

Appropriateness implies suitable writing styles (formal vs. informal).

The sentences below are wrongly written:

When I have finished the novel, I will return it back to the library. (redundancy)

Environment is equally as important as genetic factors in the child's development. (redundancy)

The local government has taken many measures that are effective and made several policies that are practical to alleviate the traffic problem in this city. (redundancy)

We are pretty sure that the delay was due to the shortage of baggage handlers.
(inappropriateness)

Instead, you should write:

When I have finished the novel, I will return it to the library.

Environment is as important as genetic factors in the child's development.

The local government has taken many effective measures and made several practical policies to alleviate the traffic problem in this city.

We are firmly convinced that the delay was due to the shortage of baggage handlers.

4.1.4 Varieties and complexities of sentence structures

Writing that contains mostly simple sentences can be uninteresting or even irritating to read. Conversely, writing that consists of mostly complex sentences is usually difficult to read. Good writers, therefore, use a wide range of structures. They also occasionally start complex or compound-complex sentences with the dependent clause and not the independent clause.

Look at the wide range of structures used in the examples below:

a. Cleft sentences

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was a man confined to the wheelchair, but it was he who put America again on its feet.

b. Prepositional phrases

Only 2.2kg of protein can be lost without death occurring.

He sat in an armchair, nodding with a newspaper in the hand.

With regard to driving, the laws of some countries are notoriously lax and even the strictest are not strict enough.

c. Participial phrases

They have conducted investigation after investigation, thereby obtaining an enormous amount of data.

d. Inversions

Not only did they lose all their money but also came close to losing their lives.

e. Comparisons

Today, as an old order passes, the new world is more free but less stable.

f. Repetitions of key words

Earth provides enough for every man's need, but not for every man's greed.

There is no objective reality which can be looked at objectively.

g. Clichés

We are living in a highly challenging world, and we are to be always ready to challenge challenges.

According to the information available to us, the success of our task depends on the availability of money.

h. Well-written expressions that you should imitate:

It goes without saying that the state-run enterprises should try every means to improve their quality and services in order to survive in the economic globalisation.

Supposing you wanted to buy a washing machine, it is more than likely that you would obtain details regarding performance, price, etc. from an advertisement.

It does not surprise us to discover that success is measured in terms of the money you earn.

An ancient saying that “Those who constantly feel satisfied tend to be happy” is illustrative in this respect.

4.1.5. Correct use of punctuation

Misuse of punctuation is very common. In fact, punctuation is powerful – one punctuation mark can change the whole meaning of a sentence.

Below is a summary of the correct usage of some commonly-used punctuation marks.

a. Comma

Commas are used to separate thoughts within a sentence, allowing the reader to mentally pause and assimilate the full meaning of the sentence. The misuse of commas can alter the entire meaning of sentences.

The comma is used:

- To set off the antecedent which is clearly defined.

It is years since I read “Gone with the Wind”, which is my favourite novel.

- To set off the adverbial clause when it comes before the main clause.

If there is any misunderstanding, the family members will sit down and try to reach some agreement.

- To set apart words in apposition. (Appositives are words that identify or define other words.)

Bill Clinton, former president of the United States, will visit that country.

- To set apart the participial phrase from the rest of the sentence.

The monitor, getting to his feet, began to make a presentation.

- To separate successive nouns, verbs or adjectives in a sentence.

She likes to dance, sing, talk, and drink at the party.

Note: A comma is used before the final *and* in a list of three or more items.

- To set off a transition word or phrase when a pause is needed for clearness or emphasis.

We can, however, disagree if we wish.

- To separate an adverbial phrase from the rest of the sentence.

They tried, in spite of my advice, to climb the mountain.

b. Period or full stop

The primary use of the period is to end a sentence (when it is a statement or an instruction).

Semicolon co-ordinates or joins two independent but related clauses or sentences.

c. Colon

The colon is used:

- To precede an extended explanation.

I have some news for you: all of us have passed our exams.

- To introduce a list. It often follows *namely, such as, as follows*.

Please send the following items indicated below, namely: a. passport, b. visa application, and c. correct fee.

d. Semicolon

While the comma is frequently used, the following is the general accepted rule for the use of the semicolon: to separate two independent thoughts in a sentence that otherwise would have been separated by using a conjunction such as *and* or *but*.

The lecture was badly delivered; it went on far too long as well.

e. Question mark

This punctuation mark is primarily used to indicate a direct question being asked.

Does everyone agree with what he said?

f. Exclamation mark

The exclamation mark is used to indicate a strong and emotional response.

How I wish I were young again!

Notes: – Restraint should be exercised when using the exclamation mark in writing; for when it is used liberally, it will lose its impact.

– Double exclamation marks should be avoided in business correspondence.

g. Hyphen

The hyphen is used:

- In compound words.

Some people used to think that men have more self-control than women.

- In a compound adjective that precedes a noun.

first-rate service one-man job up-to-date fashions

Note: When a compound adjective follows a noun, it is not generally hyphenated.

The service they provide, first rate and consistent, will be what turns that company into a success.

h. Square brackets and parentheses

Square brackets and parentheses are used to enclose words and phrases independent of the sentence, as in explanatory notes, omissions, and comments that are not written by the author.

William Smith (1910-1969) lived first in Manchester and then moved to New York.

Square brackets [] should not be confused with parentheses (). Parentheses (singular: parenthesis) are used:

- To enclose words not directly relevant to the main topic of the sentence but too important to omit.

Optimistic thinking people (and I count myself among them) always seem to produce positive results in any situation.

- To enclose figures or letters marking the division of a subject.

Our silent auction fund-raising project included the following priorities:

- (1) Securing the location to hold the auction.
- (2) Soliciting businesses in the community to donate items.
- (3) Launching an aggressive advertising campaign in the community.

- To add examples.

The new photocopier has many features (including scanning options and faxing capabilities) that will be most beneficial to us in this office.

Note: Book titles cannot be written in << >>, but “ ” must be used.

4.2. Paragraph writing

A paragraph is a basic unit of organisation in writing in which a group of sentences develops one main idea. This general idea is expressed in a **topic sentence**, and four or five supporting sentences will expand this idea by giving explanations, details and/or examples to support the main idea. The number of supporting sentences in a paragraph can vary. The concluding sentence in a paragraph indicates that the paragraph is ending and summarises important points to remember or reprises the main idea. Those are the three parts of a paragraph.

In addition to the three parts of a paragraph, a good paragraph must also have two important elements: unity and coherence (already mentioned in part 4.1.2. of Skills for the Writing Module on page 16).

4.2.1. Unity and coherence (in a paragraph)

a. Unity means that all the supporting sentences in a paragraph discuss one and only one main idea (controlling idea) stated in the topic sentence.

Look at the example below:

No living creature, plant or animal, can exist in complete isolation. An animal is bound to depend on other living creatures, ultimately plants, for its food supply; it must also depend upon the activities of other plants for a continued oxygen supply for its respiration. Apart from these two basic relationships, it may be affected directly or indirectly in countless different ways by other plants and animals around it. Other animals prey on it or compete with it for the same food; plants may provide shelter, concealment or nesting material, and so on. There are difficulties that animals can meet with when building their nests. Similarly, the animal will produce its own effects on the surrounding plants and animals: some it may eat or destroy, for others it will provide food; and through its contribution of manure, it may influence the texture and fertility of the soil. Many farmers now use chemical fertilisers.

In this paragraph, all the sentences support the main idea (*No living creature, plant or animal, can exist in complete isolation.*). The supporting sentences develop this main idea; that is, all plants and animals can survive thanks to their dependence on each other. But the mid-sentence (*There are difficulties that animals can meet with when building their nests.*) and the last sentence (*Many farmers now use chemical fertilisers.*) are irrelevant. They mention quite different ideas: animals' difficulties in building their nests and farmers' use of chemical fertilisers. The unity of this paragraph is, therefore, violated.

b. Coherence means that your paragraph is easy to read and understand because your supporting sentences are put in logical order, and your ideas are connected by the use of appropriate transition signals.

Transition signals are used to join sentences, idea groups and sections together to make a paragraph or an essay coherent. Look at the example below:

Vilma likes travelling by bus better than by airplane for four reasons. It costs less. She can ride by bus from New York to Chicago for \$20. The airfare between the two cities is \$78. Travelling by bus gives her a closer look at cities and countryside than she could get from a plane. She enjoys driving through the big cities of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Fort Wayne. Vilma finds that passengers on the bus are often closer to her own age. They are easy to talk with on the shared travel adventure. Many airline passengers are businessmen who keep busy with their work while flying. Riding a bus allows Vilma to explore any stop along the way. Once she got off the bus on a small town in Indiana and spent the night with a girlfriend. The next day she took another bus to Chicago. Vilma usually prefers buses instead of planes unless she has to get somewhere in a hurry.

This paragraph is difficult to understand due to the lack of transition words or phrases. It will become easier to follow after the transition signals (in boldface) are added to lead the reader from one idea to the next.

Vilma likes travelling by bus better than by airplane for four reasons. First, it costs less. She can ride by bus from New York to Chicago for \$20. Yet, the airfare between the two cities is \$78. Second, travelling by bus gives her a closer look at cities and countryside than she could get from a plane. For example, she enjoys driving through the big cities of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Fort Wayne. Third, Vilma finds that passengers on the bus are often closer to her own age. They are easy to talk with on the shared travel adventure. In contrast, many airline passengers are businessmen who keep busy with their work while flying. Fourth, riding a bus allows Vilma to explore any stop along the way. For instance, once she got off the bus on a small town in Indiana and spent the night with a girlfriend. Then, the next day she took another bus to Chicago. For these reasons, Vilma usually prefers buses instead of planes unless she has to get somewhere in a hurry.

Transition words and phrases provide the glue that holds ideas together in writing. They provide coherence by helping the reader to understand the relationship between ideas, and they act as signposts that help the reader follow the movement of the discussion. You should try to use transition signals appropriately and effectively to increase your band score.

Below is a list of useful transition words and phrases that you should use so as to produce a coherent and cohesive paragraph or essay.

“and” equivalents

a. Sequencing/Listing

first of all	in the first place	to begin with	finally
following this/that	afterwards	the first (reason) is	
first(ly)	second(ly)	third(ly)	
next	then	after this/that	

b. Reinforcing

also	besides	furthermore
in addition	moreover	what is more

c. Equating

in the same way	likewise	similarly
accordingly	equally important	not only ... but (also)

d. Summarising

in conclusion	in summary	in short	lastly
to conclude	to sum up	finally	

e. Referring

for example
particularly
namely

for instance
such as
a (good) case in point

in particular
that is to say
to illustrate

f. Showing results

as a result
therefore
as a consequence

consequently
thereby
on this/that account

hence
thus
it follows that

so
for this reason

"or" equivalents**a. Inferring**

in other words
(or) else

in that case
otherwise

then

b. Giving alternatives

alternatively

on the other hand

then again

c. Restating

in other words

that is to say

to put it simply

"but" equivalents**a. Contrasting**

conversely
instead
on the other hand

in comparison
nevertheless
whereas

in contrast to this
on the contrary
while/whilst

b. Conceding

after all
although/though/even though
in spite of/despite this/that
yet

all the same
however
nevertheless
even if

still
nonetheless

Examples:

One should compete for survival; otherwise, he would be thrown out of the tide of society. Therefore, if we are to set up a business research centre or an agricultural research centre, we had better choose the former for the following three specific reasons.

4.2.2. Topic sentence

The topic sentence is the main sentence of a paragraph, which describes its content and direction. It has two important functions. It details the controlling idea of the paragraph. It also sets the tone for the organisation of the supporting sentences that further explain the concept established by the topic sentence. Therefore, every topic sentence has two parts: a topic and a controlling idea. The topic is usually the subject of the sentence while the controlling idea is the predicate of the sentence.

Although topic sentences may appear anywhere in a paragraph, in academic essays, they often appear at the beginning.

Example

Topic sentence: Divorce is viewed differently by Americans and Japanese.

Evidence:

1. Attitudes of Americans
2. Attitudes of Japanese

Paragraph:

Divorce is viewed differently by Americans and Japanese. To Americans, the happiness of the individual is all-important. To Japanese, the needs of the community and society take precedence. Thus, divorced American women can remarry easily. There is no stigma attached to divorce. But to Japanese, divorce is a sign of character weakness and immaturity. A divorced woman in Japan faces all kinds of social prejudice.

A number of hints are given below for you to write a good topic sentence:

a. A good topic sentence is neither too broad nor too specific.

Examples:

- Many people keep pets.
- Many old people keep pets to get rid of boredom.
- Many people keep pets because of several reasons.

In the above examples, the first sentence is too broad. The second one is too specific as it is hard to develop. The last sentence is good since it gives background information and signals what will come next in the paragraph (some reasons are going to be presented).

Some other examples:

- Music is enjoyable.
- Rock music can be too loud for old people.
- Fast music can be stimulating while gentle music has a calming effect.

Similar to the examples above, the first sentence is too broad; the second one is too narrow: it only shows factual information that cannot be developed. The last one proves to be a good topic sentence as it signals that two effects of music are going to be presented.

b. A good topic sentence has a controlling idea – words or phrases that help guide the flow of ideas in the paragraph.

A controlling idea limits the topic by concentrating on a single aspect of it.

Look at the following examples:

Example 1

Topic: mass media

Topic sentence: The mass media are often badly used.

The controlling idea of this topic sentence is often badly used. The supporting sentences can include the following:

- Newspapers only give sensational news.
- Radio programmes are usually superficial.
- Television has bad effects on people.

Example 2

Topic: television

Topic sentence: Television has bad effects on people.

The controlling idea of this topic sentence is bad effects on people. The supporting sentences can be written about:

- Television commercials distort the truth about products.
- Crime films on television encourage violence.
- Television documentaries stop people from thinking independently.

Example 3

Topic: television commercials

Topic sentence: Television commercials distort the truth about products.

The controlling idea of this topic sentence is distort the truth about products. The supporting sentences can be written about:

- Toothpaste does not make teeth white.
- The safety of electrical goods is exaggerated.
- Many widely-advertised painkillers are not effective.

c. The topic sentence must be a complete sentence. It can be a statement or a question.

Examples:

People in Vietnam have several different ways to keep healthy: a balanced diet, proper exercise and a happy mood.

While some people believe that the government should take care of our old people, others are of the opinion that the families should take the responsibility for their old.

Students who go to universities will face many difficulties. Let's take a serious look at their frustrations and ways of adapting to the new environment.

Some people argue that pollution, a hazard in our life, can only be stopped when we slow down the rate of industrial development. Is it necessary and right to clean up our environment at the cost of industry?

d. The supporting sentences must directly be linked to the topic sentence of the paragraph to ensure unity. Also, transition signals must be added to provide coherence.

Example:

In all the Arab states, the military officer corps has provided an important contribution to the new elite. The armies and air forces, even to a greater extent than government departments organised along European lines, have provided effective training and experience in organisation and command and have developed a sense of responsibility. The first generation of officers in the Egyptian and Iraqi armies to be drawn from all levels of society, rather than exclusively from the upper classes, produced the leaders of the revolutions of the 1950. Many of them coming from the middle or lower-middle classes brought with them political ideas opposed to those of the established order and to its dependence upon the association with Great Britain and the West. The military life gave them education, special technical skills, the habit of organisation, and awareness of the political uses of military power. It was natural, therefore, that these officers should take an important place among the new life.

(Charles D. Cremeans: The Arabs and the World)

This paragraph has coherence: the four supporting sentences develop the controlling idea – an important contribution. They are arranged in order of importance – from the least to the most important points.

4.2.3. Supporting sentences

Supporting sentences have the following features:

- They should directly be tied to the topic sentence.
- There are 2-4 sentences in a paragraph.
- They develop the main idea.
- They are arranged in logical order.
- They should be proven by using enumeration, exemplification, comparison and/or contrast, cause-and-effect relationship, classification, definition, time order (usually first to last), or even space order (far to near, near to far), just about anything, as long as it serves the writer's purpose.

a. Enumeration: This technique is used to list examples or reasons, etc.

Example:

There has been an ever-increasing awareness of the importance of keeping healthy, and there are mainly three ways the Vietnamese people maintain fitness. First, they keep a balanced diet composed of sufficient protein, vitamins and carbohydrates. Second, they take regular exercises in the form of sports, aerobic exercises and jogging for the young, Taiji boxing for the senior, and varieties of play and activities for children. Third, keeping psychological well-being is another way for them to live a healthy life. They choose to release their psychological pressure by ways of talking to their friends, relaxing themselves in some exotic travels and regular meetings with their family members.

Below are transition signals used to introduce additional ideas or reasons:

first(ly)	in addition	the first (+ noun)
second(ly)	besides	the/a second (+ noun)
third(ly)	moreover	one (+ noun)
next	furthermore	another (+ noun)
last/finally	also	an additional (+ noun)

b. Exemplification: This technique is used to introduce an example.

Example:

Television has bad effects on people. For example, television commercials distort the truth about products. Crime films on television encourage violence. And television documentaries stop people from thinking independently.

Below are transition signals used to introduce an example:

for example	such as	a (good) case in point
namely	as an illustration	
take ... as an example	in the following manner	

c. Comparison and/or contrast: This technique is used to compare and/or contrast things.

Example:

There are many different forms of entertainment for the Vietnamese people nowadays. Some people who enjoy active activities can go to theme bars, for example, toy bars, pottery bars and even book bars, where they can read while enjoying a glass of wine. Those who prefer passive activities can go to movies or theatres. Others who are bored with the urban life can go to the rural areas and sit back in a tea house or an orchard, breathing the fresh air and enjoying the country view to their heart's content.

Below are transition signals used to compare and/or contrast things:

likewise	like	similarly	equally important
also	too	in the same way	still
in contrast	on the other hand	nevertheless	
instead	rather	on the contrary	
after all	unlike	at the same time	

Below are comparison sentence patterns:

- Comparative form of adjectives

A is	considerably a great deal (very) much (quite) a lot somewhat a bit/a little slightly scarcely hardly only just	smaller bigger cheaper	than B.
------	---	------------------------------	---------

- Adverbs modifying the same as

A is	exactly precisely just virtually practically more or less almost nearly approximately about	the same as B.
------	--	----------------

- Adverbs modifying not ... the same as

A is not	exactly entirely quite precisely	the same as B.
----------	---	----------------

- Adverbs modifying different (from)

A is	totally completely entirely quite	different from B.
------	--	-------------------

A and B are	different in every way. respect.
A and B are	totally completely entirely quite different.

- Structures showing contrast

Whereas			
While			Room A is dark, Room B is bright.
Whilst			

Room A is	extremely really very rather quite	dark.	On the other hand, In By comparison, In contrast,	Room B is bright.
-----------	--	-------	---	-------------------

The main difference between		Rooms A and B is that	whereas	
One of the differences between		Room A is dark,	while whilst	Room B is bright.

Example:

Many people think that A and B are similar. On the contrary, they are quite different.

d. Cause-and-effect relationship

Example:

For the last hundred years, the climate has been growing much warmer. This has had a number of different effects. Since the beginning of the 20th century, glaciers have been melting very rapidly. Secondly, rising temperatures have been causing the snowline to retreat on mountains all over the world. As a result of this, vegetation has also been changing.

The distribution of wildlife has also been affected, many European animals moving northwards into Scandinavia. Finally, the sea has been rising at a rapidly increasing rate, largely due to the melting of glaciers.

Below are words and phrases showing cause-and-effect relationship:

- Nouns introducing causes or reasons

The	cause of reason for	higher prices is an increase in demand.
-----	------------------------	---

- Nouns introducing effects

The One	effect consequence result	of an increase in demand is higher prices. to raise/increase prices.
------------	---------------------------------	--

- Transition words and phrases showing effects

The demand has increased.	Therefore, So, As a result, As a consequence, Consequently, Because of this, Thus, Hence, For this reason,	the prices are higher.
---------------------------	--	------------------------

- Verbs and verb phrases showing effects

An increase in demand (often)	causes results in leads to produces	higher prices.
-------------------------------	--	----------------

- Passive form or prepositional phrases showing causes

Higher prices are (often)	caused by due to because of	an increase in demand.
---------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------

- Prepositional phrases of cause

The prices are higher

because of	as a result of	as a consequence of	on account of	owing to	through
an increase in demand.					

Or:

As a

result of

consequence of

an increase in demand, the prices are higher.

Owing to

- Subordinating conjunctions showing causes

Because

As

the demand has increased, the prices are higher.

Since

Now (that)

Or:

The prices are higher

because

since

there is an increase in demand.

as

Or:

When

there is an increase in demand, (then) the prices rise.

If

e. Classification: This technique is used to classify or group things.

Example:

State schools in England can be classified according to the age range of the pupils and the type of education provided. Basically, there are two types of school: primary and secondary. Primary schools cater for children aged 5-11 and secondary schools for ages 11-16 (and up to 19). Primary schools can be subdivided into infant schools (for ages 5-7) and junior schools (for ages 7-11). Secondary schools may be of one type for all abilities, viz. comprehensive schools. Alternatively, the pupils may be grouped according to their ability and selected by means of examination at the age of 11. Thus, grammar schools cater for

those with academic ability, modern schools for those with less academic ability, and technical schools for those with more practical skills.

Below are some phrases and expressions used to classify or group things:

A	consists of ... comprises ...	according to ...
---	----------------------------------	------------------

A	may can	be classified classed separated	into ...	according to ... on the basis of ... depending on/upon ...
---	------------	--	----------	--

The classification is based on/upon...

B is	a member of	A.
	placed in the class of	

f. Definition: This technique is used to define a new or difficult term or concept.

Example:

A telescope is (defined as) an instrument for magnifying distant objects. It has two essential parts: the objective which collects light from the distant object and forms a real image, and the eyepiece which forms a magnified image of this image. Refracting telescopes use a convex lens as the objective, and reflecting telescopes use a curved mirror of a large diameter.

Below are some expressions used to define a term or concept:

a. X is defined/may be defined as ...

Semantics is defined as a branch of linguistics which studies meaning.

b. ... is known as/called X.

A branch of linguistics which studies meaning is called semantics.

g. Time and space order: This technique is used to show time or space order.

Example 1:

To wash your dog properly, you should follow several steps with the utmost care. First, you should make sure that your dog knows nothing, in advance, of your plan to wash him. After quietly preparing his tub of lukewarm water, you should plunge him into it tenderly but firmly. Then, keeping his head well above water, you should soap his whole body,

proceeding from his neck to his tail. After your pet is completely covered with soap, be sure to rinse him thoroughly. For your dog, being washed is an experience that cannot end soon enough. Therefore, as soon as possible, you should enjoy the final step of his bath – the vigorous sport of drying him.

Below are words used to show time order:

first	second	third	fourth	then	meanwhile
soon	before	afterwards	lately	later	finally
recently	temporarily	presently	thereafter	next	eventually

Example 2:

From my office window, I inspected the public garden below daily. Directly in front of me, I saw the graceful swaying branches of some big palm trees with some birds singing happily in them. They not only provide us with precious shade in the hot sun but also a lovely green background for the purple and blue periwinkles that bloomed in the bed just to the right of it. To my left stood four evergreen shrubs.

Below are words and phrases used to show space order:

here	there	beyond	to/on the right
above	inside	on the opposite side	over
to/on the left	on top of	in the centre/middle of	up
below	across	within	near
next to	between	down	in front of
far	across from	outside	

4.3. Essay writing

Tasks 2 of both the Academic Module and the General Training Module are the same. Candidates are asked to write a short essay of a minimum of 250 words in about 40 minutes. The essay is usually a discussion of a subject of general interest. Candidates have to present and justify an opinion about something, offer solutions to a problem, or speculate about future trends.

A well-organised essay has three parts: an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. On the next page is the organisation of an essay:

Introduction (3-4 sentences):

- a. General statements to lead in
- b. Thesis statement

Body (2-4 paragraphs):

Paragraph 1: Topic sentence

- a. 1st supporting sentence
- b. 2nd supporting sentence
- c. 3rd supporting sentence
- etc.

Paragraph 2: Topic sentence

- a. 1st supporting sentence
- b. 2nd supporting sentence
- c. 3rd supporting sentence
- etc.

Paragraph 3: Topic sentence

- a. 1st supporting sentence
- b. 2nd supporting sentence
- c. 3rd supporting sentence
- etc.

Conclusion (2-4 sentences):

(optional)

- a. Clear transition signal
- b. Restate or paraphrase the thesis statement
- c. Conclude or summarise main points of the essay
- d. Comment/Final thought: give the reader something to think about

Mini-Writing Practice

- 1.** Choose the proper transition words and phrases from the box to fill in the blanks in the paragraphs below.

although	but	instead	then	next	first (of all)	second
third	fourth	finally	furthermore	consequently	once	
sometimes	at other times		in contrast	for example	in addition	

1. To get the most out of his textbooks, a student should follow several steps very carefully. _____, he should make a preliminary survey of each book to get a general idea of what the book contains. _____, he should read for deeper understanding and formulate questions as he reads. _____, he should test himself to be sure that he can answer questions likely to be raised in class and in examinations. _____, he should review his notes and reread any parts of the book that are unclear to him.

2. European universities and universities in the United States are different in many ways. _____, European students enrol in fewer courses each term than American students do. _____, European students seldom live at their university. _____, they live at home and travel to classes. _____, most European courses are given by professors who lecture to their classes. _____, European professors often ask their students questions or allow their students to write fewer papers than American professors do. _____, European students' final examinations are usually oral, whereas American students take written final examinations. _____, a European university is mainly a place to study. _____, at most universities in the United States, social activities take up a large part of the students' time.

- 2.** Underline the controlling ideas in the following topic sentences.

1. Some Western holidays have a great influence on the young people in Vietnam.
2. College students take part-time jobs for different reasons.
3. The government is taking several effective measures to help the laid-off workers.
4. People take different attitudes towards censorship on the Internet.
5. There are many advantages and disadvantages for the use of public transport.

- 3.** Rearrange the following sentences so that they form a coherent paragraph.

1. In addition, they have trouble identifying signal lights and must memorise the position of the light to know which signal is being given.

2. Colour-blind people have problems that people who perceive colour never think about.
3. Those who are fashion-conscious avoid brightly coloured wardrobe so that they will not wear clashing colours.
4. One very real problem is that of traffic signs and signals.
5. Those that are red-green colour blind have trouble seeing stop signs found on shady streets because they may not notice them against the leaves.
6. Perhaps less of a problem is that of dressing.
7. For example, they cannot work as interior decorators, commercial photographers, painters, airline pilots, or railroad engineers.
8. Perhaps the greatest handicap of colour-blind people is evident when they select occupations.
9. As most colour-blind people cope with their problems, their handicap goes unnoticed.

4. Write a topic sentence for each of the following paragraphs.

1. Topic: Informing Patients of Cancer

Americans believe the individual has a right to know what is wrong with him so he can take decisions accordingly. Doctors, family, and friends are not allowed to deprive the individual of this right. In Japan, on the other hand, it is not the right of the patient that is paramount but the duty of the doctor and family to protect the patient from undue mental suffering. They seem to feel that their wishes supersede those of the patient. This is a paternalistic approach in which the doctor's authority takes the precedence over the patient's right to know. The patient is supposed to be submissive and obey those around him.

2. Topic: City Life

There are many reasons, but the major ones include job and promotion opportunities, higher salaries, and better sports and entertainment facilities. In addition, cities also provide conveniences for transport such as public transport. However, it cannot be ignored that cities are plagued with many problems such as overcrowding, increasing crime rates, and impersonal human relations. Likewise, many urban dwellers find living in cities too expensive and dangerous.

3. Topic: Corporal Punishment

Those who feel that American education has declined want a return to the older and strict discipline in the classroom. They favour swift punishment for wrongdoings – spanking, switching, or a slap. They believe teachers must parent as well as teach. However, educators feel that hitting is neither discipline nor teaching. They believe that corporal punishment shows a loss of control and condemn corporal punishment. They point out that every year, 2,000 students are injured by teachers.

4. Topic: My First Visit to the Cinema

I was taken there by my parents to see a film about animals when I was just 4 years old. At first, there were bright lights and music and I felt quite happy. When the lights went out, I felt afraid. Then, the film started and I saw a dinosaur on the screen running towards me. I shouted out in fear and covered my eyes with my hands. When my mother saw me, she explained to me that it was just one of the special effects and encouraged me to look at the screen again. I watched the film to the end, but I still felt afraid because the pictures were so real. I was glad when the film ended.

5. Topic : Travel with Companions

Travelling is getting so popular that sometimes booking a train ticket or a hotel room is not easy. For a group of travellers, if there are not enough tickets available, or not enough rooms to live in, the situation can be very awkward and embarrassing. For an independent traveller, however, such a case seldom happens; and even if it does, he can easily adapt himself to the changing situation.

6. Topic : Studying Alone

We certainly can discuss a certain problem until we have found a solution, but that can be an inefficient way of making use of time since we can leave the problem aside until we can ask the teachers afterwards for a detailed explanation. Furthermore, studying alone could let us choose whatever books and subjects we like without the influence of our friends.

5. Rewrite the following introductory paragraphs, each of which is in scrambled order.

Paragraph 1

- The heavy traffic problem can be solved by building rapid transit systems from the suburbs to the cities, by improving public transport systems within the cities, and by forming car pools.
- Traffic congestion is caused by the thousands of cars that come into the cities from the suburban areas as well as by the thousands of cars within the city limits.
- One of the most serious problems facing most big cities is traffic congestion.
- This mammoth problem must be resolved before it gets worse.

Paragraph 2

- However, in others, the nuclear family is the norm, with only the parents and young children sharing the same house.
- People in different cultures all over the world have different systems for family life.
- In most cultures, people live in extended families, in which several generations share the same house.

- d. If this new system becomes widespread, it could have enormous effects on American society.
- e. On the positive side, living together might reduce the divorce rate in the United States; on the negative side, it might lead to the eventual disintegration of the family altogether.
- f. In the United States, some people are experimenting with still another system of family life: living together without marriage.

Paragraph 3

- a. Although scientists have experimented with different methods of prediction, from observing animal behaviour to measuring radio signals from quasars, they have not proven successful.
- b. Earthquakes are the most destructive natural disasters known to man, in terms of the millions of deaths and billions of dollars in property loss that they cause.
- c. Despite these heavy losses, scientists are still unable to predict earthquakes.
- d. This paper will review the history of the science of earthquake prediction, then discuss each of the methods in more detail, and finally present data indicating the success/failure ratios of each method.

6. Develop paragraphs by supporting the topic sentences.

Example 1

Watching too much television reduces people's capacity to think for themselves. Firstly, watching television makes people lazy as viewers are given second-hand opinions, which can be used as a substitute for individual thought. Secondly, most television programmes are primarily entertainment as they are designed to attract viewers away from rival channels. Therefore, they are aimed to appeal to the lowest common denominator and have little educational value. Unlike books or even radio, television leaves little scope for imagination and so tends to dictate simplified role models of what life should be like.

Example 2

If people are allowed to carry guns, the number of murders will increase. The link between guns and murders has been consistently proved by world crime figures. There are more people murdered in America than in Europe, largely because guns are readily available. It stands to reason that if people can easily obtain guns, they will use them. Therefore, the only way to control gun-related crime is to make it extremely difficult for ordinary people to own a gun.

1. Television watching should be minimised to a certain extent if we want to live a more meaningful and happier life.

2. There is justification for war in some cases.

3. Overpopulation can lead to many serious problems.

4. Computers can bring us a lot of disadvantages as well as benefits.

5. A sense of humour is the most important character in a person.

6. People should not be rewarded according to their age due to several reasons.

7. School education and parental influence are equally important for the development of a child.

8. Censorship of films, TV, and printed matter is a controversial issue in some countries.

7. Discuss how the following paragraphs are developed.

1.

Miss Quentin lives alone in a detached bungalow in a London suburb: the roof is low and the tiles are covered with pale moss with lichen; the front wall is almost entirely covered with ornamental trees. The structure of the bungalow is concealed by plants and trees; everything is reticence, timidity and concealment.

2.

The elastic used in clothes extends and contracts under the influence of forces applied to it. Demand and supply similarly extend and contract under the influence of such forces as changes in price. It is often useful to know the degree of extension or contraction that will follow a given price change. For instance, a finance minister who is about to impose a tax of 10 per cent on some commodities with a view to raising revenue would like to know in advance the probable contraction in demand that new tax will inevitably cause. The responsiveness of demand and supply to changes in price has been termed "price elasticity of demand and supply". Price elasticity of demand is the responsiveness of demand to changes in price; price elasticity of supply is the responsiveness of supply to changes in price.

3.

Parasitology may be defined as a branch of biology which deals with the nature of parasitism and its effects on both the parasite and the host. Broadly defined, a parasite is an organism which lives for all or part of its life on or in another organism from which it derives some benefit, such as food, shelter or protection. Organisms living on the host are known as ectoparasites; those living within the host organism are called endoparasites.

4.

There is an essential difference between a news story, as understood by a newspaperman or a wire-service writer, and the newsmagazine story. The chief purpose of the conventional news story is to tell what happened. It starts with the most important information and continues into increasingly inconsequential details, not only because the reader may not read beyond the first paragraph, but because an editor working on gallery proofs a few minutes before press time likes to be able to cut freely from the end of the story. A newsmagazine story is very different. It is written to be read consecutively from beginning to end, and each

of its stories is designed, following the critical theories of Edgar Allan Poe, to create one emotional effect. The news, what happened that week, may be told in the beginning, the middle, or the end, for the purpose is not to throw information at the reader but to seduce him into reading the whole story, and into accepting the dramatic (and often political) point being made.

5.

The cottage where we stayed for one week during our holiday consists of two floors: the ground floor and the first floor. In front of the house, there is a garden with an untidy hedge of roses. Downstairs, there is a garage, dining room, kitchen, a lounge and a hall. In the hall, there is a telephone and a big TV set. A staircase leads from the hall to the landing on the first floor. There, we have four bedrooms and a bathroom. On the roof, there are two chimneys and a TV aerial.

6.

Microorganisms were once regarded as being members of the plant kingdom, apart from protozoa, which were once classed as animals. It became obvious that this arbitrary classification resulted in confusions, even absurdities. A virus infecting an animal cannot, by any criterion, be termed a plant. There became almost as many systems of classification as there were microbiologists. In order to clarify the nature of microorganisms, we may distinguish between those, like fungi and some algae, which have a cell structure similar to higher organisms and those, like the bacteria and the blue-green algae, which have a comparatively simple cell structure. We will refer to the former as "higher protists" and to the latter as "lower protists". Both these groups are placed in the kingdom "protista". The viruses and the recently described subviral agents cannot at present be adequately classified, so we shall place them in a group of their own.

7.

There is some disagreement as to whether we should spend more money on the building of the new school. Some people are of the opinion that the government should spend more money on the infrastructure so as to improve the living standard of people. However, others argue that education is more important a way to help people out of poverty. Even if you had advanced machinery and first-class infrastructure, the citizens could not put them into full play due to their lack of competence or ignorance. A generation of literate people can, in the long run, contribute to the development of a country.

8.

As the price of everything from toothpaste to tuition increases, workers demand higher wages to keep up with the rising costs. This can produce further increases in prices or a decreased demand for manufactured goods, or both. Since production tried to keep pace with demand, decreased demand is followed by decreased production. This, in turn, can lead to layoffs and unemployment, which further decreases the demand for goods.

8. Write a conclusion for each of the following paragraphs.

1. The busy schedules that most adults face from day to day have created a rising health problem in the modern world. Stress affects almost everyone, from the highly pressured executive to the busy homemaker or student. It can cause a variety of physical disorders, ranging from headaches to stomach ulcers and even alcoholism. Stress, like a common cold, is a problem that cannot be cured; however, it can be controlled. A person can learn to control stress by setting realistic goals, enjoying a hobby and/or physical exercise, and by maintaining a good, warm relationship with family and friends.

2. Television is the most popular form of entertainment in many households. People of all ages use this medium to entertain themselves for an average of four hours a day. Thus, television has had a tremendous influence on its viewers, especially children. Scientists now say that children can be adversely affected by constantly watching television. This is due to the fact that they participate less in physical activities, spend less time reading and studying, and see a world of violence that can affect their own feelings of security.

Day 3

Report Writing (1) – Task 1

1. An Introduction to Report Writing

Basically, Task 1 of the Academic Module asks you to describe some information presented in a visual format (graph, chart, table or diagram). You must write at least 150 words.

The main features given in the graph, chart, table or diagram must be reported in your description, or you will lose marks. You will also lose marks if you provide your personal opinion or do not write the required number of words.

2. The Layout of a Report Passage

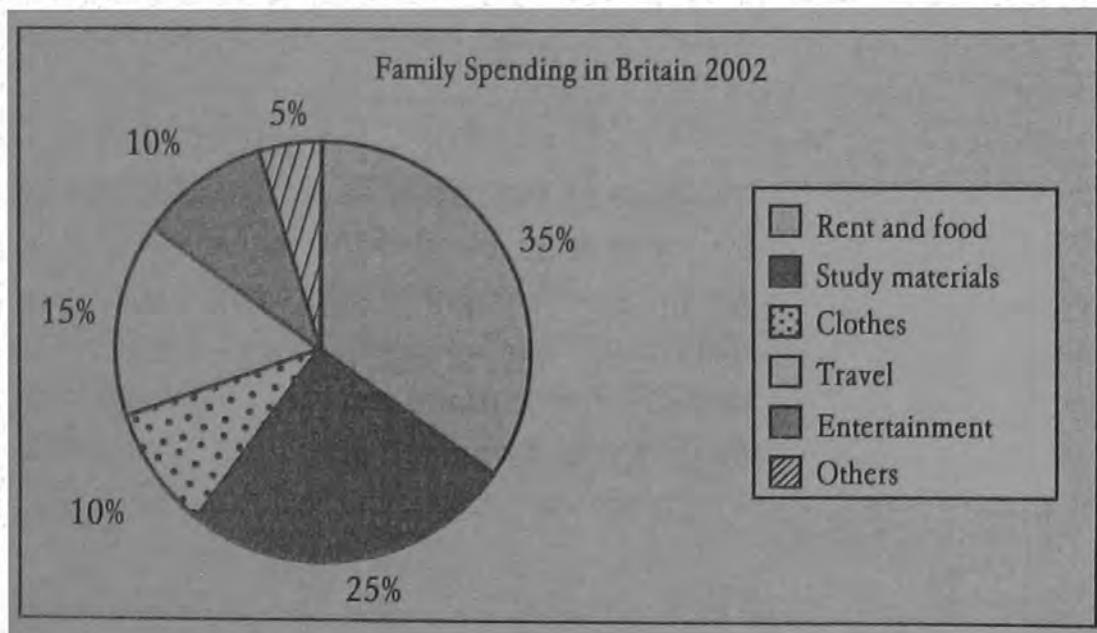
A report passage can be presented in an indented style or a block style.

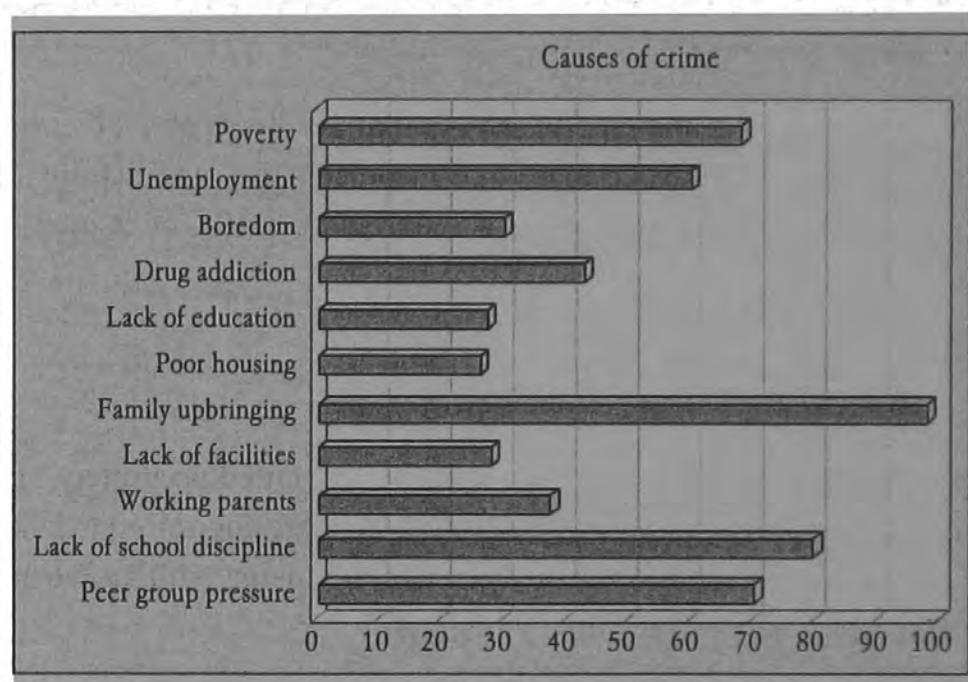
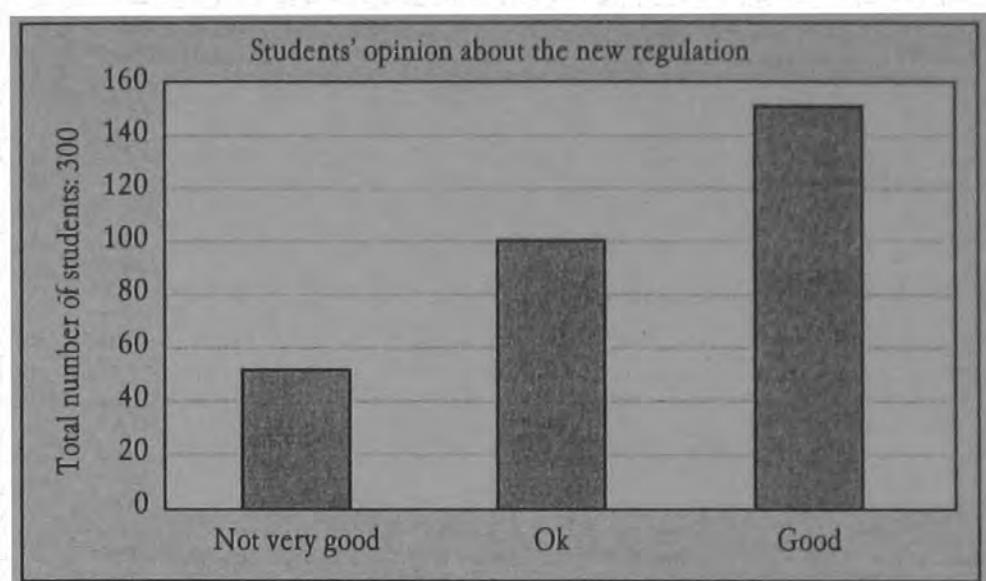
3. Types of Charts

Overall, candidates will be asked to describe some information presented in a visual format such as pie charts, bar charts, tables, line graphs, etc.

Examples:

Pie chart:

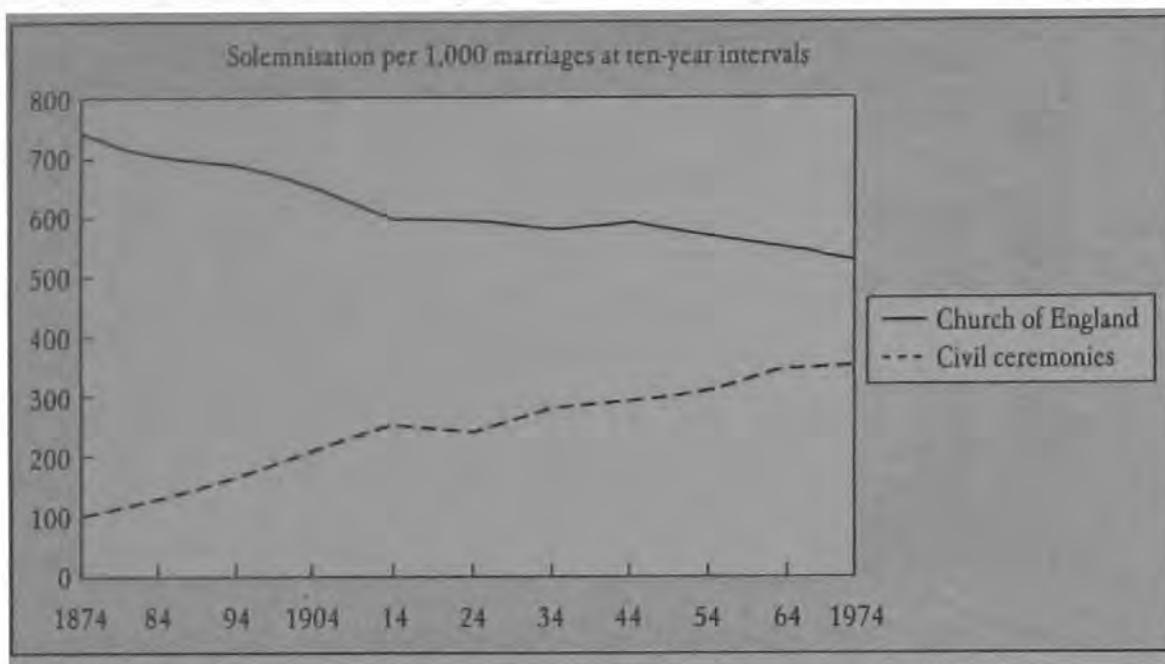


Bar chart:**Table:**

Statistics about children killed in road accidents in a Western country during May, June and July in one recent year

When/Where accidents occurred	Age 2 - 4	Age 5 - 7	Age 8 - 11	Age 11 - 13	Age 14 - 16	Total
Going to school	2	12	8	2	1	25
Going home from school	2	17	10	3	2	34
Playing in the street	98	81	28	5	2	214
Cycling in the street	1	10	25	8	1	45
Shopping for their parents	5	32	12	2	1	52
Total	108	152	83	20	7	370

Line graph:



From the visual information above, you can see that pie charts and tables normally show percentage/proportion, which can be measured in percentages or fractions. On the other hand, bar charts and line graphs generally show different quantities or changes over a period of time.

4. The Structure of a Report Passage

The information given in a visual format must be presented accurately and coherently (i.e. the paragraphs should be linked by sentences that are logically connected with one another). Especially, the organisation is of logical paragraphing with an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

Your report passage should consist of three parts:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1 Introduction: | 1 paragraph (1-2 sentences) The introductory sentence(s) explain(s) what you are describing. |
| 2. Body: | 2-4 paragraphs When discussing the date presented in the task, identify significant trends and give examples that relate directly to the given information to support your statements. If you are explaining a process or an object and how it works, you need to group your information so that it follows a definite logical order. Remember that the use of verbs expressed in the present (present simple or present perfect) passive voice is often appropriate when giving a description of a process or procedure. The secret here is to select what is important, organise it, and compare and/or contrast. |

3. Conclusion: 1 paragraph (1-2 sentences) The conclusion should sum up the global trends shown on the figure and compare them if possible.

5. Commonly-Written Expressions

5.1. Introduction

The introduction should describe the purpose of the chart and say what overall trends can be seen. Note that you should not copy the exact words given in the instructions. Below are some commonly-written expressions:

Type of charts (Subject)	Main verb	Object/ Noun clause
chart	shows	
graph	indicates	
table	illustrates	
diagram	describes	
The	gives	the number of ...
	presents	the proportion of ...
figures	show	information on ...
statistics	indicate	data on ...
	illustrate	that ...
	describe	
	give	
	present	

5.2. Body

5.2.1 The body should point out the source of information. The expressions below may be used:

According to the	table/chart,	
As (is) shown in the	diagram,	
As can be seen from the	graph,	...
	figures,	
It can be seen	table/chart	
We can see	diagram	
It is clear/apparent	graph	that ...
	figures	

5.2.2. The following sentences may be used to write about the proportions or percentages:

Company A and Company B both had 10%.

The profit remained steady at 10%.

The profit rose to 10%.

The profit peaked at just over 10%.

The monthly profit increased/fell by 10% from 10% to 20%/from 20% to 10%.

China had the largest percentage/number (10%/245) of students.

China had 10% of the students.

10% of the students were from China.

Taiwan accounted for 10% of the students.

They made twice/three times/four times the profit percentage/percentage of the profit in May than in March.

The profit percentage/percentage of the profit doubled/increased threefold from March to May.

Company A's profit percentage rose steadily, whereas that of Company B fell slightly.

There were more males than females (10% and 5% respectively).

5.2.3. The following expressions may be written in describing or comparing data:

in relation to ...
 compared with ...
 twice as high/large/many as ...
 three times as high/large/many as ...
 double/treble/half the percentage/number of ...

Subject + main verb	Adverb of degree	Fraction	The scale being compared
Company A has	almost nearly	a/one quarter half a third three quarters	of the (total) number of (employees).
	approximately about	a quarter half	as many (employees) as
	just over	three quarters twice three times	Company B. as much (space) as

	almost nearly about	as many (employees) as as much (space) as	Company B.
Company A has	approximately		
	exactly precisely	the same number proportion of (employees) as amount	Company B.

5.2.4. When describing graphs, you have to examine whether there is an obvious trend, it is important to mention this; or look for obvious differences such as the largest, the smallest. When describing a graph of this type, you should state what the overall trend is (upwards, downwards or unchanging), and mention the initial and final figures. You should also mention the lowest and highest points reached.

You will not normally see a graph with a straight line; most will fluctuate in some way or another. Once you have identified a trend, point out the exceptions.

You may use the following sentence patterns:

a. Verb + adverb

The number of something + verb + adverb + from ... to ... /between ... and ...

Subject	Verb indicating changes	Adverb	Period of time
The number of (cars)	increased	suddenly	
	jumped	rapidly	
	rose	quickly	
	grew	dramatically	
	went up	significantly	
	climbed	sharply	
		steeply	from (June) to (December).
	decreased	steadily	
	dropped	consistently	between (June) and (December).
	fell	smoothly	
	reduced	continually	
	went down	stably	
		gradually	
	fluctuated	slowly	
	varied	slightly	

Or:

Period of time	Subject	Verb indicating changes	Adverb
From (February) to (March),	sales	increased went up grew rose declined dropped went down fell	slightly. slowly. dramatically. significantly. greatly. sharply. gradually. moderately.

b. Adjective + noun

There + be + a (very) + adjective + noun + in the number of something + from ... to ... / between ... and ...

There + be	Adjective indicating changes	Noun indicating changes	In what scale	Period of time
There was a (very)	sudden	increase		
	rapid	jump		
	dramatic	rise		
	significant	growth		
	sharp			from (January) to (February).
	steep	decrease		
	large	drop	in the number of (cars)	
	marked	fall		between (January) and (February).
	steady	decline		
	gradual	reduction		
	slow			
	small	fluctuation		
	slight	variation		

c. Some other phrases of time:

for one month
for a period of one month
over the next month
during the next month

5.2.5. The following sentences may be used when describing small changes or no changes:

The number of (cars sold)	remained steady	from (June) to (December).
	stayed the same	between (June) and (December).
	little	
There was	hardly any change	in the number of (cars sold).
	no	

5.2.6. Use the sentences below when describing the highest and lowest points:

	peaked		
The monthly profit	reached	a peak	
The figures		a high point	in (December).
The situation	bottomed out		at (20%).
	reached	the bottom	
		a low point	

5.2.7. In your description, you have to quote some data or examples, applying the following rules:

a. Use parentheses: ()

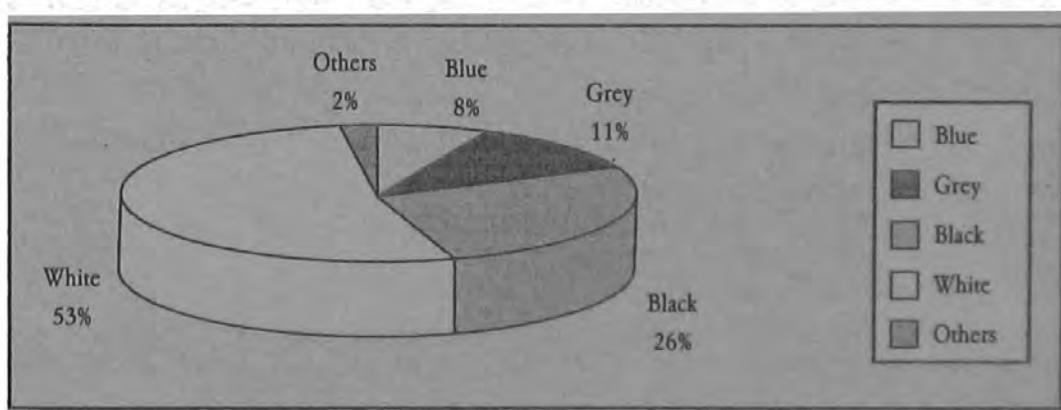
b. Use adjective clauses:

which + appropriate verb (is/makes up/constitutes/accounts for)

c. Use participial phrases (V-ing):

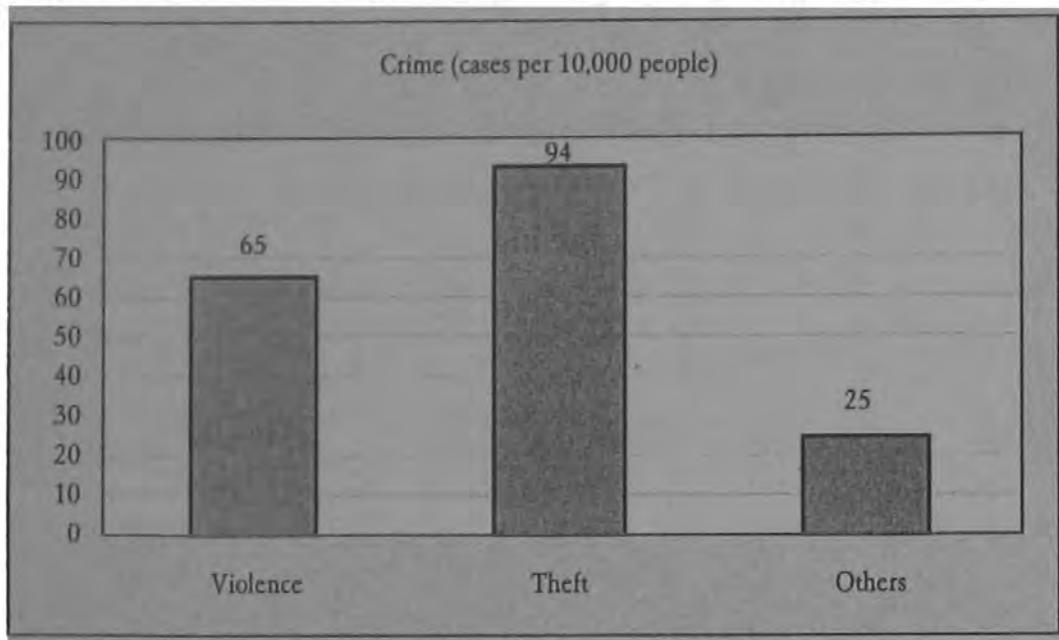
making up/accounting for

Example 1



- White, which is 53%, is considerably more common than grey, which makes up 11%.
- Black, which constitutes 26%, is about four times as popular as blue, which is 8%.
- The other colours, which constitute 2%, are considerably less popular than blue (8%).
- The other colours, which is 2%, are considerably less popular than blue, accounting for 8%.

Example 2

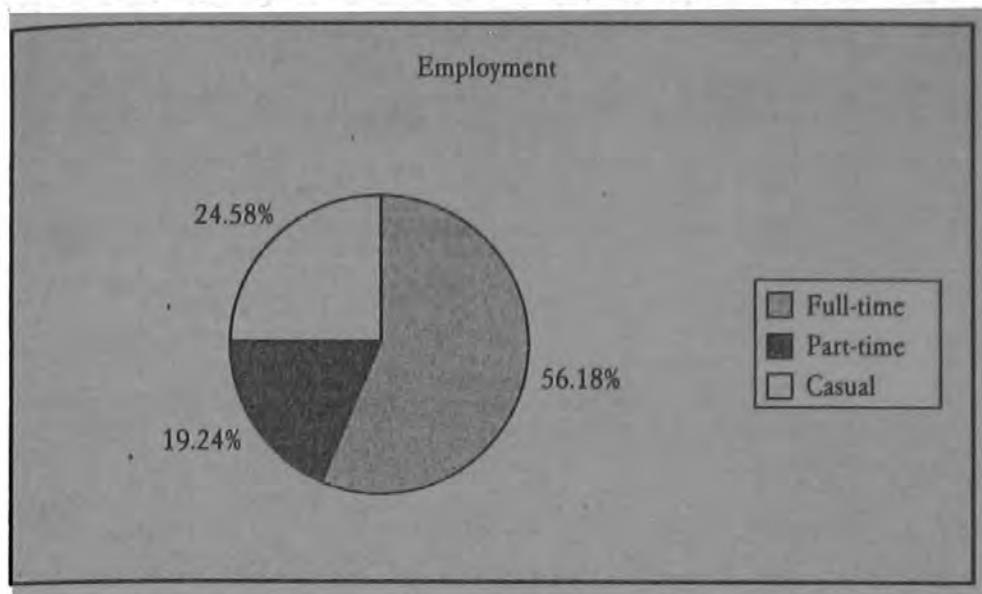


No data are included:

- Theft is the most common crime.
- Theft is slightly more common than violence.
- Theft is just under four times more common than other crimes, excluding violence.
- Aside from theft, there are nearly three times more incidences of violence than of other crimes.

Data are incorporated:

- Theft is the most common crime, with 94 cases per 10,000 people.
- Theft, of which there are 94 cases per 10,000 people, is slightly more common than violence (65 cases).
- Theft, which accounts for 94 cases per 10,000 people, is just under four times more common than other crimes (25 cases).
- Not including theft, there are nearly three times more incidences of violence (65 cases per 10,000 people) than of other crimes (25 cases).

Example 3

No data are included:

- Full-time employment is the most common type of employment.
- Full-time employment is considerably more common than part-time and casual employment.
- About twice as many people are employed in full-time work than in casual work.

Data are incorporated:

- Full-time employment, which makes up 56.18%, is the most common type of employment.
- Full-time employment (56.18%) is considerably more common than part-time (19.24%) and casual employment (24.58%).
- About twice as many people are employed in full-time work (just over 50%) than in casual work, which accounts for about 25%.

5.3. Conclusion

5.3.1.

Connectors to signal conclusion	Content
In summary, To sum up, In short,	Express the main point of the illustration again in your own words.
In conclusion, To conclude, On the whole, Altogether,	Say something new that does not extend too far beyond what the illustration shows. You can mention future implications or draw a conclusion.

5.3.2.

Therefore,					concluded	
Thus,	it	can	be	deduced		that ...
On this basis,		may		inferred		
Given this,						

5.3.3.

Table 1,

From	the	table, figures, data, results, information,	it	can may	be	seen concluded shown estimated calculated inferred	that ...
------	-----	---	----	------------	----	---	----------

5.3.4.

In conclusion,	we can/may say		
Finally,	it can/may be said		that ...

6. Tenses and Voices

You are expected to use correct tenses and voices in your report passage.

1. You should use the present (present simple or present perfect) passive voice when describing a process. Besides, gerunds (V-ing) and to-infinitive phrases (*It is necessary to ...; It is important to ...*) may be applied.
2. You can also use the present simple, present continuous, and passive voice when reporting a diagram showing current situations.
3. When describing past situations or past changes, you have to use the past simple and past perfect.
4. If a prediction about the future is made, you will use the future simple.

Day 4

Report Writing (2) – Task 1

1. Skills for Report Writing

1.1. Important steps

There are three important steps you should follow: preparation, writing and editing. These steps will help you to write a coherent and well-organised report passage in the time given.

Step 1: Preparation (about 3 minutes)

You need to spend 2-3 minutes working out exactly what you are going to do. You should bear the following points in mind:

1. Study the question carefully. Most Tasks 1 involve writing a report which describes the visual information given. You should note the instructions with a highlighting pen.
2. Think carefully about the title. Outline some pertinent points.
3. Note the times given for correct use of tenses.
4. Ensure that your ideas are arranged logically including appropriate connectors.

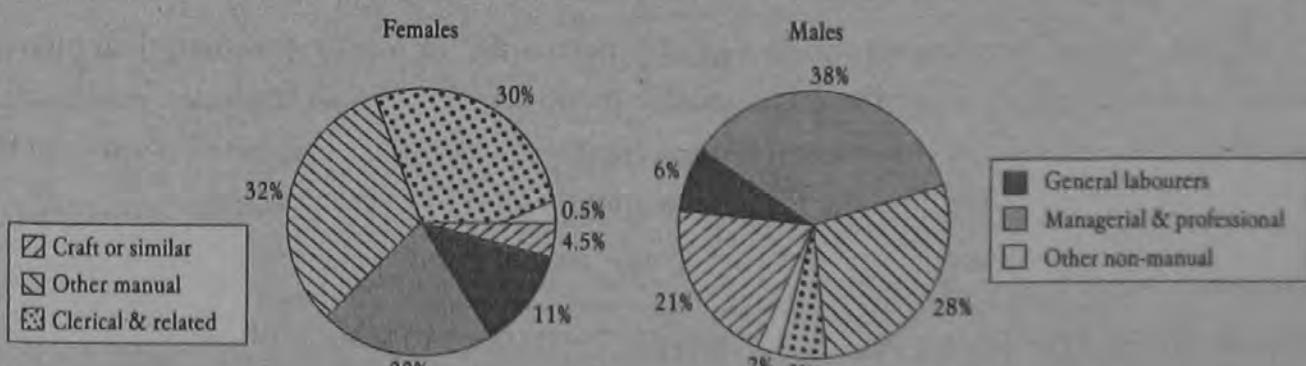
Example 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

It is often claimed that women have achieved greater freedom and have access to the same opportunities as men. The pie charts below show some employment patterns in a developed country.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.



Analysis

Time: Not given – present simple tense

Subject: Employment

Trends: More men than women engaged in managerial and professional, craft; fewer men in clerical work; same number for men and women in other manual work

Details: Non-manual section: more women in clerical; more men in managerial and professional; the same in other work

Manual section: men in most craft and general labour; the same in other work

Step 2: Writing (about 15 minutes)

When writing a Task 1 report passage, include:

- An introduction (1-2 sentences)
- Body paragraphs (2-4 paragraphs)
- A conclusion (optional)

While you are writing, keep the following guides in mind:

1. Introduction

The introductory sentence(s) explain(s) what you are describing, for example:

The table compares the population growth and interstate migration in each Australian state for 12 months to the end of 1994.

The graph shows the growth of computers in Australia between 1975 and 1995.

The pie chart represents the proportion of gases contained in natural gas.

2. Body

Each body paragraph must contain the following points:

- Complete sentences are used in describing the given information.
- When discussing the data presented in the task, identify significant trends and give examples that relate directly to the given information to support your statements.
- The use of verbs expressed in the present passive voice is often appropriate when giving a description of a process or procedure. Also, add transition devices appropriately.

The body paragraphs for the above task may be written as follows:

In the non-manual occupations, while a greater percentage of working women than men are found in clerical-type positions, there is a smaller percentage of women than men employed in managerial and professional positions. The percentage of men employed in other non-manual occupations is slightly larger than the percentage of women in these occupations.

(Details: men vs. women in non-manual section)

In manual employment, the biggest difference between the two sexes is in the employment of craft workers, where males make up 21% of the workforce and females just 4.5%. Furthermore,

the percentage of women working as general labourers is small, only 11%. There is not a great deal of difference between the percentage of men doing other forms of manual work (28%) and women in other manual work (32%).

(Details: men vs. women in manual section)

3. Conclusion (optional)

A simple concluding statement may include any of the following where relevant:

- significant comments
- an overall summary of the key point(s)

The concluding sentence for the above task may be written as follows:

In conclusion, the two charts clearly show that women do not have the same access as men to certain types of employment.

(This sentence sums up the key point and answers the task question.)

Step 3: Editing (about 2 minutes)

Make sure that you have followed the instructions carefully. Be sure that you have written what you intended and that no important ideas are missing.

In the last few minutes, check for obvious errors such as spelling and grammatical errors.

This is a sample answer to the above task:

The two pie charts show the proportion of males and females in employment in six broad categories, divided into manual and non-manual occupations. In general, a greater percentage of women work in non-manual occupations than in manual occupations, and the reverse is true for men.

(General trend: men vs. women in the two sections)

In the non-manual occupations, while a greater percentage of working women than men are found in clerical-type positions, there is a smaller percentage of women than men employed in managerial and professional positions. The percentage of men employed in other non-manual occupations is slightly larger than the percentage of women in these occupations.

(Details: men vs. women in non-manual section)

In manual employment, the biggest difference between the two sexes is in the employment of craft workers, where males make up 21% of the workforce and females just 4.5%. Furthermore, the percentage of women working as general labourers is small, only 11%. There is not a great deal of difference between the percentage of men doing other forms of manual work (28%) and women in other manual work (32%).

(Details: men vs. women in manual section)

In conclusion, the two charts clearly show that women do not have the same access as men to certain types of employment.

(One sentence for conclusion)

1.2. A summary of the three-step report writing

Take the table below as an illustrative example for the writing steps mentioned.

Study the table below and look for patterns in passenger death rates in Country A in relation to the modes of land transport.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information in the table below.

You should write at least 150 words.

Passenger Death Rates in Country A by Modes of Transport

Modes of transport	Rates per billion passenger kilometres					
	1996	2001	2006	2007	2008	Average 1996-2008
Motorcycle	115.8	100.3	94.4	97.0	94.6	104.0
Foot	76.9	75.3	62.5	58.5	56.2	70.5
Pedal cycle	56.9	49.6	46.8	43.4	41.3	48.8
Water	9.4	9.5	9.0	9.5	9.0	9.2
Car	6.1	5.1	3.7	3.5	3.0	4.6
Van	3.8	3.8	2.2	2.2	1.7	2.7
Rail	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.9
Bus and coach	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.5
Air	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2

Studying the title

Topic: Study the table below and look for patterns in passenger death rates in Country A in relation to the modes of land transport.

Understanding the task

Task: Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information in the table below.

Noting the instructions with a highlighting pen

You should write at least 150 words.

Outlining some key points

Time/tense: 1996-2008 – past

Topic: passenger deaths from transport

General comment: decrease in passenger death rates except buses and coaches

Details: significant reduction for cars, vans and bicycles

slight drop for motorcycles and rail

buses and coaches nearly trebled

Conclusion: buses and coaches still the second safest type of land transport

	Explaining what you are describing	The table shows the passenger death rates by different means of land transport in Country A between 1996 and 2008. As can be seen from the table, death rates saw a general trend of decrease over the period except for buses and coaches.
	Identifying the first significant information	It is clearly seen that cars, vans and bicycles experienced a significant reduction in the rate of road death over the period under study. For example, death among the car and van users declined by more than half, falling from 6.1 per billion passenger kilometres to 3.0 and 3.8 to 1.7, respectively. Cycling, however, despite a significant decrease from 56.9 per billion to 41.3, remained the third most dangerous type of land transport.
	Describing the second significant category	In the second category, comprising motorcycles and rail, the rate dropped slightly between 1996 and 2008. Motorcycling was the most dangerous type of transport, averaging more than twice as many fatalities as cycling, and more than twenty times as high as cars.
	Indicating the third important information The concluding sentence (none)	Regarding buses and coaches, the road death almost trebled over the period under view, increasing from 0.3 per billion passenger kilometres to 0.8. Nevertheless, buses and coaches were still the second safest type of vehicular transport.
	Checking the content	Have you fulfilled the requirements of the task? Have you written what you intended? Are any important ideas missing?
	Checking the language	Are there any lexical, grammatical and spelling errors?
	Checking the organisation and coherence	Is the report well organised and coherently written?

1.3. A combination of graphs and charts

Sometimes, when there is more than one graph, how much detail should be included in your report passage? This depends really on how much detail there is in the question. There is usually a relationship between the two and you can bring in some comparison, but more than this is not necessary. To cope with this kind of task, you should describe the relevant and most important parts, or describe any comparisons or trends that can be made out.

Also, you can compare and contrast between the two different sets of data. If there is too much data presented, what can be done?

1. Do not describe all the data.
2. Spot the significant information: the highest point, the lowest point, etc.
3. Classify the most important and significant detail that needs to be included, for example, developed countries and developing countries, motor vehicles and non-motor vehicles, etc.

Example

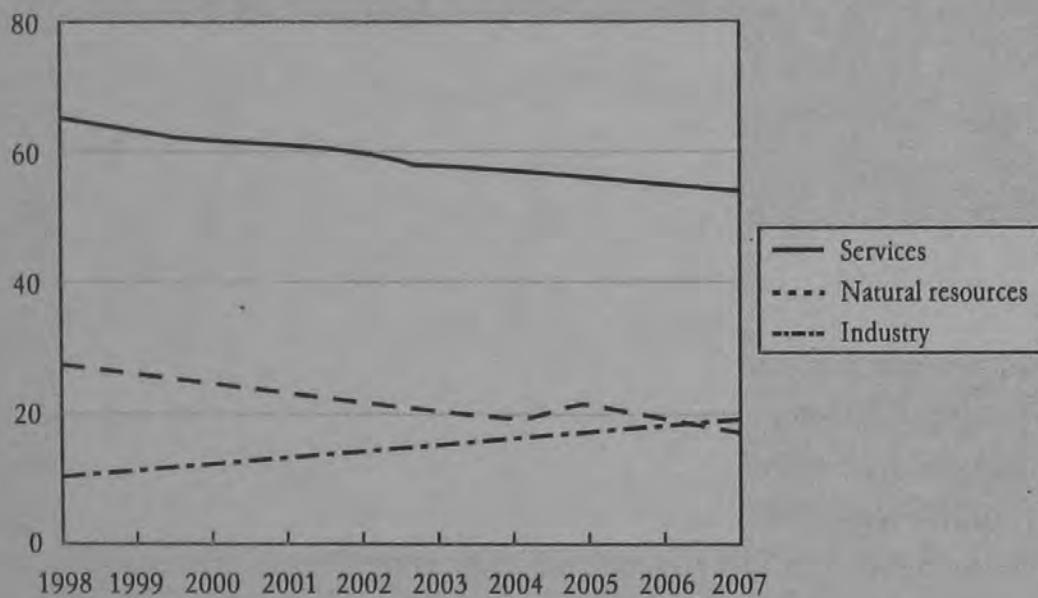
The following table and graph give information about the gross domestic product (GDP) and employment sectors of a developing country.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information shown below.

Sectoral Distribution of Employment and GDP, 2004

	Services								Total %
	Natural Resources %	Industry %	Trade, Restaurants, Hotels %	Transport, Communication %	Government %	Others %	Total %		
Employment	77.4	3.6	4.9	1.6	8.7	3.8	100		
GDP	19.2	15.4	37.1	8.4	12.5	7.4	100		

Percentage of GDP



Time/tense: 1998-2007 – past

Topic: Employment sectors; gross domestic product (GDP)

Table: The percentage of people employed in a sector did not match the percentage of GDP the sector produced in 2004.

Graph: Importance of sectors changes over time – services decline, industry goes up, and natural resources go down.

Note: The table relates to a single year only (2004), while the graph relates to a number of years (1998 to 2007).

Analysis

There are several possible versions for the description of the table and the graph. Below are the three illustrative versions.

Version 1: Describing the table and the graph separately

The table shows the percentage of people employed in different sectors of the economy in 2004, and the percentage of GDP which they produced. The main economic sectors are natural resources, industry and services. The graph shows movements between 1998 and 2007.

(Introduction includes paraphrase of topic words, and general interpretations of the table and graph.)

The table reveals that although 77.4% of the population worked in natural resources in 2004, they produced only 19.2% of GDP. However, 3.6% of the population who worked in industry produced 15.4% of GDP, and 15.2% of those who worked in the services sector produced 58% of GDP.

(Notable features of the table)

The graph shows that services as a percentage of GDP has been falling steadily. In 1998, natural resources provided more than 25% of GDP, but this declined to less than 20% in 2007. Industry earned only about 10% of GDP in 1998, but rose almost to 20% in 2007.

(Summary of information and trends in the graph)

The table and the graph reveal that GDP is earned primarily by the services sector.

(Concluding sentence)

Version 2: Describing each sector in both the table and the graph

The data shows some economic indicators for the services, natural resources and industry sectors in a developing country.

(Brief introduction)

Looking first at services, clearly this area contributed significantly more to GDP than the others, although it decreased slowly, from above 60% in 1998 to below that level in 2007. In 2004, services made up 58% of GDP (most of this – 37.1% – in terms of trade, restaurants and hotels), but comprised only 15.2% of the workforce.

(First sector – services)

In contrast, most people (77.4% in 2004) worked in natural resources, but this sector made only a small and decreasing contribution to the country's GDP, which fell from about 27% to 18% between 1998 and 2007.

(Second sector – natural resources)

In terms of employment, the third sector, industry, was easily the smallest at only 3.6% in 2004. However, over the time period in question, it gradually became more important in the nation's economy, actually having a higher percentage of GDP (19%) than natural resources by 2007.

(Third sector – industry)

Version 3: Comparing and contrasting the different sectors in both the table and the graph

The data shows the levels of employment and GDP in different areas in a developing country.

(Brief introduction)

Looking first at employment in 2004, by far the most important sector was natural resources, with 77.4% of the workforce. This was followed by services (including trade, restaurants, hotels, transport, communication, and government), which totalled 15.2%. Finally, industrial workers were the fewest in this country at only 3.6%.

(Employment)

However, the GDP of this country had very different patterns. Most of the GDP came from the services sector. Although this showed a slow but steady decline in importance, it was still by far the main contributor to the economy in 2007 at about 55% of total GDP.

(GDP 1 – services)

In contrast to its huge number of employees, natural resources was much less key in terms of GDP. In fact, its share fell from nearly 30% (1998) to under 20% (2007).

(GDP 2 – natural resources)

Finally, industry, in 1998 the smallest sector of the country's wealth at only about 10%, steadily increased its contribution, actually overtaking natural resources by 2007.

(GDP 3 – Industry)

2. Examiners' Comments on Candidates' Report Passages

Example 1

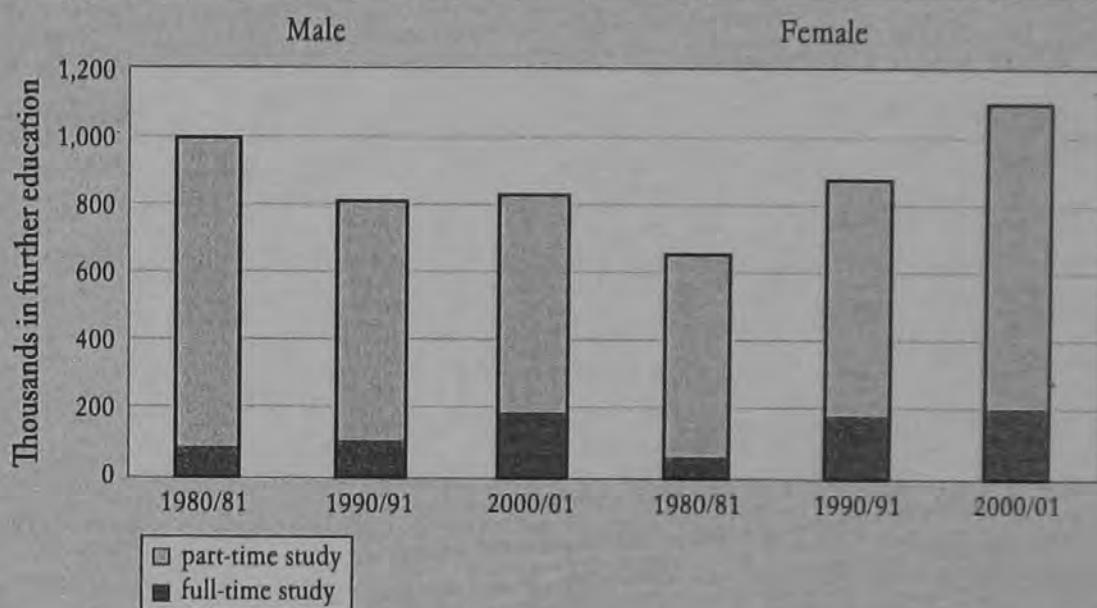
Title

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The chart below shows the number of men and women in further education in Britain in three periods and whether they were studying full-time or part-time.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.



Version 1

This is a bar chart of the number of men and women in further education in Britain in three periods. In 1980 most of men were studying part-time but from 1990, studying part-time was decreased and studying full-time was increased and in 2000, it was twice as many students as in 1980. On the other hand, women studying full-time were increased and not only full-time, part-time also were increased, in 2000, studying full-time was three times as many students as in 1980. If compare men and women, as you see, 1980, men were studying more than women full-time or part-time but it changed from 1990 and then in 2000. Women were studying part-time more than men and studying full-time was same number.

It shows you women has a high education now.

Score: Band 5**Examiner's comments**

The length of the answer is just acceptable. There is a good attempt to describe the overall trends but the content would have been greatly improved if the candidate had included some reference to the figures given on the chart. Without these, the reader is lacking some important information. The answer is quite difficult to follow, and there are some punctuation and spelling errors that cause confusion. The structures are fairly simple, and efforts to produce more complex sentences are not successful.

Version 2

According to this chart, the number of men and women in further education in Britain shows that following pattern.

In the case of male, the number of male has declined slightly from about 1,000 thousands in 1980/81 to about 850 thousands in 2000/01. However, this figure rose back to about 850 thousands in 2000/01 from about 820 thousands in 1990/91. The proportion of full-time education has declined during this period. However, the proportion of part-time education has increased dramatically.

On the other hand, in the case of female, the number of both full-time education and part-time education has increased during the period.

From about 700 thousands in 1980/81, these figures rose to about 820 thousands in 1990/91, to about 1,100 thousands in 2000/01.

In terms of full-time education, this figure rose by about 260 to about 900 in 2000/01.

On the other hand, with respect to part-time education, this figure rose dramatically between 1990/91 and 1980/81. However this figure rose slightly between 1990/91 and 2000/01.

Score: Band 6**Examiner's comments**

The candidate has made a good attempt to describe the chart looking at global trends and more detailed figures. There is, however, some information missing and the information is inaccurate in minor areas. The answer flows quite smoothly although connectives are overused or inappropriate, and some of the points do not link up well. The grammatical

accuracy is quite good, and the language used to describe the trends is well handled. However, there are problems with expression and the appropriate choice of words and whilst there is good structural control, the complexity and variation in the sentences are limited.

This is the corrected version:

The bar chart shows the number of people in further education in Britain, divided by gender and full- or part-time study, in 1980/81, 1990/91 and 2000/01.

(The overall graphic information is introduced. Remember not to copy the exact words in the instructions.)

It is clear that in general part-time education was more popular than full-time. However, for men this has been changing. In 1980, about 90% of male students studied part-time (about 900,000), but by 2000 the number of part-time students had dropped to about 600,000.

(The first trend: Part-time education is compared with full-time education, including some significant data.)

In contrast, for both men and women, full-time education has shown a marked increase, from below 100,000 in 1980 to 200,000 in 2000.

(The second trend: A marked increase in the number of men and women in full-time education is indicated.)

Perhaps the biggest change has been in the overall number of women in further education. In 1980, this figure was at approximately 700,000, significantly lower than the men (1,000,000). There was an increase of about 100,000 over the next ten years, and then a sharp jump in the number of part-time women students to give a total of 1,100,000. This was well over the number of men, which had declined to about 800,000 in 1990, and just over that number by 2000.

(The third trend: The number of women and men in further education is compared and contrasted.)

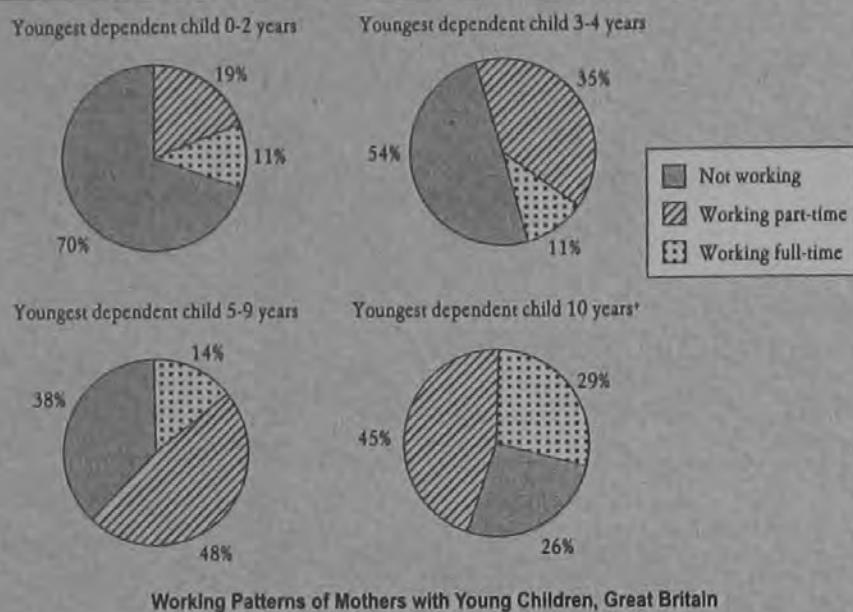
Example 2**Title**

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Many women want or need to continue working even after they have children. The charts below show the working patterns of mothers with young children to care for.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.



In Great Britain, there are many women who want or need to continue working even after they have children. The four charts show the working patterns of mothers with young children to look after.

At first, mothers with their youngest dependent child aged 0-2 years, there is 11% women working full-time and 19% women working part-time. The women who are not working is 70%.

The mothers with youngest dependent child aged between 3-4 years, almost half of them not work. There is 35% women working part-time and the women who are working full-time is 11%. It increase.

Then, the mothers with youngest dependent child aged between 5-9 years 38% of them are not working. There is 48% women working part-time and the women who are not working full-time is 14%. The number of women working full-time was increase in

this chart and the number of working part-time increase 13% from chart 2 and increase 29% from chart 1.

Finally, the chart 4 showed that the mother with dependent child aged 10 years has the biggest percentage number. There is 45% women working full-time and 25% part-time.

Score: Band 5

Examiner's comments

This report passage has the following errors:

- The structures are not varied, and there are several grammatical errors (i.e. there is no grammatical range and accuracy).
- The organisation is not good. (The overall organisation is somehow satisfactory, but the details in each paragraph are not consistent.)
- Some descriptions are confusing. (This is due to the fact that each chart is described separately.)

Overall, the report has responded to the question. Most details are described accurately.

Below is the corrected version:

The pie charts give information about British women's employment patterns with regard to the ages of their children.

The most obvious fact shown by the charts is that, as their youngest child grows older, more and more women return to work. Of those women with very young children (0-2 years old), 70% do not work. This figure falls to 54% for mothers with toddlers, and continues reducing steadily until, when children are over 10, only about a quarter of women still remain in the home all day.

While the number of working women increases with the age of their children, the types of work may vary. In general, part-time work is more popular for mothers although both part-time and full-time work rise over time. Among mothers with the youngest children, 19% work part-time and 11% full-time. As children grow older, more women take up part-time work (35% for 3-4-year-old children, 48% for 5-9). Full-time work does not increase significantly until children are much older (i.e. over 10), when there is a sudden jump from 14% to 29%, although this is still less than 45% of part-time workers.

In conclusion, it is clear that looking after children often affects women's work availability.

Day 5

Process or Diagram Writing – Task 1

1. An Introduction to Process or Diagram Writing

Usually in Task 1 of the Academic Module, candidates are asked to describe a graph, chart or table of data. Occasionally, however, candidates are shown an object, or series of pictures, a diagram, or a flow chart, which they then have to describe in at least 150 words for approximately 20 minutes. This kind of task tests candidates' ability to describe, to expand, and to link every important stage in the description. The most common tasks given in recent exams involve static description and process description.

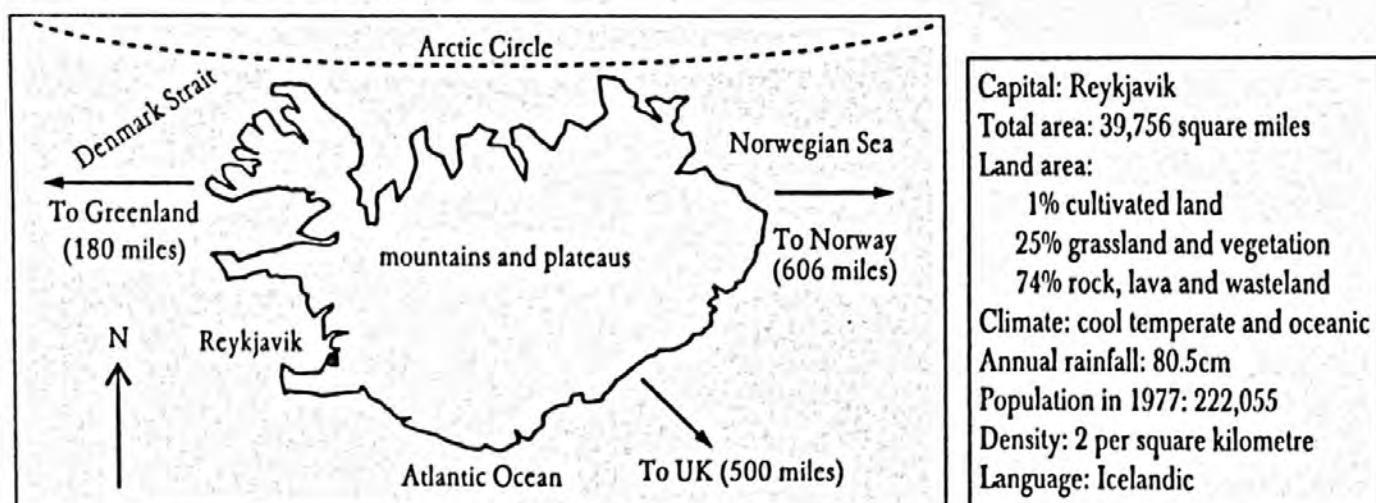
1.1. Static description

Static description comprises an object such as a car, a human body, a supermarket plan, etc., or a diagram and a flow chart.

Describing objects is one way of communicating information. To describe an object, you should:

- look at the object in the picture and tell something about its shape, size, colour, location of parts, condition, texture. Also, explain what they are used for, etc.;
- include comparisons with other things if you find that this would aid you in describing;
- check if all the essential information from the picture or diagram is in your description, excluding the information that is not on the flow chart; and
- focus on the key information as there will usually be too much information for you to describe every detail.

Example: A map of Iceland



Sample passage

Iceland is an island that lies close to the Arctic Circle. The nearest country is Greenland, which is 180 miles away and from which Iceland is separated by the Denmark Strait. The island is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, to the south, and the Norwegian Sea, to the east. The capital city is Reykjavik, which is situated in southwest Iceland.

Iceland has a total area of 39,756 square miles. About 1% of the land area is cultivated, about 25% is devoted to grassland and vegetation, and 74% is rock, lava and wasteland. The centre of Iceland consists of mountains and plateaus.

Iceland has a generally cool temperate and oceanic climate. It has an annual rainfall of 80.5cm.

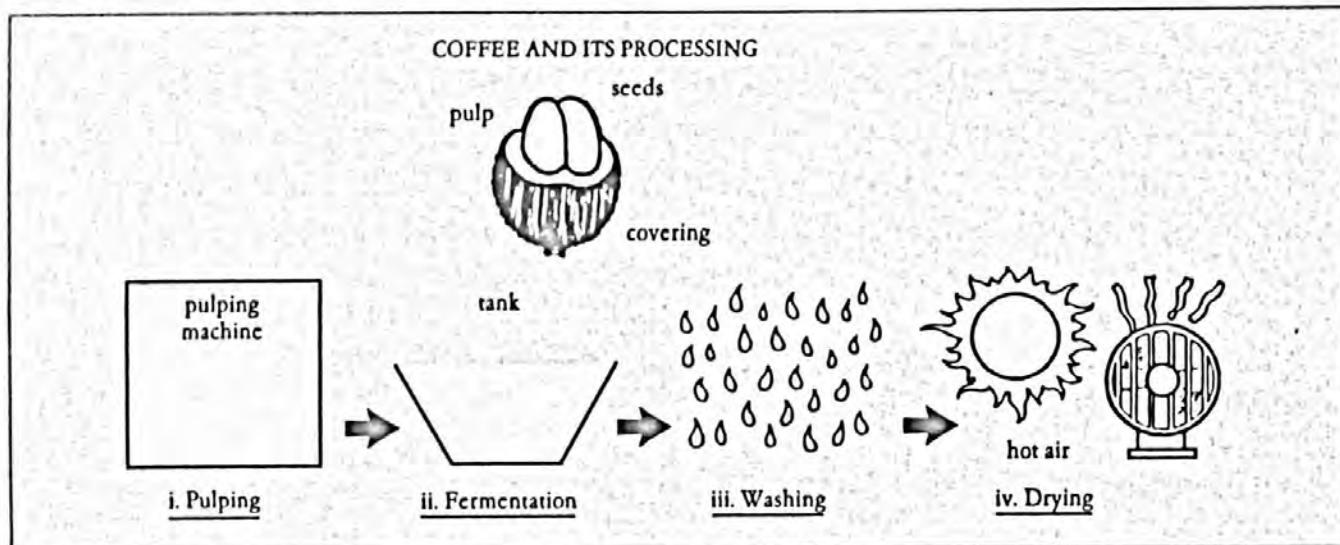
In 1977, the population of Iceland was 222,055. The density of population was approximately 2 people per square kilometre. In Iceland, Icelandic is the language which is spoken.

1.2. Process description

Describing a process or a procedure means describing what it is like to do something or telling other people how to do something. You should focus on answering these questions: What happens? How does it happen? What is the purpose of this diagram? What principles are involved? How does it work and why does it work in that way?

Remember:

- to make sure you understand what the important stages of the flow chart or diagram are, and that you know what order they all come in;
- not to include minor details;
- to make sure that the information is in logical order;
- to clearly mark the different stages with adequate linking expressions;
- to use the language accurately and appropriately; and
- to write the whole passage with unity and coherence.

Example**Sample passage****Coffee and Its Processing**

The coffee plant, an evergreen shrub or small tree of African origin, begins to produce fruit 3 or 4 years after being planted. The fruit is hand-gathered when it is fully ripe and a reddish purple in colour. The ripened fruits of the coffee shrubs are processed where they are produced to separate the coffee seeds from their covering and from the pulp. Usually, a wet process is used as the main technique.

First, the fresh fruit is pulped by a pulping machine. Some pulp still clings to the coffee, however, and this residue is removed by fermentation in tanks. The few remaining traces of pulp are then removed by washing. The coffee seeds are then dried to a moisture content of about 12 per cent either by exposure to the sun or by hot-air driers. If dried in the sun, they must be turned several times a day for even drying.

2. The Language Used in a Process Passage

When describing a process or a flow chart, you need to choose the right language given in the diagram. Also, the present simple passive as well as time words and phrases such as *then*, *next*, *after that*, *afterwards*, etc. and prepositions or prepositional phrases are generally used in the description. Sometimes, the future simple passive can be used when appropriate.

Example

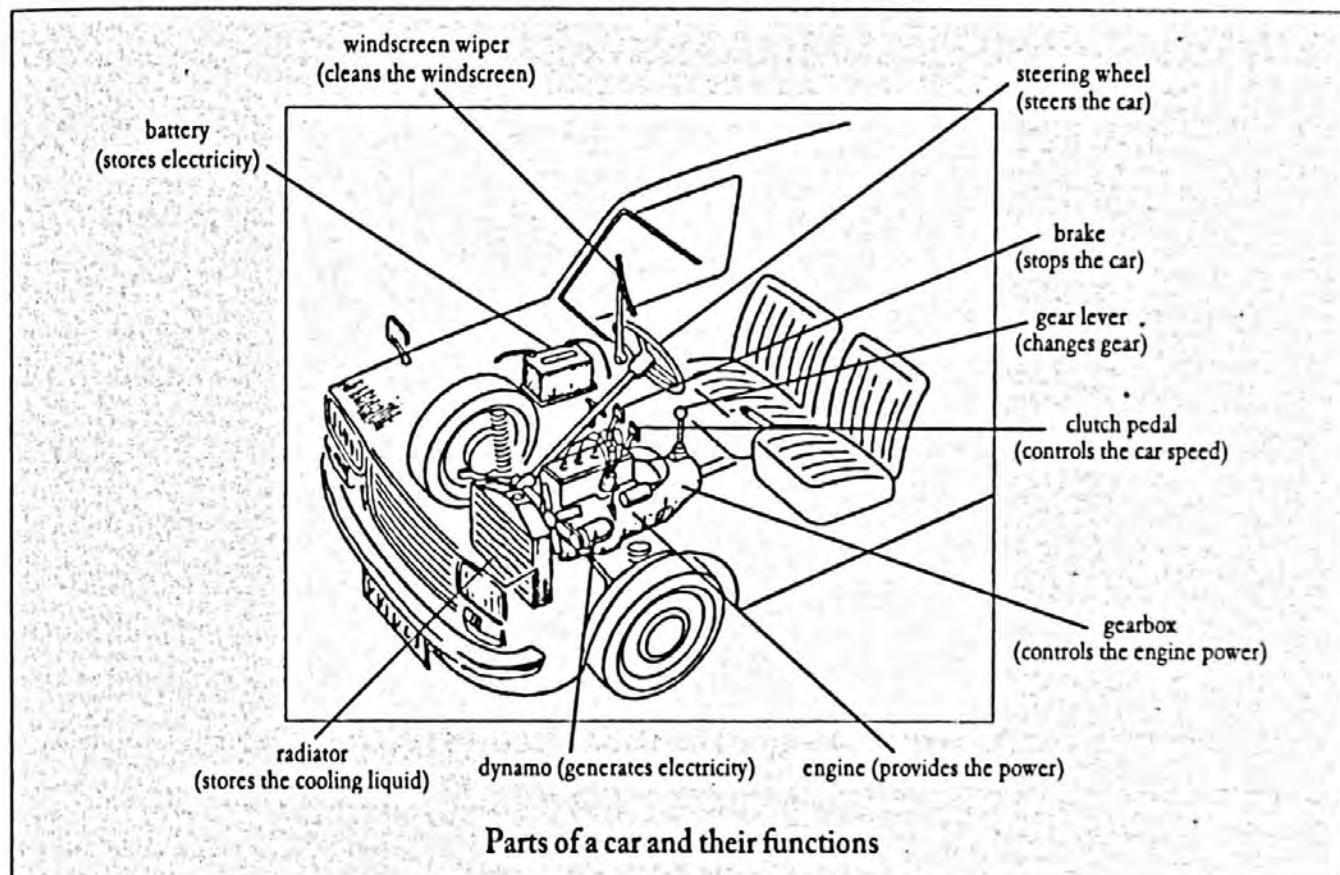
The diagram illustrates how a new dredging boat will be used in the future to drain canals of mud in a certain city.

The boat will carry a suction pump **with** rotating blades on the end of it which will be lowered into the canal by two hydraulic arms. These rotating blades will stir up the mud, called slurry, on the bottom of the canal and **this will then** be sucked up by the centrifugal pump. **From the pump**, the mud will be discharged **through** a large tube **into** a shuttle boat located **behind** the dredging boat. When the shuttle boat is full of mud, it will be towed out of the city and the mud will be dumped.

Below is a list of words and expressions that may be used in the description of a process or procedure.

2.1. Describing functions

There is a variety of words and expressions for stating the function of something. You will find the sentences which are appropriate for each of the pictures below.



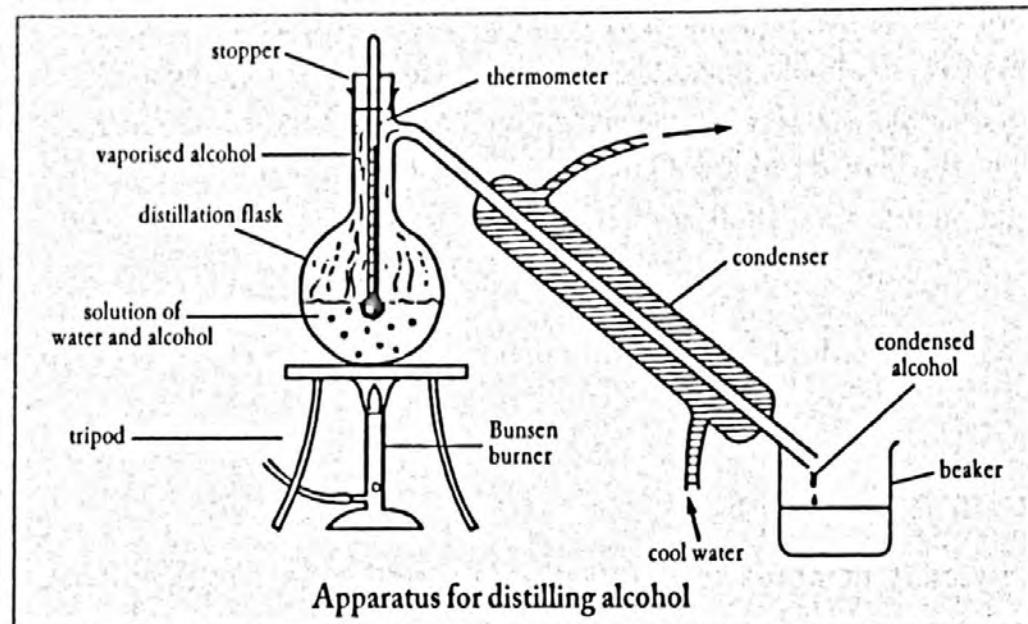
The gearbox is used for controlling the engine power.

The dynamo serves to generate electricity.

The function of the brake is to stop the car.

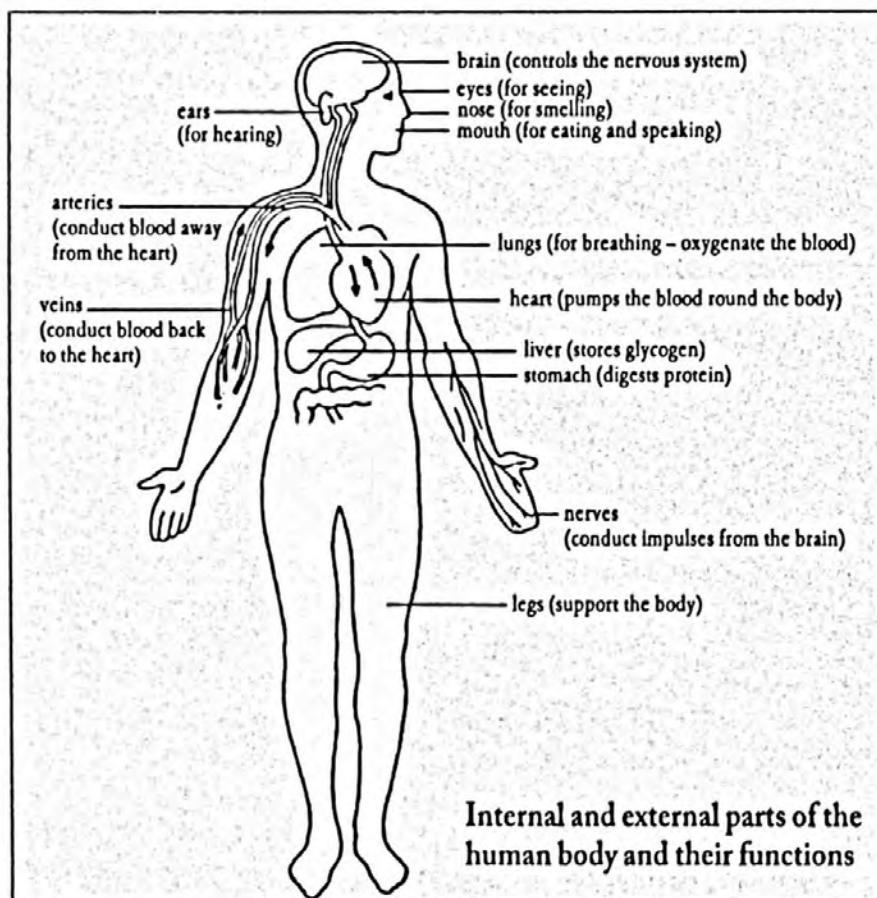
The gear lever enables the driver to change gear.

With the help of the clutch pedal, the driver is able to control the car speed.



The function of the Bunsen burner is to heat the liquid.

The liquid is heated by means of a Bunsen burner.



The function of the brain is to control the nervous system.

The legs act as a support for the body.

Our eyes help us to see.

Our ears are organs for hearing.

The veins conduct blood back to the heart.

2.2. Indicating actions in sequence

a. Simultaneous actions

As the water evaporates, liquid is turned to gas.

As the plant germinates/During germination, the seeds swell.

b. Preceding actions

Before the plant germinates, it is watered.

Before/Prior to germination, the seed is watered.

c. Following actions

After the plant germinates/After germination, the roots and leaves develop.

As soon as the gas is turned on, bubbles appear.

2.3. Showing causes and effects

a. Actions and results

A match is rubbed against the side of a matchbox, with the result that/and as a result it ignites.

b. Changes of state

The process of smoking a water pipe: Smoke is sucked down the pipe, and as a result the smoke changes into bubbles, the water turns green and the smoke becomes cool. Another result is that the tobacco is converted into ash.

c. Other ways of expressing result

Hydrogen combines with oxygen to form water.

Gases and solids sometimes dissolve in liquids ... to form/thus forming solutions.

Calcium burns in oxygen to form calcium oxide.

Metals often react with acids to give metal salts.

Calcium reacts with water, thereby liberating hydrogen, and producing calcium hydroxide.

When the handle is pulled out, the valve inside the cylinder opens, and this allows the cylinder to fill with air.

The air enters the tyre through a valve, which prevents it from escaping from the tyre when the handle is pulled back again.

2.4. Describing locations

The garden is located/situated ... (in/to/on ...)

The botanic garden is in the south of the city.

It is to the north of the zoo.

The north of the country is cold.

The city is on/near the coast/sea.

It is a neighbouring/adjacent country.

3. The Organisation of a Process Passage

A process passage has an organisation similar to that of a graph report. It also has an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

3.1. Introduction

The introduction mentions what is being described.

The diagram shows the workings of ...

The diagram illustrates how ... is produced ...

As can be seen from the diagram, the human heart consists of ...

You may directly introduce the equipment or device.

The equipment consists of X main parts, ...

3.2. Body

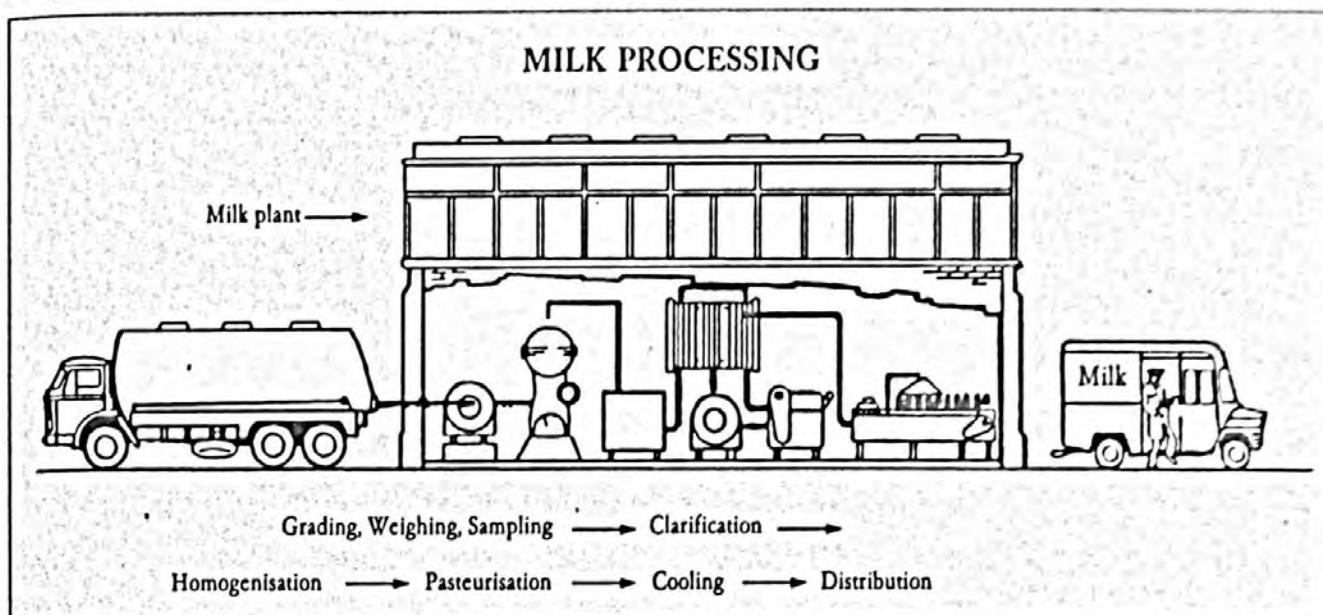
You have to organise your information clearly by showing a logical order: from the general to the specific, from the most important to the least important, from the front to the back, from the lowest to the highest, etc.

There will usually be too much information for you to describe every detail, so you need to focus on the key information only.

You should check if all the essential information from the picture or diagram is accurately described.

3.3. Conclusion

When describing a process, the final paragraph may be a brief summary of the overall function of what you have just described. When describing an object, however, you do not need a conclusion as your opinion on why the thing was invented, or whether it is useful, etc. is not asked. An opinion would be considered irrelevant for this task, and you could lose your marks.



Sample passage

The diagram shows the different stages of milk processing.

Milk is first received at the milk plant where three different operations are performed on it: grading, weighing and sampling. It is graded by examining it for abnormal odours and flavours. The milk is weighed by emptying it into a tank on scales. A sample of the milk is then taken and tested for butterfat.

The milk then flows to a clarifier whose purpose is to remove foreign material and sediment. The clarified milk may then be homogenised to prevent cream formation. The homogenised milk is then pasteurised to destroy all pathogenic bacteria. The pasteurised milk is cooled to 50°F or below. The cooled milk is then ready for distribution.

4. Steps to Write a Process Passage

Step 1: Study the question carefully. Note the beginning and the end of the diagram. Also, note the instructions with a highlighting pen.

Step 2: List some important verbs and connectors needed for the passage.

Step 3: Think of the right tenses to write. If the diagram is about the past, use the past tense; or else, use the present tense.

Example 1

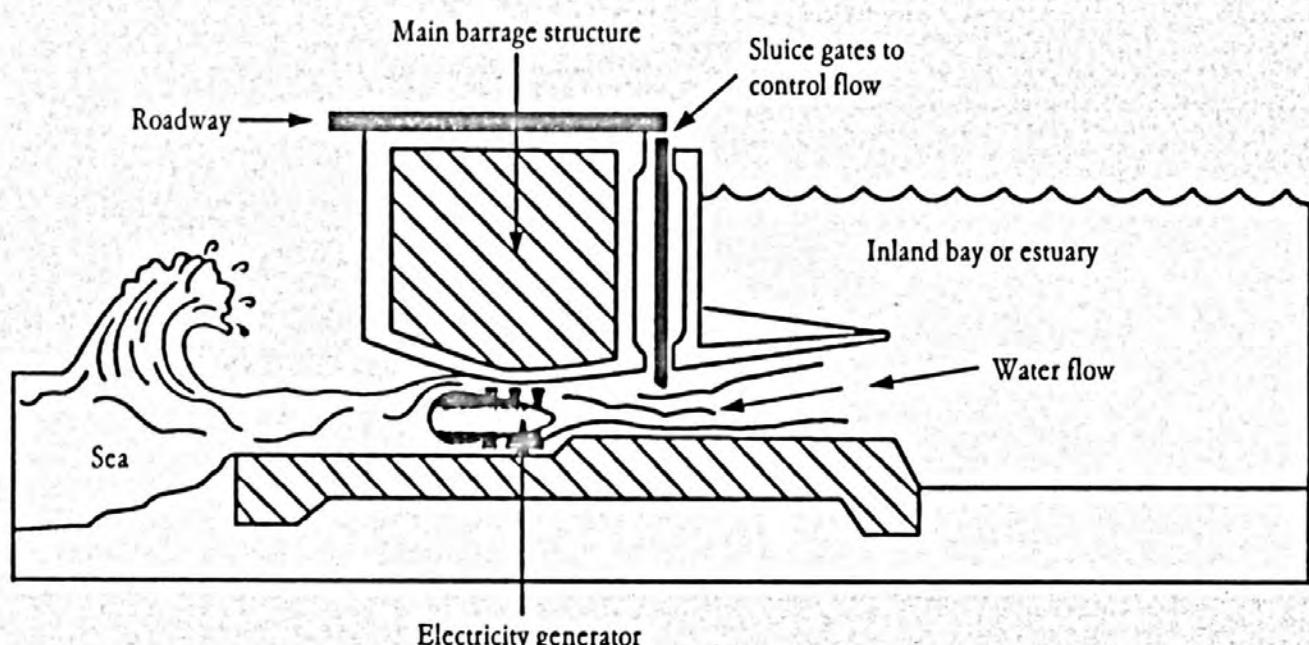
You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Scientists and engineers are continuing to look for new ways to generate electricity.

The following is a diagram of how electricity may be generated from tidal flow.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.



Analysis

Subject: Electricity is generated from rising and falling tides.

Procedure: a. main construction and roadway

b. sluice gates open

c. water from incoming tide passes generator

d. electricity generated

Conclusion: Although this method is a clean and perpetual source of energy, it is inefficient.

Sample passage

The diagram shows how electricity can be generated from rising and falling tides.

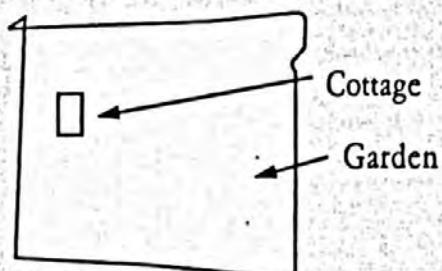
A structure which houses turbines is built across a bay or somewhere where a large body of water can be contained. The structure can also have a roadway built on top of it, thus providing dual services. When the water level on one side of the structure is significantly higher than the other side, i.e. at high tide or low tide, the sluice gates are opened to allow the water to flow. The water passes through tunnels where the generators are housed and causes them to spin. This creates electricity, which is then harnessed for use.

In conclusion, although this method is a clean and perpetual source of energy, it appears to be rather inefficient as it is dependent on the tidal changes, which have a rather slow cycle.

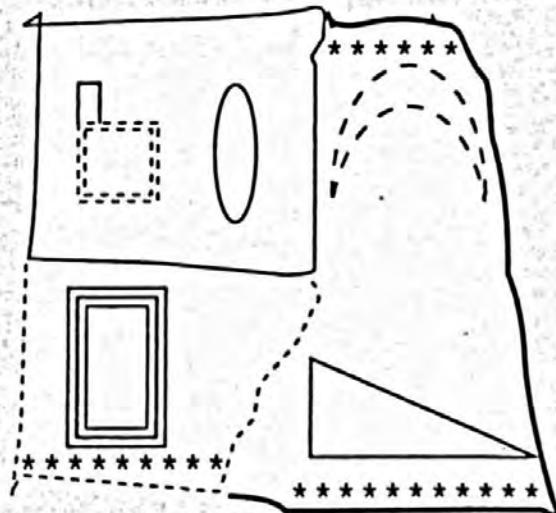
Example 2

Describe the changes that took place at the Rainbow Cottage.

**The Rainbow Cottage
and Garden 1986**



**The Rainbow Cottage
and Garden 2008**



Key

Vegetable garden 1996 □

New land purchased 1989

Pond 1996 ○

Orchard 1995 ⌂

New land purchased 1991 —

Trees 2002 * * *

Addition to cottage 1992-1994 ━━

Open-air swimming pool 2006-2007 □

Sample passage

Diagrams 1 and 2 illustrate a number of changes which took place at the Rainbow Cottage between 1986 and 2008.

(The introduction states the main subject of the pictures, place, and time.)

The purchase of two plots of land enlarged the garden. The one adjacent to the southern border was bought in 1989 and almost equalled in size to the original garden. Then in the year 1991, the area covered by the garden was effectively doubled by the acquisition of another plot of land on the eastern border.

(The first body paragraph points out the most important change: how and when the garden was enlarged.)

Between 1992 and 1994, the cottage was extended on the southern side and the following year saw the planting of an orchard in the northern part of the land acquired in 1991. A pond was added to the garden in 1996 and in the same year, a vegetable garden was added on the other side of the garden from the orchard. In 2002, two lines of trees were planted, one along the southern edge of the garden and the other above the orchard. Between 2006 and 2007, an open-air swimming pool was built in the land purchased in 1989.

(The second body paragraph indicates other changes; all the details are accurately written.)

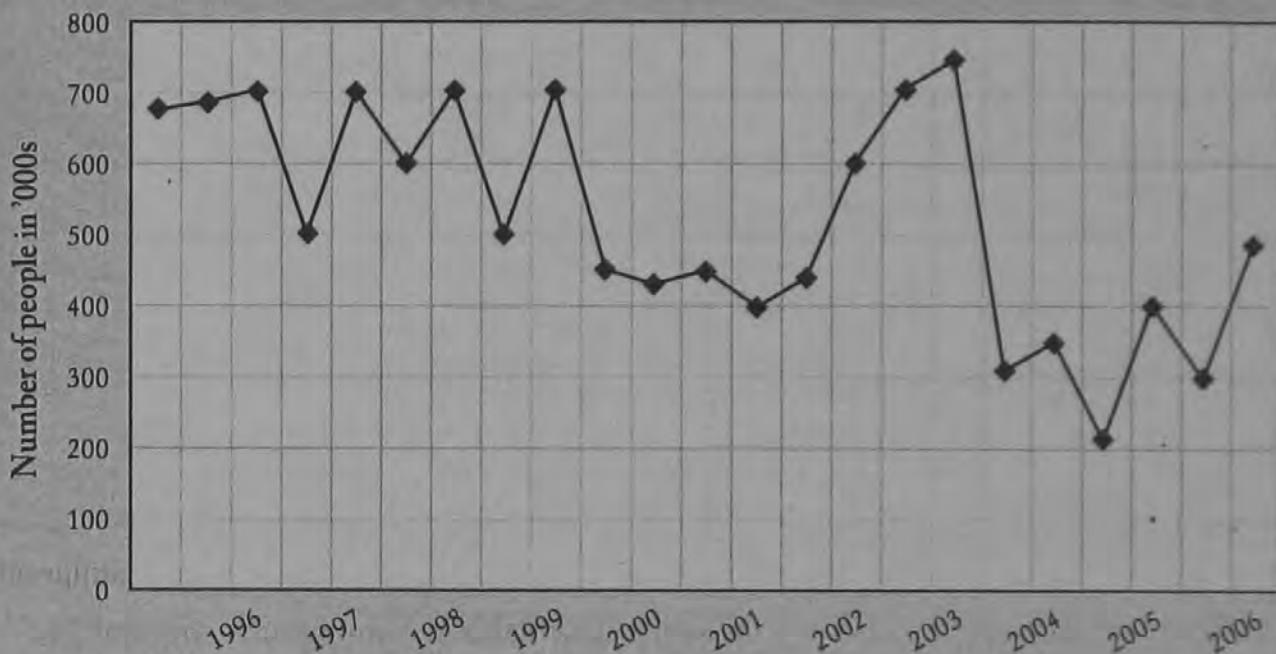
In conclusion, in the two decades, the Rainbow Cottage has seen great increase in size and new development.

(The conclusion sums up the main information.)

Report Writing Practice

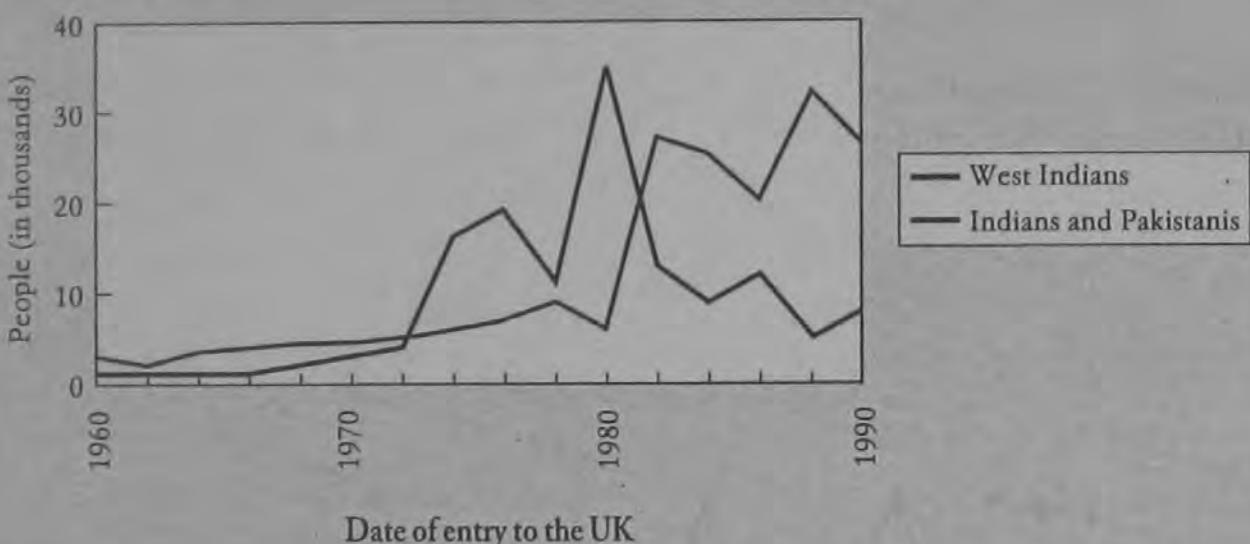
1. Gap filling: Look at the graphs, the tables, the diagrams, and the charts below and fill in the blanks with appropriate words or phrases to complete the descriptions.

1. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



The average _____ of people attending the museum yearly stood at just under 700,000 at the beginning of 1995. Over the subsequent years, attendance saw a _____, followed by a period of volatility. During 1999, the museum suffered a _____ in the number of visitors as a result of the introduction of voluntary charges. The recovery, fitful at first, _____ through to the beginning of 2003, by which time _____ of people attending had _____ a new _____ of 750,000. In the first half of 2003, the attendance at the museum went into free _____, nose-diving to approximately 300,000 visitors after charging was introduced. Over the next two years and a half, _____ of people coming to the museum _____; the trend, however, was obviously _____.

2. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



The graph _____ the number of West Indians and Indians and Pakistanis immigrating to the UK from _____.

As _____, immigration of both West Indians and Indians and Pakistanis _____ over a twenty-year period. After 1980, _____ of West Indian immigrants _____ whereas _____ of Indian and Pakistani immigrants continued to _____.

From 1960 to 1980, _____ of Indian and Pakistani immigrants _____ to just under 10,000 people. Then, after an initial drop, there was a rapid _____ to over approximately 25,000 immigrants. Between 1985 and 1990, the number of immigrants _____ with an overall upward trend.

Similarly, the number of West Indian immigrants _____ between 1960 and 1976 to roughly 18,000 people, and decreased to 10,000 in 1978. Then there was a very sharp increase _____ to a peak of 35,000 people. From 1982 to 1990, the number of immigrants _____ with some _____ to just over 5,000 people.

In _____, it is impossible to speculate that immigration from India and Pakistan may have continued to _____ up to the present day, _____ West Indian immigration may have continued to _____.

3. The table below presents the perceptions of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and their partners as to the main sources of stress in the CEO lifestyle.

Using the information in the table, describe and compare the ways CEOs and their partners perceive pressures in the CEO lifestyle.

**Perceptions of Pressure in the CEO Lifestyle:
Top Ten Rated Sources of Stress (Percentages)**

Factors perceived to produce stress	Perceptions of CEOs	Perceptions of spouses/partners
Time pressures and deadlines	52	60
Demands of work on private life	48	23
Demands of work on relationship with family	45	29
Work-related travel	39	57
Work overload	37	62
Interpersonal relations	25	21
Long working hours	24	62
Taking work home	24	32
Inadequately trained subordinates	24	17

The table _____ in the perceptions of a number of issues about stress of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and their spouses or partners.

_____, the three main sources of stress as far as CEOs were concerned _____ time pressures and deadlines (52%), demands of work on private life (48%), and demands of work on relationship with family (45%). The four main sources of stress _____ their spouses or partners included work overload (62%), long working hours (62%), time pressures and deadlines (60%), and work-related travel (57%). Time pressures and deadlines are tangible factors _____ both groups were aware of. _____, spouses or partners tended to be more specific in identifying work overload, long working hours, and work-related travel as problems, _____ CEOs who focused on more general “demands of work”.

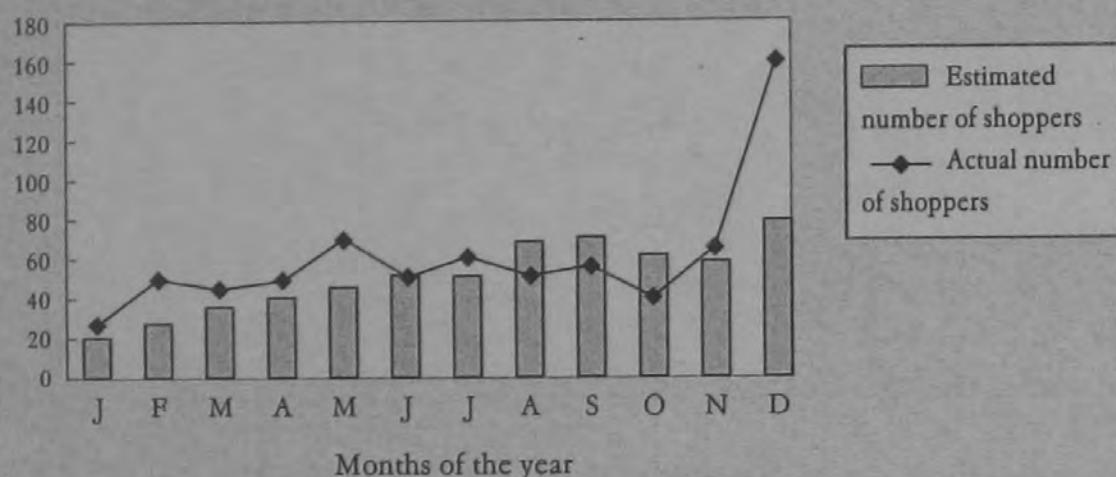
_____ is in the numbers nominating long working hours as a source of stress: 62% of spouses or partners, _____ only 24% of CEOs.

The diagram below shows the number of shoppers who visited a new shopping complex in its first year of operation and the estimated number of shoppers over the same period. Below the diagram, there are two charts, which show the sales at the centre in the first and last quarters of the year.

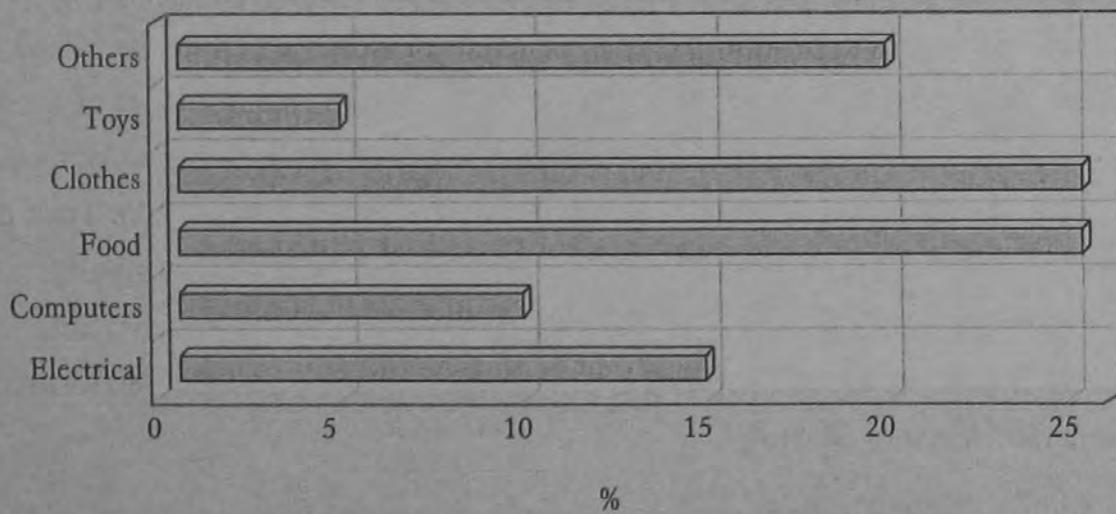
Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.

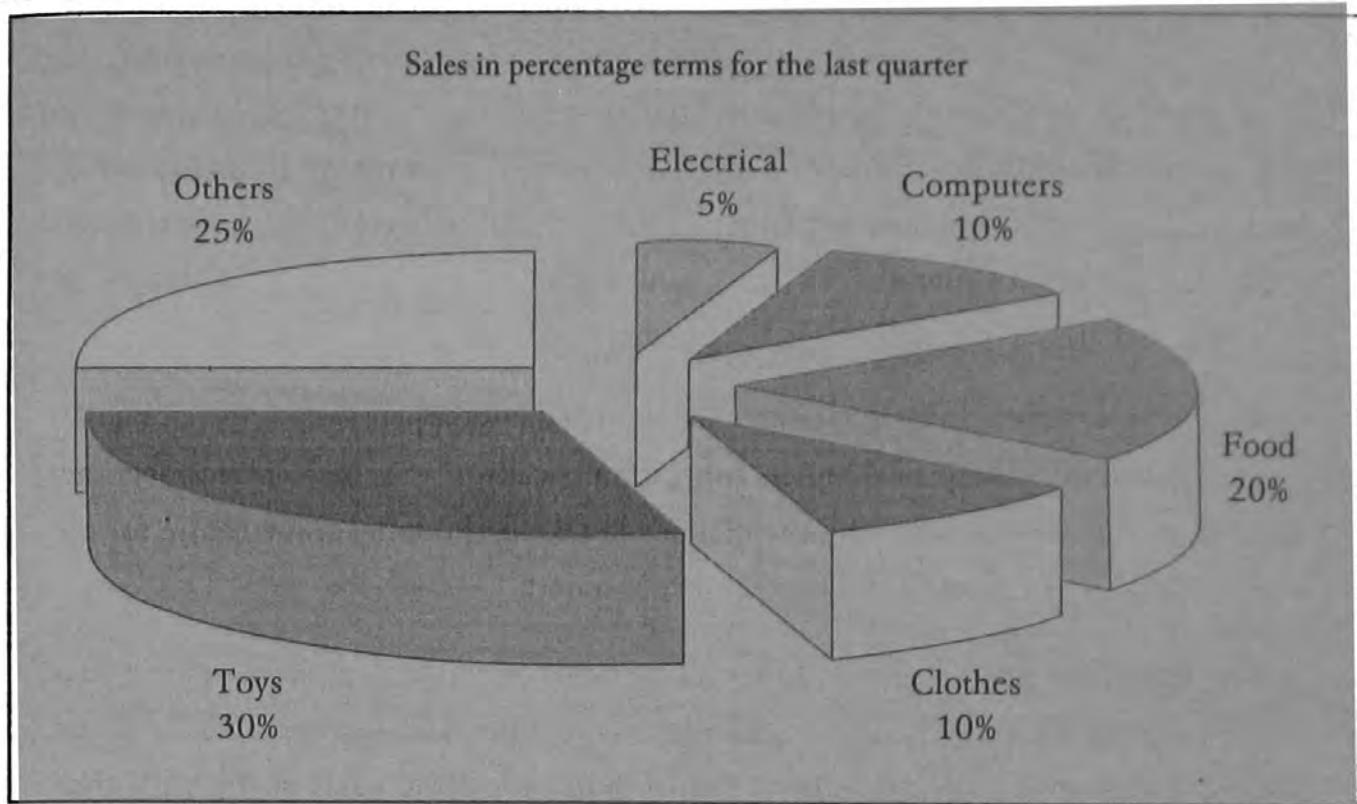
Number of shoppers in '000s



Sales in percentage terms for the first quarter



Sales in percentage terms for the last quarter



List of words and phrases

- a. in November the number of shoppers increased again
- b. fell by a large amount
- c. those
- d. experienced a hefty fall
- e. in the chart
- f. outstripping projections by a wide margin
- g. outperforming the figures predicted
- h. declined further
- i. being
- j. November saw a noticeable turnaround
- k. before they went up
- l. of forecast for the period
- m. as can be seen from the chart
- n. which were predicted for the period
- o. which is twice as much as the estimated figures
- p. they were
- q. reveal a marked shift
- r. doubling the estimate for the period
- s. before picking up
- t. proved
- u. hitting a peak
- v. were
- w. show that there was a change
- x. went down
- y. during which time they did better than the figures predicted
- z. doing better than expected

_____ , in the first two months after the opening of the new shopping complex, the number of shoppers reached nearly 50,000, _____. During March, however, the number of shoppers dropped slightly, _____. During April and May, once again _____. The summer months _____ not only erratic with the shopper numbers at the end of August _____ no higher than _____ at the end of February, and also falling well below the numbers _____ .

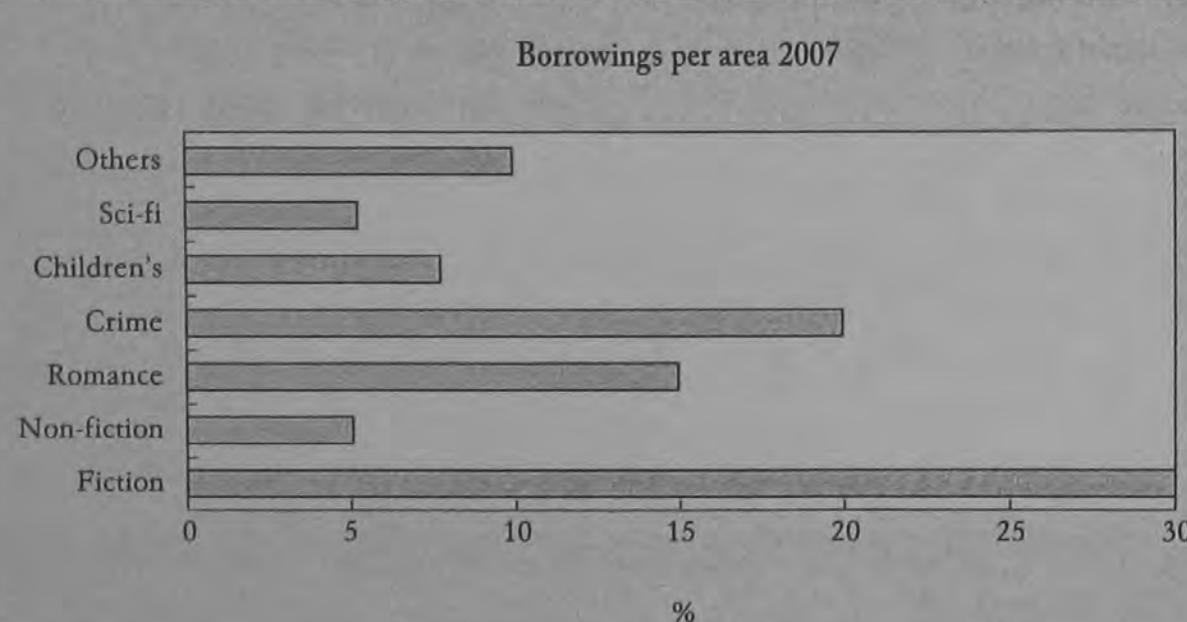
During September and October, the number of actual shoppers _____ , but with the volume of shoppers rising dramatically, _____. December saw this spectacular rise continue with the number of people shopping at the centre for the year _____ of nearly 160,000 visitors per month.

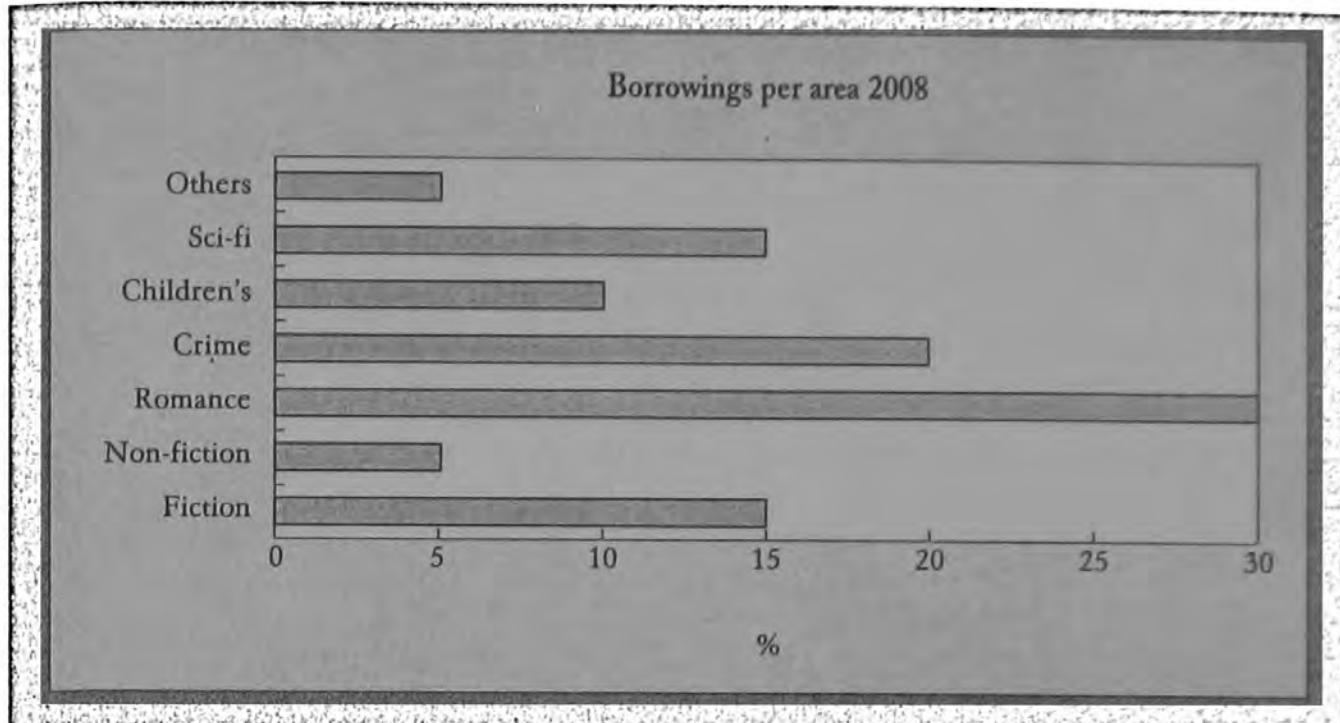
The sales figures _____ in spending patterns at the complex over the year with greater expenditure on toys, computers and other items at the expense of food and clothes. For example, toy sales soared from 5% to over 30%, while at the same time clothes sales _____ .

5. The charts show the number of books borrowed from a local library per month in 2007 and 2008.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.





List of words and phrases

in no way

a comparison

for example

the latter

in the third category come

fall into three categories

whereas

however

as another example

on the one hand

by contrast

by varying degrees

The two bar charts give information about the average number of books borrowed from one library per month in each category during the periods of 2007 and 2008.

(1) _____ of the borrowings for 2007 and 2008 shows that they (2) _____.
 (3) _____, those for fiction and the "others" category fell, the former by 50% from 30% of borrowings to 15%, and (4) _____ again by 50% from 10% to 5%.

(5) _____, children's books, romance and sci-fi all rose (6) _____. Children's increased by several percentage points, (7) _____ books taken out from the romance section rose by 50% between the two years. The number of books borrowed by those reading sci-fi, (8) _____ went up threefold.

(9) _____ non-fiction and crime, neither of which saw any rise.

2. Write a report according to the information given.

The following table gives statistics showing the aspects of quality of life in five countries. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.

Country	GNP per head (2007; US dollars)	Daily calories supply per head	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)
Country A	140	1,877	40	132
Country B	570	2,086	50	124
Country C	690	2,950	56	97
Country D	580	2,296	49	87
Country E	13,160	3,652	74	12

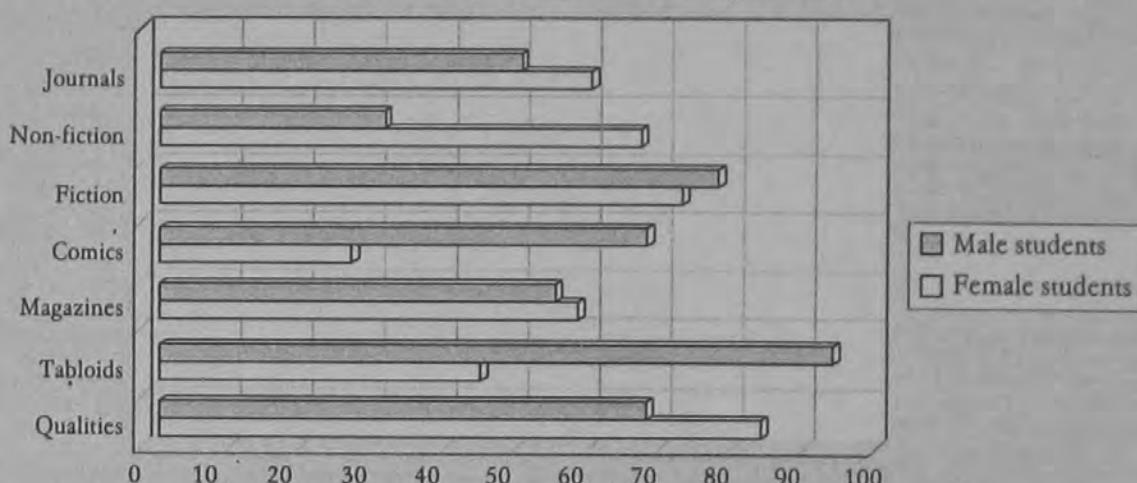
3. Write a report for each of the following tasks according to the requirement.

1. The bar chart on the next page shows the results of a survey of the reading habits of male and female first-year university students at a university in the UK. The pie charts show the amount of time male and female students spend on various activities.

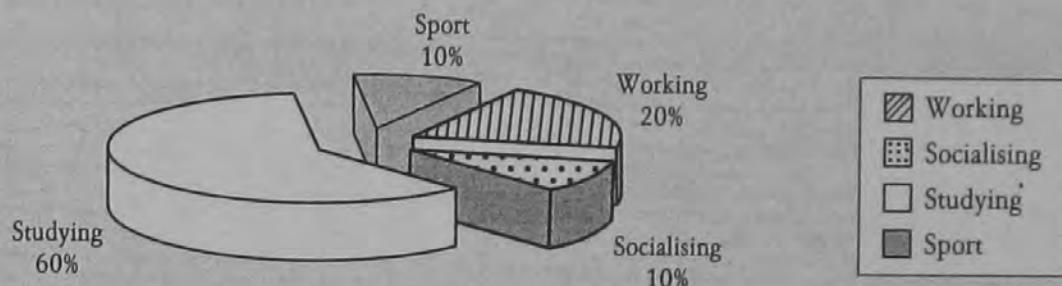
Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.

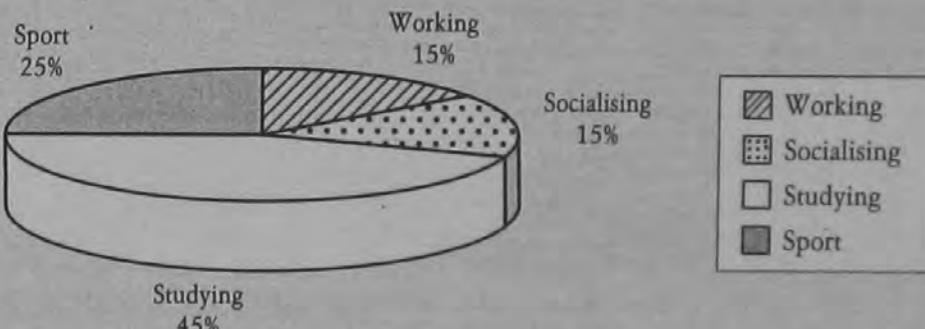
Reading habits of first-year university students



Female students



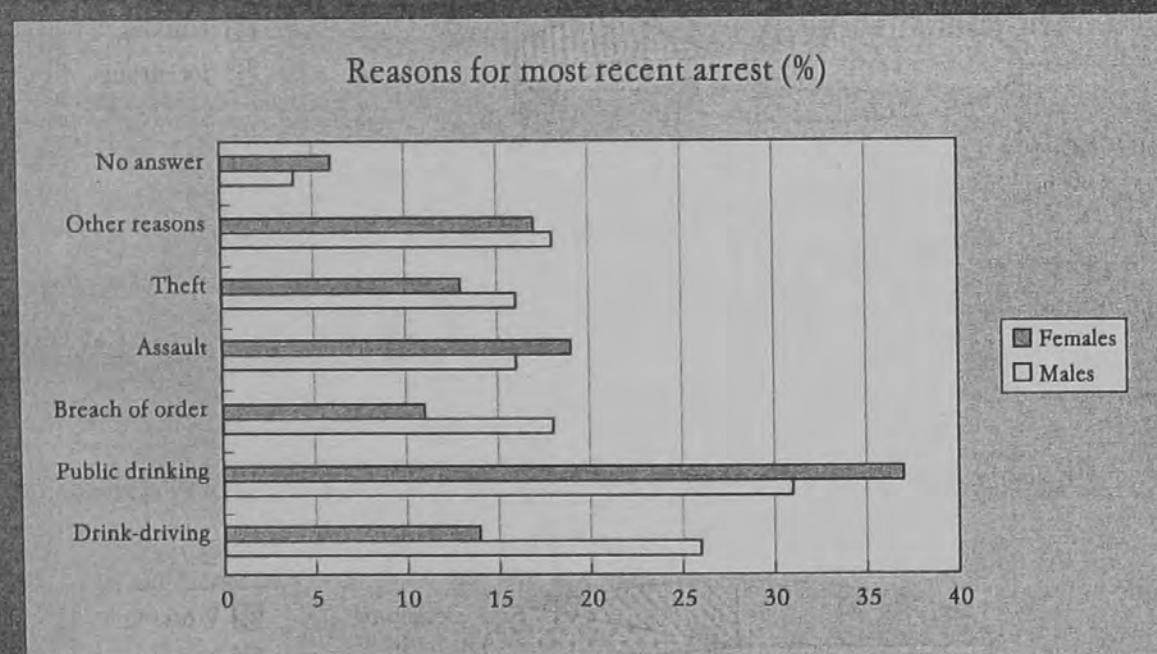
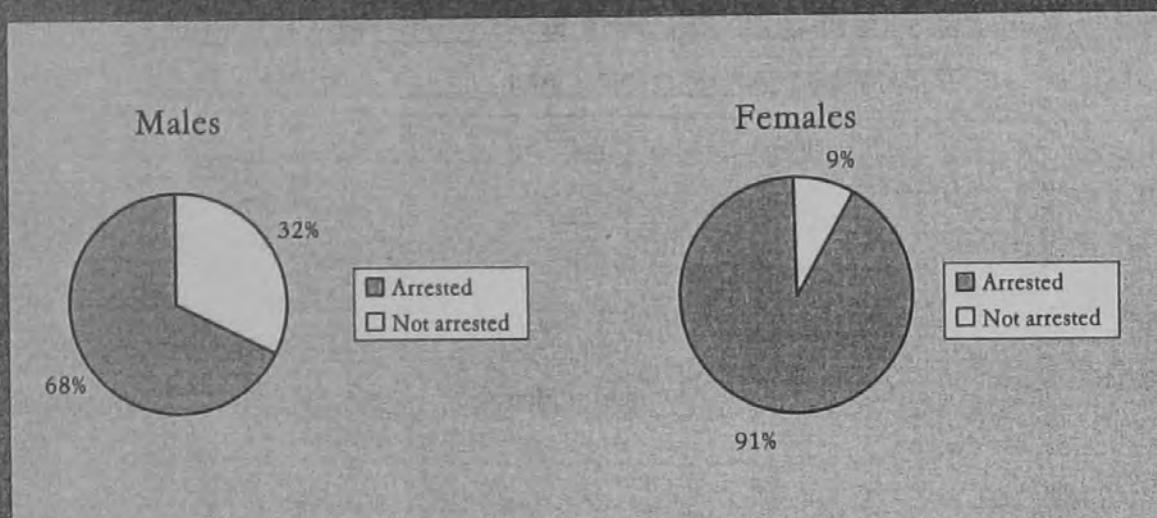
Male students



2. The pie charts below show the persons arrested in the past five years, and the bar chart shows the reasons for most recent arrest in 2008.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.



3. The table below shows the average incomes of scientists employed by an organisation. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.

Pay of the Scientists by Gender

Position	Male (number)	Female (number)	Difference
Total MD	\$89,219 (483)	\$85,274 (71)	-\$3,945
Total PhD	\$74,024 (473)	\$64,903 (118)	-\$9,121
Lab Chief MD	\$95,185 (138)	\$105,696 (7)	+\$10,511
Lab Chief PhD	\$89,827 (78)	\$89,484 (2)	-\$343
Section Chief MD	\$89,653 (157)	\$86,022 (21)	-\$3,631
Section Chief PhD	\$76,819 (140)	\$73,570 (31)	-\$3,249
Investigator MD	\$83,249 (177)	\$81,585 (43)	-\$1,664
Investigator PhD	\$67,131 (251)	\$61,164 (85)	-\$5,967
Staff Fellow PhD	\$34,642 (14)	\$31,848 (9)	-\$2,794

4. Rewrite the sample writing about the changes at the Rainbow Cottage (p.77), making as few changes as possible.

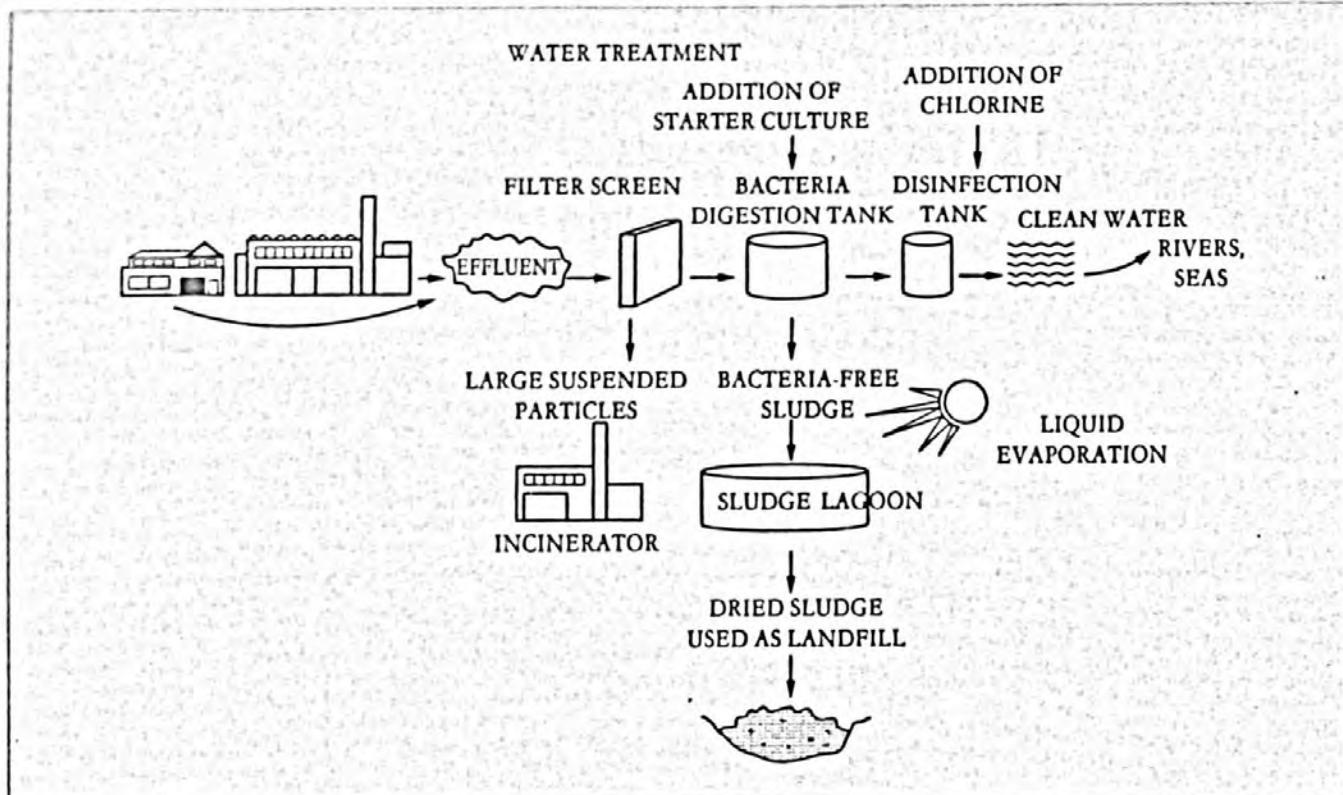
5. Describe the diagrams on page 90.

1. You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The safe and effective disposal of domestic and industrial wastes plays an important role in pollution control. The diagram on the next page shows how liquid domestic and industrial wastes are recycled.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.

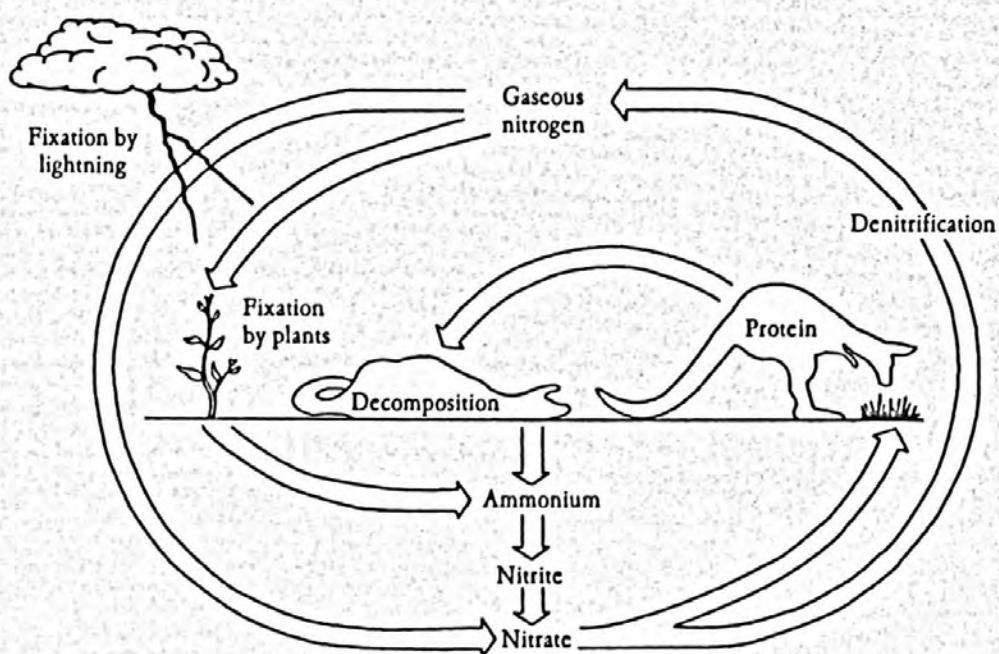


2. You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Nitrogen is very important for the life on earth. Over 90% of the earth's supply exists as a gas in the atmosphere. The diagram below describes the nitrogen cycle.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write at least 150 words.



Essay Writing – Task 2

1. An Introduction to Essay Writing

Tasks 2 of both the Academic and General Training modules are the same. Candidates are asked to write a short essay of a minimum of 250 words in about 40 minutes. The essay is usually a discussion of a subject of general interest. Candidates have to present and justify an opinion about something, offer solutions to a problem, or speculate about future trends.

Task 2 is more important than Task 1 in that there is more ‘weighting’ towards Task 2. If your performance in Task 1 is not as good as it is in Task 2, you can still receive a good writing score.

2. Task Requirements

In this task, you need to write an academic-style essay on a single topic given. You have no choices here – you must write only about the one topic – so prepare yourself with strategies to write a well-organised essay on a variety of subject areas. You may need to offer solutions to a problem, express an opinion, or comment on ideas or arguments presented.

Your essay should be about four or five paragraphs in length, with an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion. It should not be a list of bullet points, but a properly-organised essay, written in full sentences.

Preparation (about 3 minutes)

You may spend about 2-3 minutes working out exactly what you are going to do. Below are the steps you should take into consideration:

1. Study the question carefully. Most task statements or questions have a key instructional word or words telling you what to do. Note these words with a highlighting pen. There are also key topic words which point to the most important parts of the question. Underline those words, too. Ask yourself how the key words relate to the given instructions.
2. Use the written language, not the spoken language. Use a wide range of structures.
3. Think in English when writing. Do not translate word for word from the mother tongue into English.
4. Decide which points will be written as topic sentences. Think about how they will be developed into paragraphs.

5. Use topic sentences to clearly identify the main theme in each paragraph.
6. Try to develop every paragraph in a convincing way. This may be done through the use of examples, explanations, details, logical inferences, causes and effects, or comparisons/contrasts.
7. Ensure that your paragraphs are arranged in logical order. Each of these contains an appropriate connective word to ensure a smooth transition between paragraphs.

3. Skills for Essay Writing

3.1. The essay organisation

When you are writing a Task 2 answer, a structure based on the following elements could be used: an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

Below is the basic essay organisation:

Introduction (3-4 sentences)

- a. general statements
- b. a thesis statement

Body (2-4 paragraphs)

- Paragraph 1: a. a topic sentence which is the main point of the paragraph (including an appropriate connective word)
b. supporting sentence 1 (logical inference)
c. supporting sentence 2 (examples)
d. supporting sentence 3, etc.

- Paragraph 2: a. a topic sentence which is the main point of the paragraph (including an appropriate connective word)
b. supporting sentence 1 (logical inference)
c. supporting sentence 2 (examples)
d. supporting sentence 3, etc.

- Paragraph 3: a. a topic sentence which is the main point of the paragraph (including an appropriate connective word)
b. supporting sentence 1 (logical inference)
c. supporting sentence 2 (examples)
d. supporting sentence 3, etc.

Conclusion (2-4 sentences)

- a. a connective word
- b. a summary of the main points, or a restatement of your thesis in different words
- c. your final comment on the subject based on the information proved before

3.2. Writing

3.2.1. Introduction

The introduction is the first paragraph of an essay. It introduces the essay and arouses the reader's interest.

a. Purpose

The introduction is aimed at letting the reader know:

- the topic
- the aspect of the topic being dealt with
- the stand (attitude) taken by the writer to the topic

In other words, the introduction actually contains the conclusion.

b. Parts of the introduction

The introduction usually has two parts:

- **General statements:** These give the reader the background information about the topic of an essay. They should lead the reader gradually from a general idea to a very specific idea.
- **A thesis statement:** This introduces the main idea of an essay. A thesis statement is like an answer to the question your paper explores. It provides your reader with a "guide" to your argument.

Example 1

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in the modern world.

Introduction:

A person born in the late twentieth century has seen a lot of changes taken place in almost all areas of human life. Some people are excited by the challenges that these changes offer; others want to return to the simpler, less automated lifestyle of the past. Living in the modern world has certain advantages such as a higher standard of living, but it also has some disadvantages such as a polluted environment, the depersonalisation of human relationships, and the weakening of spiritual values.

Example 2

Every country has poor people and every country has different ways of dealing with the poor.
What are some of the reasons for world poverty? What can be done to help the poor?

Introduction:

Every country, no matter how rich, has groups of people who live under the poverty line. They live in miserable conditions without adequate goods such as food or shelter, or without such services as health or education. This essay will examine some of the main causes of poverty and suggest some possible solutions.

(Introduction refers to topic words and defines poverty, and then states the scope of the essay.)

Example 3

If countries are serious about solving traffic problems, they should tax private cars very heavily and use the money to provide free or very cheap rail travel.

To what extent do you agree with the above?

Compare the three introductory paragraphs below:

Introduction 1

Many nations are facing massive traffic congestion in their cities. This both makes travel difficult and causes environmental damage. In order to solve this problem, it is necessary to establish alternative transport systems such as railways. In my opinion, the best way to finance the development of public transport is to tax car drivers.

Introduction 2

Motor cars were invented at the end of the last century and have developed greatly over the last 100 years. In many countries, families have two cars and sometimes even three. As there are so many cars on the road, there are often traffic jams on major roads. It can take hours to complete a short journey at peak times in some major cities. Many attempts have been made to solve the problems of bad traffic. These include limiting the times cars are allowed to drive in certain areas and making cars carry a certain number of passengers. These schemes have met with varying degrees of success.

Introduction 3

Many people say that if countries are serious about solving traffic problems, they should tax private cars very heavily and use the money to provide free rail travel.

As you have seen, the first introduction is fairly good. The second one lists too many details while the last one copies the same words in the instructions, which gains no value.

3.2.2. Body

The body is at the heart of an essay. It contains several paragraphs.

The purpose of the body is to explain, illustrate, discuss or prove the thesis statement.

There are three things to remember when writing developmental paragraphs in the body:

1. Each paragraph in the body discusses one aspect of the main topic.
2. The controlling idea in the developmental paragraph should echo the central idea in the thesis statement.
3. The developmental paragraphs should have coherence and unity.

Example 1

Describe the disadvantages of living in a big city.

Introduction:

Big cities are full of charm and opportunities, so people from the country all rush to the urban areas to take advantage of the opportunities for jobs and education, make good use of the theatres, cinemas and museums, and patronise all the ethnic restaurants in the cities. Although cities seem like a paradise, it is not, for the cities have several serious problems: poor public transport, congested streets, and expensive housing.

Body:

A. The first and most important problem is the inadequate public transport system for the urban dwellers.

1. Schedules are unreliable.

- a. Late bus arrivals
- b. Arrival in bunches

2. Passengers are victims.

- a. Late to work, appointments, classes
- b. Extra waiting time

B. The second serious problem is the extremely congested condition of the city streets.

1. Heavy downtown traffic

- a. Cars and trucks within city
- b. Commuter traffic from suburbs
- c. Accidents

2. Traffic jams

C. The final problem is the lack of reasonable housing.

1. Shortage of rentals

2. High rents

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the traffic systems in big cities are in bad shape. Furthermore, the high cost of housing and massive traffic jams are all negative aspects of the city life.

Example 2

In what ways should imports and exports be adjusted to increase your country's efficiency and effectiveness in the world marketplace?

Body:

First of all, a balance should be maintained between exports and imports. Vietnam is a developing country and tries to import as many goods as possible to serve our society. But if

the quantity of imports is much greater than the quantity of exports, we have to go into debt or depend heavily on other countries. In this case, our economy will be controlled, and obviously it will not be able to run efficiently and effectively. On the other hand, if the quantity of exports is greatly more than the quantity of imports, that means we do not efficiently use what we earn from other countries to serve our society. In this sense, it wastes the earnings.

Secondly, exportation should concentrate on the goods we have the greatest advantages to produce. Considering our society's real situation, labour-intensive products such as textiles, handicrafts, and so on, should be given priority as exports. If we do not consider our advantages, maybe our exported products will have no competitive value in the world market, and of course, will prove superfluous.

Thirdly, concerning importation, it is necessary to import technology rather than consumer goods. Today's technology plays a major role in developing the economy. If we import consumer goods, after consuming them we have to import again. But if we import technology, we can apply it in our manufacture and produce the goods we need to meet the needs of the people. In this way, our economy can be improved fast and efficiently.

Different topics will have different body-paragraph development. This will be dealt with in the next section.

3.2.3. Conclusion

The conclusion is the last paragraph of an essay.

a. Jobs of the conclusion

The conclusion does three things:

- It signals the end of the essay.
- It summarises the main points or restates the thesis in different words.
- It leaves the reader with the writer's thought on the subject. A conclusion, however, should not bring up a new topic.

b. Parts of the conclusion

The conclusion has two parts:

- The concluding sentences
- The final thoughts

The concluding sentences

- form the first part of the conclusion.
- summarise the main points or restate the thesis in different words.

c. Conclusion transition signals

The first sentence in a conclusion usually begins with a conclusion transition signal such as *in brief*, *in conclusion*, *in summary*, *in short*, *to sum up*, etc.

Example 1

If countries are serious about solving traffic problems, they should tax private cars very heavily and use the money to provide free or very cheap rail travel.

To what extent do you agree with the above?

Introduction:

Many nations are facing massive traffic congestion in their cities. This both makes travel difficult and causes environmental damage. In order to solve this problem, it is necessary to establish alternative transport systems such as railways. In my opinion, the best way to finance the development of public transport is to tax car drivers.

The conclusion can weigh the pros and cons of the issue:

For

- a. Encourage people to use public transport
- b. Reduce the number of cars on the road
- c. Cut down on traffic jams/pollution
- d. Save fossil fuels
- e. More money to develop infrastructure

Against

- a. Not door-to-door service like cars
- b. People like owning cars.
- c. Increased taxes are always unpopular.
- d. Cheap railways would lose money and need state subsidies.

Conclusion:

Although taxing private cars would be an unpopular short-term measure, it would eventually solve the problem of road congestion. Cheap railways and expensive cars are undoubtedly in the public interest. However, it is unlikely that any government has the political will necessary to bring in measures which would undoubtedly alienate influential groups within society.

Example 2

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in the modern world.

Introduction:

A person born in the late twentieth century has seen a lot of changes taken place in almost all areas of human life. Some people are excited by the challenges that these changes offer; others want to return to the simpler, less automated lifestyle of the past. Living in the modern world has certain advantages such as a higher standard of living, but it also has some disadvantages such as a polluted environment, the depersonalisation of human relationships, and the weakening of spiritual values.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, although the modern life has indeed given us a lot of advantages by making us richer, healthier, and freer to enjoy our lives, it has, in my opinion, not made us wiser. The modern world has also made our earth dirtier, our people less humane, and our spiritual lives

poorer. We should continue to enjoy the benefits of technological advancements because they free us to pursue our interests and goals. However, we must make a joint effort to preserve our natural environment for future generations. Moreover, we should take the time now to make our lives more meaningful in an increasingly impersonal, mechanised world.

3.2.4. Transition signals between paragraphs

Transition signals are important not only within a paragraph but also between paragraphs. If you write two or more paragraphs, you need to show the relationship between your first and second paragraphs, between your second and third paragraphs, and so on.

Two paragraphs are linked by adding a transition signal to the topic sentence of the second paragraph. This transition signal may be a word, a phrase, or a dependent clause that repeats or summarises the main idea of the first paragraph.

Look at the transition signals you should include in the following essay. The topic is *Flexitime*.

Introduction:

One of the most important changes that management has made in industry in recent years is the scheduling of flexible working hours for their employees. Workers are given the option of choosing when they will work. This allows them more leisure time for family and fun. Flexitime has obvious advantages for both workers and management although it may not be practical in all types of businesses.

Transition signal word: The first advantage is increased production per working hour.

(+ supporting details)

Transition signal word: A second advantage is that factory workers are happier.

(+ supporting details)

Transition signal phrase: In addition to increased output and worker satisfaction, factory managers report that absenteeism has declined.

(+ supporting details)

Transition signal clause: Although flexitime has produced these three positive results in some industries, it is not as advantageous in all types of businesses.

(+ supporting details)

Conclusion:

To summarise, flexitime has resulted in increased production and happier workers who are less likely to miss work, and it works well in manufacturing and retail industries. It works less well in service industries such as the restaurant and health care industries.

Day 8

Opinion and Balanced-Argument Essays

Some candidates have a hard time figuring out what type of essay to write on the second task of the IELTS Writing test. Let us now take a look at some typical task types in the IELTS Task 2 Writing.

In Task 2, you often see the following key words in the essay titles:

1. To what extent/How far do you agree/think ...?
2. ... agree or disagree?
3. ... Discuss.
4. Give your opinion.
5. advantages/merits/benefits/upsides/positive effects and disadvantages/demerits/ drawbacks/downsides/negative effects
6. problems + reasons + recommendations

All in all, though there are differences in the wording of the task instructions, all of these belong to the general type of essays, specifically, argument essays. In addition, the way you develop your essay is also similar.

The key here is to identify the task at hand; namely, figuring out what type of essay the question asks for. Basically, argument essays can be divided into three major types: opinion and balanced-argument essays, discussion essays, and enumerative essays. You will find a general guide in answering each of them.

1. Opinion Essays

Here you are given an opinion about a certain social issue to discuss. Sometimes, you are given some background information, then the opinion and then the task. Typically, you are asked whether or to what extent you agree or disagree with it.

In the task instructions, you may see the following key words:

How far do you agree/think ...?

To what extent/degree do you agree/think ...?

To such questions, you are being asked for your personal opinion; therefore, it is not enough to talk generally about the topic. You must give your personal view, using the inductive method. That is to say, you tend to present evidence and then draw a general conclusion. Opinion essays are the easiest to write and somehow give you the freedom to express your views on a certain topic. Generally, an opinion essay has 4-5 paragraphs.

Example 1

It is inevitable that as technology develops, traditional cultures must be lost. Technology and traditions are incompatible – you cannot have both together.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Introduction: stating the argument in question and signalling parts of the body

Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate the possibility of coexistence of traditions and science and technology.

Body:

1st paragraph: 1st view – presenting the “for” view, giving ideas and examples

It is an undeniable fact that some traditions have been replaced by machines, the scientific and technological results.

- e.g. the making of some handicrafts
- traditional wedding ceremonies
- performance such as shadow or puppet playing

2nd paragraph: 2nd view – presenting the “against” view, giving ideas and examples

However, it is observed that many traditions still flourish with the aid of science and technology.

- e.g. fireworks display at festivals
- computers help make more beautiful cards
- local operas more attractive, more audience
- cherish traditional moral values more

Conclusion: giving your own opinion and your conclusion

Traditions and science and technology can coexist. Use the discoveries of science and technology to reinforce the cultural traditions.

Example 2

A government's role is only to provide defence capability and urban infrastructure (roads, water supplies, etc.). All other services (education, health, social security, etc.) should be provided by private groups or individuals in the community.

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

In order to deal with this task, you may apply the following suggestions:

1. Underline and interpret the key words in the question.

A government's role – the job a government should do

Defence capability – the ability to defend people against attack

Infrastructure – roads, water supplies

Private groups or individuals – businesses, charities or private people

2. Think of how to answer the question.

In this type of question, you are given an opinion and then told to discuss it. You must discuss the opinion in the question. You cannot only give your opinion.

3. Work out a possible outline.

Thesis: Certain types of service must be provided by governments, whereas both governments and private groups or individuals can share the responsibility to provide other services.

Body paragraph 1: A government must provide those services which are essential to a country.

e.g. defence capabilities

social security

compulsory education and basic health care

Body paragraph 2: Some services can be provided by either governments or private groups or their joint efforts.

e.g. secondary or tertiary education

part of health care

urban infrastructure, water or electricity supply

Conclusion: Restatement of the thesis

Sample essay

Governments can only provide a limited range of services for citizens. Certain types of service, however, must be provided by governments, whereas both governments and private groups or individuals can share the responsibility to provide other services.

A government must provide those services which are essential to a country. These include defence capabilities and social security, which must not be left to private enterprises or individuals. Other services the government must provide are the infrastructure such as the road system in the city and protection of the environment.

On the other hand, some services could be provided by either governments or private groups or both. To ensure the quality and literacy of its citizens, the government must take the responsibility for the 9-year compulsory education and basic health care so that all citizens can have easy access to them. However, in tertiary education or part of health care, the private groups could get involved at some stage. Urban infrastructure is another area where governments and private groups or individuals can join efforts and share the responsibility. Governments must build and maintain a system of roads, but toll roads

can be built and road maintenance carried out by private contractors. Similarly, other infrastructure, such as water or electricity supply, can be operated by private companies.

To sum up, there are some services such as defence and social security which must be provided by governments. Other services, for example water supply or education, could be provided by both governments and private enterprises. Consequently, it is not true to say that a government's role is only to provide some services while others should be provided by the private sector. In fact, both governments and private groups can share in the provision of most services.

In this essay, the introduction states the writer's definite view. The first body paragraph gives the opposing idea, and supports it with some specific examples; the second body paragraph voices the next opposing opinion supported with explanations and evidence. The conclusion restates the writer's opinion.

Example 3

Too much education is dangerous. If people receive more education than they need to function in their jobs, it only breeds dissatisfaction.

Write a report for an educated non-specialist audience for or against the above.

Here you are given a social issue and asked directly to discuss it. You may then work out some "for" and "against" ideas as below:

For

- a. Give people unrealistic expectations
- b. Expensive
- c. Not enough challenging jobs to meet people's expectations
- d. Students' major cause of disruption, reject authority

Against

- a. How do you decide the level of education a person needs?
- b. High-level human resources necessary for development
- c. Uneducated people unable to show initiative
- d. People have the right to attain self-fulfilment.

Your body paragraphs may read like this:

Some people may say that education gives people unrealistic ambitions; the law of the marketplace decrees that not everyone can be a managing director. In fact, for every boss there must be many more employees, so some countries believe there is very little point in training people for a level of job that they can never hope to achieve. What is more, education is expensive. Therefore, over-education is a waste of time and money. Another argument against education would be that students tend to be a disruptive influence on society. Once you encourage people to think for themselves, it is difficult to control what

they think. It is hardly surprising that students are often found at the forefront of radical organisations.

In spite of the problems of over-education, most countries need a high standard of human resources in order to compete in the world market. Constantly changing technology means that the workforce has to be flexible and receptive to new ideas in order to be of value to employers. When a person is only trained to perform one job, it is not realistic to expect him or her to adapt to a change in circumstances or an unexpected problem. All this is not to mention the moral questions involved in limiting education. Who has the right to say how much education a person is entitled to? What criteria could be used to decide a level of schooling?

It may be true that a greater level of education tends to make people more radical. However, if society is not going to become static, it must be prepared to accept new ideas. Therefore, the degree of radicalism caused by a high level of education can only serve to make the country more adaptable and better able to withstand social change in the long run.

Example 4

Some employers reward members of staff for their exceptional contributions to the company by giving them extra money. This practice can act as an incentive for some, but may also have a negative impact on others.

To what extent is this style of management effective?

Are there better ways of encouraging employees to work hard?

Sample essay

In times of high unemployment, employers need do very little to encourage their staff to work hard, but when job vacancies are scarce, they have to find effective ways of rewarding their staff in order to stop them from going elsewhere.

One obvious way of doing this is to offer extra money to employees who are seen to be working exceptionally hard, and this is done in companies with a product to sell. For example, real estate agents or department stores can offer a simple commission on all sales.

This style of management favours people who can demonstrate their contribution through sales figures, but does not take into account the work done by people behind the scenes who have little contact with the public. A better approach is for management

to offer a bonus to all the staff at the end of the year if the profits are adequate. This, however, does not allow management to target individuals who have genuinely worked harder than others.

Another possibility is to identify excellent staff through incentive schemes such as "Employee of the Month" or "Worker of the Week" to make people feel recognised. Such people are usually singled out with the help of clients or customers. Hotels, restaurants and tour operators may also allow staff to accept tips offered by clients who are pleased with the service. However, tipping is a highly unreliable source of money and does not favour everyone.

Basically, employees want to be recognised for their contribution – whether through receiving more money or simply some encouraging words. They also need to feel that their contribution to the whole organisation is worthwhile. Good management recognises this need and responds appropriately.

2. Balanced-Argument Essays

- For the first type, you are usually given two different views on a social issue; then, you have to discuss both of them, and finally offer your own view. You may find the following key words in the questions:

Some people ... Others ... Discuss the arguments on both sides ... What is your opinion ...?

Example 1

Some people are of the opinion that prisons are basically universities of crime, fostering the kind of behaviour they aim to eradicate, and are, therefore, not effective. Others feel that prison life is not hard enough. Discuss the arguments on both sides of the issue. What is your own opinion on the matter?

Use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and with relevant evidence.

Reading the instructions, you can spot these key words:

Some people ... prisons ... universities of crime ... not effective. Others ... prison life ... not hard enough. Discuss the arguments on both sides of the issue. ... your own opinion ...

The question asks you to discuss the arguments on both sides of the issue, and then give your own opinion on the matter.

Sample essay

The use of prisons as a means to combat crime has always been a matter of debate and is becoming more so as prison population increases, and crimes become more violent.

(The introduction presents the current matter of debate.)

Some people believe that prisons are merely a breeding ground for criminals, and are, therefore, not doing the job they are supposed to do. They point to the incidence of reoffending among former prison inmates and the rise in the seriousness of crimes committed by reoffenders as evidence for their case. They maintain that young people enter prison for minor offences and come out equipped with the skills to commit more serious crimes. For this group, the prison process is not working.

(The first body paragraph discusses the first view in a limited way.)

Others are of the opinion that prisons are not harsh enough. They argue that prisoners lead a life of luxury inside at the expense of the taxpayer, quoting estimates of the high cost of keeping people inside compared with staying in luxury hotels. Another argument put forward is that, for many criminals, prisons are a soft option, as they are often released after serving only a small portion of their sentence to ease the over-crowding in jails. Prisons are, therefore, not seen as a deterrent.

(The second body paragraph discusses the second view, expanding it more with some arguments.)

I'm personally inclined to agree with the latter viewpoint. I feel that to make penal institutions more effective, the regime needs to be much harsher than at present, with no sentence remission. It is unrealistic to think that this would be a panacea for all the ills of prisons. However, at the same time, this increased harshness should be coupled with an attack on the causes behind crime. Poverty is often quoted as a factor behind criminal activity as is a lack of education, but there are rich criminals as well as well-educated ones. By generally improving the standard of living and the quality of life for everyone, and at the same time making prisons very harsh regimes, such institutions will become effective.

(The last body paragraph gives your own view, supporting it with convincing arguments.)

Example 2

In many countries, children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong, while others consider it as valuable work experience, important for learning and taking responsibility.

What is your opinion?

Reading this essay title, you can see the two sides of an issue. You may work out a possible outline as follows:

Thesis: The issue of children doing paid work, a complex and sensitive one, has aroused a heated debate.

(Introducing the issue)

Body paragraph 1: An important consideration is the kind of work undertaken.

(Giving supportive argument 1)

e.g. factory production line

dangerous work or work with heavy pollution

Body paragraph 2: However, in many countries, children work because their families need the additional income.

(Discussing concession view)

Body paragraph 3: Nevertheless, in better economic circumstances, few parents would choose to send their children out to full-time paid work.

(Giving supportive argument 2)

Sample essay

The issue of children doing paid work is a complex and sensitive one. It is difficult to say who has the right to judge whether it is "wrong" or "valuable". Opinions will also differ as to "learning" benefits: no doubt teachers and factory owners, for example, would have varying concerns.

An important consideration is the kind of work undertaken. Young children doing arduous and repetitive tasks on a factory production line, for example, are less likely to be "learning" than older children helping in an old people's home. There are health and safety issues to be considered as well. It is an unfortunate fact that many employers may prefer to use the services of children simply to save money by paying them less than adults, and it is this type of exploitation that should be discouraged.

However, in many countries, children work because their families need the additional income, no matter how small it is. This was certainly the case in the past in many industrialised countries, and it is very difficult to judge whether it is wrong for children to contribute to the family income in this way.

Nevertheless, in better economic circumstances, few parents would choose to send their children out to full-time paid work. If learning responsibilities and work experience are considered to be important, then children can acquire these by having light, part-time jobs or even doing tasks such as helping their parents around the home, which are unpaid, but undoubtedly of value in children's development.

- 2) For the second type, you are given a problem or an issue and two different solutions or opinions about it. Typically, you are then asked to decide which solution/opinion is the better. You may see these typical task words:

Which is the more ..., A or B?

Example

Which do you consider is the more important influence on human intelligence, genetic factors or the environment?

With this task, you need to discuss both sides of the question: genetic factors and the environment.

Sample essay

We are constantly reading of outstanding figures in the world of science or politics, who came from relatively poor environments and received little formal education. It is always fascinating to consider what factors have produced this kind of exceptional ability.

(The introduction draws attention to the issue.)

It is generally agreed that a stimulating living environment can have positive effects on the development of the intelligence. According to the results of a study in the US of the achievements of two groups of children in an intelligence test, those who remained in the relatively quiet atmosphere of the country did less well than their counterparts who had moved to the city, with its better education facilities and more colourful cultural environment.

(The first body paragraph discusses the impact of the environment on the development of the intelligence.)

But it cannot be denied that there seem to be some limits to the extent to which we can develop our intelligence. It is generally accepted that parents hand down a number of personal characteristics and intellectual qualities to their children, and thus, given the same opportunities, members of the same families seem to show similar abilities.

(The second body paragraph writes about the effects of the genetic factors on the human intelligence.)

It seems that what we inherit at birth is a kind of potential ability that we may develop as best we can. There are many who unfortunately do not reach their full potential, and there are also those surprising few who seem to outshine their families and succeed against all odds. There are several factors which may influence the degree to which we use the talents that nature has given us.

(The third body paragraph expands more on the effects of the genetic factors on the human intelligence.)

And secondly, we cannot neglect the character of the individual. Apart from intelligence, a person may have in his genetic make-up some personality traits that make him a prey to laziness, or distraction from his goals, whereas another person may be gifted with a kind of determination and singleness of purpose that enables him to grapple with all difficulties and make the most of every opportunity that comes his way. In this sense, what we receive from our genetic inheritance is not only our potential intelligence, but also a kind of programming that determines how we will use it.

(The fourth body paragraph points out that the genetic inheritance has an influence not only on the human intelligence but also on their personality.)

Discussion Essays

For this type of essay, you are first given an opinion and then asked to agree or disagree with it. This question is often found in the instructions: *Do you agree or disagree?*

To answer this question, you may apply the deductive method in your answer. Namely, you begin with a generalisation and then use specific instances with examples or evidential arguments to support your view.

Example

Some people suggest that more courses promoting the healthy psychological growth of students should be set up in high schools. They believe that such courses will help the students in their future careers.

Do you agree or disagree?

There are four or five paragraphs in this type of essay. It begins with an introduction, where the writer states the argument in the title and expresses the side he/she is taking in the argument (either agree or disagree). Then, in the body, the first idea is discussed to support his/her opinion. The second and third paragraphs continue with the second and third ideas to expand more on his/her opinion. The conclusion ends by repeating his/her view.

Alternatively, you may analyse some pros and cons of the issue and finally give your decisive stand or compromise.

Example 1

Some people say part-time jobs are useful for full-time students because they not only earn money but also gain career experience.

Do you agree or disagree?

Below are some suggestions for you to cope with this essay title:

1. Read the task instructions, underline and interpret the key terms and concepts.

Part-time jobs – work a student does outside his study

Full-time students – those students who need to devote themselves sufficiently to study

Not only ... but also – both ... and

Money and career experience – two advantages (money and work experience)

2. Think of how to answer the question.

There are two ways you can apply: either giving your personal stand and supporting it with arguments and justifications or investigating the issue on both sides with evidence, and finally establishing your viewpoint in a concise manner.

3. Work out a possible outline.

Thesis: Taking a part-time job has both advantages and disadvantages.

(Paraphrasing the essay question and stating your stand.)

Body paragraph 1: The first obvious advantage is that work can bring in money.

(Agreeing: earning money. Pointing out the first advantage of part-time jobs with practical examples.)

e.g. independent

poor families

financial position

Body paragraph 2: Moreover, a part-time job can help prepare a person for the real world of work, a step out of the ivory tower.

(Agreeing: gaining career experience. Pointing out the second advantage of part-time jobs with practical examples.)

e.g. employer's complaint

my own example

Body paragraph 3: However, it should be borne in mind that the primary purpose of university study is to concentrate on academic work, and a student who also works may be unable to devote themselves sufficiently to their study.

(Disagreeing: causing negative effects on study. Providing counter-argument with justifications.)

e.g. insufficient time for study

failing to meet the requirements of universities

terrible consequences for their futures

Conclusion: Therefore, in my opinion, the decision of whether or not to take up a part-time job while studying depends on individual students' circumstances.

(Restating the introduction and giving recommendations.)

Sample essay

It is common nowadays for students at university or college to undertake part-time work either for money or gain some work experience. In my opinion, this has both advantages and disadvantages.

The first obvious advantage is that work can bring in money. In many countries, students are independent from their families, or their parents are not wealthy enough to afford their education. Therefore, a part-time job can greatly contribute to the financial position of a student. It may be an essential factor in permitting study in the first place. For example, in Britain, the tuition fees have increased a lot in recent years, which has kept some of the intelligent but poor students from concentrating on their study as they are often in debt and in severe shortage of financial support. So, if they want to continue their academic pursuit, many students have no choice but to work in addition to their academic duties.

Moreover, a part-time job can help prepare a person for the real world of work, a step out of the ivory tower. Many employers nowadays complain that new workers do not appreciate the needs of business, nor can they apply their theoretical study to practice. But some work experience gained during study can facilitate one to develop one's career. My own experience is a good case in point. Thanks to my experience of working as a part-time computer programmer, I was easily able to adjust to full-time work responsibilities in an IT company after graduation.

However, it should be borne in mind that the primary purpose of university study is to concentrate on academic work, and a student who also works may be unable to devote themselves sufficiently to their study. Many universities have seen an alarming rate of students failing to meet the requirements of the universities in attendance, performance or assignments or exams. It seems likely that those students who work will have greater difficulty in passing their courses, with terrible consequences for their futures.

Therefore, in my opinion, the decision of whether or not to take up a part-time job while studying depends on individual students' circumstances – it may be beneficial or financially necessary, but it should never be at the cost of underachieving in academic work.

Example 2

Sports which depend on violence for their entertainment, such as boxing and wrestling, have no place in a civilised society and should be banned.

Do you agree or disagree?

First, think of some rough ideas for your writing:

1. Rephrase the topic
2. Give reasons why violent sports should be banned
3. Point out the counter-argument to present the consequences
4. Conclude (agree/partially agree/disagree)

Then, work out a possible outline:

Thesis: It is highly debatable whether this is acceptable in modern society when at all other times we try to emphasise co-operation and team spirit, training people not to be aggressive and not to resort to violence when in conflict with others.

Body paragraph 1: It is argued that dangerous sports like boxing and wrestling, even in a controlled and institutionalised form, are highly disturbing.

Body paragraph 2: However, it should be borne in mind that cruelty is inherent in society and banning violent sports like boxing will not alter this. On the contrary, institutionalising and controlling violence in boxing clubs can help change this.

Conclusion: To sum up, therefore, there is not much to be said about the prohibition of violent sports like boxing as it will not stop violence in society.

Sample essay

It is quite common nowadays to see such sports like rugby and football involve violent contact between players and often lead to injury. Other sports like boxing and wrestling, in particular, have the deliberate intention of hurting the opponent. It is highly debatable whether this is acceptable in modern society when at all other times we try to emphasise co-operation and team spirit, training people not to be aggressive and not to resort to violence when in conflict with others.

It is argued that dangerous sports like boxing and wrestling, even in a controlled and institutionalised form, are highly disturbing. The line of reasoning lies in the fact that it is better for everyone if we live in a violence-free society. In order for us, especially children, to learn to avoid such behaviour, it is preferable if we never see it and cannot copy it. If society actually sanctions brutality, as in boxing, it cannot be argued that violence is always unacceptable.

However, it should be borne in mind that cruelty is inherent in society and banning violent sports like boxing will not alter this. On the contrary, institutionalising and controlling violence in boxing clubs can help change this. Boys, who would otherwise be part of street riots outside the law, can be taught to be part of the law-abiding citizens, directing their energies at legal activities. In this environment, they can be trained to be better members of society. In addition, organised sports follow elaborate rules and medical facilities are always on hand; so, barring accidents, no one should be seriously hurt in the fair and peaceful game.

To sum up, therefore, there is not much to be said about the prohibition of violent sports like boxing as it will not stop violence in society; on the contrary, it will drive organised fighting outside the law and into the hands of criminals. There is no point in losing so much with limited gains.

Enumerative Essays

The third and last type is the enumerative essay. This is usually given when the title is about a phenomenon. The writer's task is to discuss some problems of and solutions to the identified phenomenon, or to point out the causes and effects of the phenomenon, or the advantages and disadvantages of the phenomenon.

You may find these typical task words in the essay titles: *What ...?*, or *How ...?*

Examples:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet?

What is the most dangerous threat the world faces today?

The way you develop this task into an essay is similar to that of the previously-learnt types. A slight difference is you do not have to discuss the issue, just point out some of your ideas to appropriately respond to the task question.

Example 1

There are lots of difficulties for the newly-arrived international students in the first several days of school. They often feel very lonely and a bit depressed. What are other difficulties they will face on the first day? Discuss the causes and give some advice and suggestions.

Here is a suggested outline for it:

Thesis: It is often the case that students who study abroad will be confronted with some problems in their first several days of school, and it is vital to find a timely and proper solution to these problems.

Body paragraph 1: The problems they will meet can be compounded to their uncertainty and confusion.

- e.g. language barrier
- psychological problems
- financial difficulties

Body paragraph 2: A variety of causes can contribute to the discomfort of the new students.

- e.g. a breakdown in communication
- language obstacle, culture shock, and homesickness
- feeling of being out of place when suddenly transplanted to a new culture
- an adjustment problem

Body paragraph 3: All these uncomfortable reactions can be overcome as long as the students have an active attitude and take sufficient precautions.

- e.g. improve language by taking some courses
- enlarge one's circle of friends or join some societies
- keep an open attitude towards the new culture

Conclusion: Restatement of the thesis

From this outline, you can see that the last sentence of the introduction should include a thesis statement which shows the direction that will be supported in the body. The first body paragraph is the indication of the first task (mentioning other difficulties). The second task (providing causes) is pointed out in the next body paragraph. And the third body paragraph responds to the third task (giving advice and suggestions). The conclusion involves the restatement of the thesis.

Example 2

Every country has poor people and every country has different ways of dealing with the poverty.
What are some of the reasons for world poverty? What can be done to help the poor?

Sample essay

Every country, no matter how affluent, has groups of people who live in poverty. Poor people can be described as those who are lacking in goods and services to the point where their lives become miserable. They may lack such important goods as food and shelter and such services as health care and education. It is interesting in this article to examine some of the main causes of poverty and suggest some possible solutions.

(The introduction begins with a general idea that takes into account the key topic words (a definition of *poor people*). The last sentence includes a thesis statement which shows the direction that will be supported in the body.)

A major cause of poverty has always been war. The recent war in Afghanistan saw people evicted from their homes and deprived of food and shelter, and of services such as hospitals, schools, gas, water and electricity. Media coverage of the war caused worldwide revulsion. The solution to war may be such universal rejection that the world leaders will not consider it as an option and seek peaceful negotiation instead.

(The first body paragraph mentions the first cause of poverty: *war*; then, it suggests a solution: *peaceful negotiation by the world leaders*.)

Some countries such as India and China have the problems of both overpopulation and underdevelopment. They simply do not create enough wealth per capita for their people to escape from poverty. This is changing in many places as countries have adopted effective measures to reduce their birth rate and develop their resources. Other countries are facing the problems of unemployment and natural disasters. The possible solutions for some countries include massive aid from the rest of the world whereas for bigger

countries like China and India, the best solutions lie in the development of their national economy and the implementation of birth control policies.

(The second body paragraph points out the second cause of poverty: *overpopulation and underdevelopment, unemployment and natural disasters*; next, it mentions solutions: *aid from developed countries, economic development and birth control policies*.)

In conclusion, poverty can be attributed to the frequent occurrences of war, natural disasters as well as overpopulation, unemployment and underdevelopment. The problems at times appear overwhelming, with no solution. Despite this, much good work is being done, with more people than ever enjoying a good quality of life.

(The conclusion paraphrases the thesis.)

Despite some slight differences among the above-mentioned types of argument essays, the structure of an argument essay is held together by the following:

1. A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay
2. Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion (Transitions are the mortar that holds the foundation of the essay together.)
3. Topic sentences and supporting sentences (The topic sentence in each body paragraph expresses the main idea of the paragraph, and it is supported with supporting sentences which are directly related to it to ensure unity.)
4. Evidential support (Every view in the body paragraphs must be supported adequately through the use of examples, explanations, details, logical inferences, causes and effects, or comparisons/contrasts.)

Let us now review the three argument essays with the following table of illustrative examples.

Questions	The twentieth century saw the rise of powered flight from a dream to a commonplace occurrence. Nowadays every country has airports, and flying is a boring routine for many.	It is inevitable that as technology develops, traditional cultures must be lost. Technology and traditions are incompatible – you cannot have both together.	Some people say part-time jobs are useful for full-time students because they not only earn money but also gain career experience.
	How has the aeroplane changed the way we live? Have all of these changes been positive?	To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?	Do you agree or disagree?
Question analysis	Two part question: 1. Describe positive changes 2. Describe negative changes	Specific opinion – can technology and traditions exist together? Opinion may be one-sided or two-sided, but two is better.	Specific opinion – part-time jobs are good for students because of money and experience? Or not? Opinion may be one-sided or two-sided, but two is better.

Plan: Limit yourself to 3 or 4 basic, clear main ideas. Make sure they are relevant but do not try to include everything	1. Introduction 2. 1 st change – distance 3. 2 nd change – speed 4. 1 st negative change – pollution 5. 2 nd negative change – war 6. Conclusion	1. Introduction 2. Yes (1) – destruction of old by new 3. Yes (2) – replacement of old by new 4. No (1) – new helping old 5. Conclusion	1. Introduction 2. Yes (1) – money 3. Yes (2) – experience 4. No (1) – negative effect on study 5. Conclusion
Introduction: 1. Introduce the general topic 2. Thesis statement – give specific direction (what are you going to do in your essay?)	Aeroplanes have become an almost mundane form of transport in many parts of the world. This essay would like to examine some of the effects of the rise of the plane in the twentieth century.	Some people say that whenever modern society and old traditions meet, the old is always replaced or destroyed by the new. Is this really true?	Nowadays, an increasing number of full-time students take part-time jobs both to earn money and to improve themselves. I would definitely agree with the idea that students should look for decent part-time jobs for these two reasons.
Body: Each paragraph contains: 1. Linking or transition phrase + topic sentence 2. 1 st supporting sentence (often but not always a reason) 3. 2 nd supporting sentence (example or evidence) 4. 3 rd supporting sentence, etc.	The most obvious change that flight has brought to the world is that it is now easy to travel to all, even the most distant, parts of the world. Due to its ability to go great distances, the modern aeroplane connects the whole world. This can be seen by the fact that, before this great invention became commonplace, most people had never left their own country, and those who travelled far away, for instance, the explorer, Stanley, were seen as great adventurers.	It is certainly true that many ancient civilisations, societies and customs have been wiped out by the march of "progress". In the 19th century, for example, the native Indian tribes of the USA could not withstand the invasion of the white settlers, with their more advanced weapons. Most of these ancient societies are now extinct. Many people believe that moral and spiritual values are being destroyed by modern, especially Western, cultural values.	The first advantage is that work can bring in money. The second advantage is that part-time jobs can enhance students' interpersonal skills and leadership. However, in actual fact, some people are of the opinion that part-time jobs would occupy a huge amount of time, and most of jobs are merely basic work that might not promote students' specific skills.

Conclusion: In conclusion, therefore, planes are not an absolute boon to humanity although they have greatly expanded our horizons.

Repeat/Summarise main idea(s). Make sure the question is clearly answered.

Conclusion agrees with your introduction and body.

In conclusion, therefore, while modern science and society clearly does threaten much of our heritage, it is not always destructive. It should be possible for the best parts of ancient culture to coexist with the best of the modern world.

In conclusion, I admit that there are a few disadvantages of part-time jobs for full-time students. Yet, I strongly believe that its advantages outweigh its disadvantages. Thus, part-time jobs should become an indispensable part of schooling.

Now, read the three complete essays below to see how they are coherently written and effectively communicated.

The twentieth century saw the rise of powered flight from a dream to a commonplace occurrence. Nowadays every country has airports, and flying is a boring routine for many.

How has the aeroplane changed the way we live? Have all of these changes been positive?

Aeroplanes have become an almost mundane form of transport in many parts of the world. This essay would like to examine some of the effects of the rise of the plane in the twentieth century.

The most obvious change that flight has brought to the world is that it is now easy to travel to all, even the most distant, parts of the world. Due to its ability to go great distances, the modern aeroplane connects the whole world. This can be seen by the fact that, before this great invention became commonplace, most people had never left their own country, and those who travelled far away, for instance, the explorer, Stanley, were seen as great adventurers.

In addition to the distances covered, the plane is the fastest form of transport. For instance, travellers from China to the United Kingdom before World War II would have to spend literally months at sea. In contrast, when I made the same journey a few years ago, it only took 12 hours. This great convenience has resulted in air travel's rapid rise to be the primary form of transport for both tourism and international business.

However, despite its obvious benefits, not all of the changes brought to us have been good. The most serious problem with aeroplanes is the pollution and environmental destruction they bring with them. The problems are many: airport construction totally devastates the pristine environments, jet fuel adds significantly to the greenhouse effect, and people living near airports suffer major noise pollution as the great monsters take off and land.

Another modern disadvantage is the use to which some have put planes, particularly in the arena of war. Aircraft make devastating weapons, as the US bombardment of Iraq proved. The increase in air power has greatly increased the misery and destruction of war.

In conclusion, therefore, planes are not an absolute boon to humanity although they have greatly expanded our horizons.

It is inevitable that as technology develops, traditional cultures must be lost. Technology and traditions are incompatible – you cannot have both together.

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

Some people say that whenever modern society and old traditions meet, the old is always replaced or destroyed by the new. Is this really true?

It is certainly true that many ancient civilisations, societies and customs have been wiped out by the march of “progress”. In the 19th century, for example, the native Indian tribes of the USA could not withstand the invasion of the white settlers, with their more advanced weapons. Most of these ancient societies are now extinct. Many people believe that moral and spiritual values are being destroyed by modern, especially Western, cultural values.

However, not all of these changes are bad. Many old customs and traditions are replaced by new ideas because society deems them to be no longer suitable. For instance, in China, women used to bind their feet to meet the fashionable standards of beauty, despite the fact that this caused them great pain and permanent disability. Modern people rightly consider it good that this tradition was abandoned.

It is also true that sometimes modern technology can be used to preserve or enhance ancient traditions and cultures. Science is improving our ability to protect and restore ancient buildings or paintings so that they can be enjoyed and understood by future generations. Some old ideas and customs are being widely distributed and discussed using the Internet. For example, the ancient game of chess is now easier to study and practise, thanks to computers.

In conclusion, therefore, while modern science and society clearly does threaten much of our heritage, it is not always destructive. It should be possible for the best parts of ancient culture to coexist with the best of the modern world.

Some people say part-time jobs are useful for full-time students because they not only earn money but also gain career experience.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Nowadays, an increasing number of full-time students take part-time jobs both to earn money and to improve themselves. I would definitely agree with the idea that students should look for decent part-time jobs for these two reasons.

To begin with, doing part-time jobs can help students financially independent. They are partially supporting themselves. According to a survey conducted by a college, nearly forty per cent of university students are able to pay for their tuition fees. As a result, this has encouraged them more in taking part-time jobs.

Secondly, part-time jobs can enhance students' interpersonal skills and leadership, which will put them in a favourable position in the future job markets. Good interpersonal skills are considered as a major prerequisite for getting rapid promotion. There is no better way to improve interpersonal skills than to work part-time. When students are working, they have to meet and communicate with different kinds of people. In this process, they can learn how to cope with the relationship between strangers and themselves. Furthermore, doing part-time jobs helps students raise their awareness of leadership. Clearly, leaders play an essential role in an organisation, especially in this extremely competitive and commercialised society. For a good leader, leadership is the most important character.

In actual fact, some people are of the opinion that part-time jobs would occupy a huge amount of time, and most of jobs are merely basic work that might not promote students' specific skills. But if students spend all their spare time just on video games, part-time jobs seem to be a far better choice for them.

In conclusion, I admit that there are a few disadvantages of part-time jobs for full-time students. Yet, I strongly believe that its advantages outweigh its disadvantages. Thus, part-time jobs should become an indispensable part of schooling.

Note that there is not a single pattern of organising argument essays. Different patterns of organisation can result in different effects on readers. Let us now examine a variety of organisation patterns for the one essay title below.

Money is the key to happiness; without money we are nothing.
Do you agree with this opinion?

The first pattern: using counter-arguments to show the writer's view

There are a variety of opinions on the importance of money and its role in ensuring or creating happiness. In this essay, I will give my opinion as to its level of importance in our lives.

(Introduction: The writer's view is not yet shown.)

There are those who believe that money is everything and those who despise those without it. In my opinion, such a view is unjustifiable. Simple reflection will conjure up many examples of those living a happy and fulfilled life, despite not being rich. The Chinese poet, Du Fu, for instance, was a poor man, with just a simple home, yet he created such wonderful work and lived a rich spiritual life. In contrast, those who are always chasing Mammon will surely find their hearts become cold and empty.

(Real-life examples are given to show disagreement with the opposing view.)

In my opinion, money is simply a tool for subsistence, not the goal of living. If one has money, but no love, how can happiness be found? The poor are obviously just as capable of living as the rich; in fact, they may be even more so as they do not have to worry that their lovers are only after their money. And, while money may buy good doctors, it cannot buy life. The American billionaire, Howard Hughes, who was obsessed with cleanliness and disease, wasted his vast fortune trying to escape fate, but he still died.

(The first view is presented: *love and health are more important.*)

In order to find true happiness, one must look inside oneself, and cultivate knowledge and wisdom. All of the world's religions emphasise this point, as when Jesus threw the moneylenders from the temple, or when Buddha renounced his wealth for a life of contemplation.

(The second view is pointed out: *knowledge and wisdom are also important.*)

In conclusion, the true requirements for happiness are not money, but love, health and spiritual wealth.

(Conclusion: The writer's view is concluded.)

The second pattern: using the writer's own view to offer counter-arguments and supportive arguments

In modern society, we are surrounded by visions of wealth and money, and by terrible images of poverty and despair. Thus, many people place an extremely high value on the possession of money. Are they correct to do so?

(Introduction: The writer's view is not yet shown.)

In the first place, there is no doubt that money is very important in our daily life, as we need it to buy the daily essentials and to enjoy some necessary luxuries. News reports, for example, frequently show the utter misery of the homeless and starving in places such as Afghanistan and Ethiopia, where a total lack of money makes even simply staying alive a cruel burden. Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine enjoying a life without being able to buy our favourite things. Money lets us have a good meal in a nice restaurant and buy gifts for our loved ones, so it is important for the quality of life.

(This paragraph approves of the opposing view supported with examples.)

But, of course, having money does not automatically ensure happiness. There are many things in life that we need which cannot be bought. As the Beatles so rightly sang, "Money can't buy me love." Neither can it guarantee health or luck, all of which are, in my opinion, more essential to a good life than mere material objects.

(The first supportive argument is given with a specific quotation.)

In addition, we can plainly see many rich people who are unhappy despite their wealth. Too much money creates pressures of its own, such as the fear of robbery or kidnapping, or the need to continually increase one's fortune. The terrible story of the Hernandez brothers in the USA, who, driven by greed, murdered their rich parents in order to inherit their money, is only one example of many.

(The second supportive argument is indicated with a real-life example.)

In conclusion, in my opinion, it is clear that we need some sufficient money to ensure our basic survival, but true happiness depends on much more.

(Conclusion: The writer sums up the views of the opposing and supporting sides, and then concludes with a compromise.)

The third pattern: offering only one view (not as effective as the other two patterns)

There are a variety of opinions on the importance of money and its role in ensuring or creating happiness. However, I do not believe it is the most essential thing for a truly happy life.

(Introduction: The writer's view is given.)

In my opinion, money is simply a tool for subsistence, not the goal of living. If one has money, but no love, how can happiness be found? The poor are obviously just as capable of loving as the rich; in fact, they may be even more so as they do not have to worry that their lovers are only after their money. Statistics prove that the rich have a much higher rate of divorce and remarriage than common folk, presumably for precisely this reason.

(The first reason with evidential support is presented.)

Secondly, health is an essential for a good life. It is clearly impossible to be happy if one is ill or in pain. While money may buy good doctors, it cannot buy life or guarantee freedom from disease. The American billionaire, Howard Hughes, who was obsessed with cleanliness and disease, wasted his vast fortune trying to escape fate, but he still died.

(The second reason with evidential support is shown.)

In order to find true happiness, one must look inside oneself, and cultivate knowledge and wisdom. All of the world's religions emphasise this point, as when Jesus threw the moneylenders from the temple, or when Buddha renounced his wealth for a life of contemplation. Many people find great happiness in activities such as music, literature, or simply walking in the mountains, none of which require money.

(The third reason with evidential support is pointed out.)

In conclusion, the true requirements for happiness are not money, but love, health and spiritual wealth.

(Conclusion: The main view is restated.)

Skills for Argument Essay Writing

The second writing task is designed to assess the candidate's ability to:

1. Present differing points of view and support one with his/her own ideas and evidence.
2. Communicate his/her ideas and opinions clearly and fluently.
3. Use grammatical and appropriate English with a wide range of structures and vocabulary.
4. Organise his/her ideas and stick to the point.

When writing a Task 2 answer, you should apply the steps below in order to produce a well-structured and coherent essay that addresses the given task.

Step 1: Preparation (about 5-7 minutes)

1. Study the question carefully. Most task statements or questions have a key instructional word or words telling you what to do. Note these words with a highlighting pen.
2. There are also key topic words which point to the most important parts of the question. Underline those words too. Ask yourself how the key words relate to the given instructions.
3. Establish a point of view and list some points for development. In a Task 2 answer, your purpose is to develop your point of view in a convincing way.

Examples

The Internet will bring about a new freedom of information and so narrow the technology gap between developed and developing countries.

- Worldwide communication possible (yes)
- Greater access to information (yes)
- Only the rich can afford access to the Internet. (no)
- Computing skills are necessary to operate the Internet, so new technology gap develops. (no)

As public safety is of the highest importance, it is often necessary to test new products on animals. It is better for a few animals to suffer than for human life to be placed at risk by untested products.

- Realistic tests are necessary. (yes)
- It's better that animals suffer than humans. (yes)
- Tests are necessary to find cures. (yes)
- Not all animal tests are important. (no)

- Animals have rights. (no)
- Often computer simulation is possible. (no)

If countries are serious about solving traffic problems, they should tax private cars very heavily and use the money to provide free or very cheap rail travel.

To what extent do you agree with the above?

- Taxes on cars would discourage people from using cars. (yes)
- Good public transport would increase the mobility of the people. (yes)
- Save natural resources (yes)
- No door-to-door service (no)
- Take time to develop the infrastructure (no)

The quality of health care a person receives should not depend on the size of their bank balance. The government is responsible for providing a high level of health care for all its citizens.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the above statement?

- Health is the responsibility of the individual. (no)
- Aging population makes health care practical. (no)
- Health is a fundamental right. (yes)
- Good hospitals are governmental responsibility. (yes)
- A healthy population is vital to national interests. (yes)

After listing some points for development, decide which points will be written as topic sentences. Think about how they will be developed into paragraphs and ensure that your points are arranged in logical order. (You had better work out an outline so that you can write in the right direction.) For example:

Topic sentence:

It is often said that people need to work to feel useful. This is not true.

Supporting arguments:

It is doubtful whether most of the jobs people do are of any value to society. It is hard to imagine people getting much satisfaction from the usual paper shuffling that takes place in most offices. Therefore, if a lot of jobs are of little value to the world and some jobs are actually harmful to mankind, there is no reason for people to feel guilty about staying at home and doing something more interesting instead. In fact, it could be said that in these times of high unemployment, it is more useful not to work as you are giving other people opportunities to feel fulfilled. As most jobs are neither interesting nor productive, the idea of working to contribute to society is not realistic.

Step 2: Writing (about 30 minutes)

When you are writing, a structure based on the following elements could be used:

1. Introductory paragraph

The introduction should begin with a general statement or idea of your own that takes into account the key topic words or their synonyms. The last sentence of the introduction should include a thesis statement which shows the point of view or direction that will be taken in the answer. (Remember to introduce the topic in your own words. Do not copy the task from the question, or it will be ignored and not be included in the word count.)

2. Body paragraphs

Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence, then come some supporting sentences that are arranged in a logical way to develop the topic sentence. Every sentence in the paragraph must directly be related to the topic and developed adequately. This may be done through the use of examples, explanations, details, logical inferences, causes and effects, or comparisons/contrasts. You can write about 2-4 body paragraphs for a Task 2 answer.

3. Concluding paragraph

The conclusion should be the final assessment starting with a concluding connective word or phrase.

Step 3: Editing (about 3-5 minutes)

In the last few minutes, you should check for obvious errors such as spelling and grammatical errors. Be sure you have written what you intended and that there are no important ideas missing.

Example 1

In what ways should imports and exports be adjusted to increase your country's efficiency and effectiveness in the world marketplace?

This is an enumerative essay. It is, therefore, written by offering points in order.

Today, we are in the era of globalisation. International trade plays an important role in improving our country's economy. So, it is interesting to investigate how to adjust our country's exports and imports in order to benefit our economy.

First of all, a balance should be maintained between exports and imports. Vietnam is a developing country, and tries to import as many goods as possible to serve our

society. But if the quantity of imports is much greater than the quantity of exports, we have to go into debt or depend heavily on other countries. In this case, our economy will be controlled, and obviously it will not be able to run efficiently and effectively. On the other hand, if the quantity of exports is greatly more than the quantity of imports, that means we do not efficiently use what we earn from other countries to serve our society. In this sense, it wastes the earnings.

Secondly, exportation should concentrate on the goods we have the greatest advantages to produce. Considering our society's real situation, labour-intensive products such as textiles, handicrafts, and so on, should be given priority as exports. If we do not consider our advantages, maybe our exported products will have no competitive value in the world market, and of course, will prove superfluous.

Thirdly, concerning importation, it is necessary to import technology rather than consumer goods. Today's technology plays a major role in developing the economy. If we import consumer goods, after consuming them we have to import again. But if we import technology, we can apply it in our manufacture and produce the goods we need to meet the needs of the people. In this way, our economy can be improved fast and efficiently.

In conclusion, by keeping a balance between imports and exports coupled with careful consideration on what goods should be exported and imported, we can enhance our country's efficiency and effectiveness in the world marketplace.

Example 2

To what extent do you think that economic development can benefit from rapid urbanisation?

This is an opinion essay. You should apply the principles learnt (see Opinion Essays) into your writing.

First of all, you may work out a list of "pros" and "cons" ideas as follows:

Pros	Cons
a. Improve the industrial economy e.g. set up more factories meet the needs for labour in factories	a. Pollution e.g. decrease the output of agriculture
b. Provide more help for farming e.g. machines insecticides	b. Lack of labour on farms e.g. detrimental to agri-economy
c. Increase the demand for more goods	

From the lists, you can see the pros outweigh the cons. You can, consequently, form your own view now.

As a country's economy develops, its urbanisation usually develops fast as well. So, it is interesting to investigate the influence of urbanisation on economic development.

It is often argued that urbanisation blocks the development of the economy. Indeed, it often causes a series of problems, such as pollution, which can decrease the output of agriculture, lack of labour on farms, which may be harmful to agri-economy, and so on. But these problems are not insoluble. For example, if some steps are taken towards pollution control when the city plan is made, the negative influence can be minimised.

In fact, economic development can get a lot of benefits from urbanisation. First of all, it can improve the industrial economy. As cities are enlarged, a lot of factories can be set up. Meanwhile, a lot of people migrate from the country to the cities and this can meet the needs for labour in the factories. In addition, as the industry grows, it can provide more and more farming machines and insecticides for agriculture, which enables farming to be more effective and efficient. Furthermore, urbanisation increases the demand for advanced consumer goods, which drives the economy to reach a higher level.

In conclusion, urbanisation, though imperfect in many ways, plays an important role in improving the economy.

Sample Essays

Title 1

Nowadays, many people think that there is not enough time to do their work or enjoy leisure. Some people compare time to money.

To what extent do you think time is money?

Sample opinion essay 1

In modern society, more and more people emphasise the efficient and rational use of their time. There is a popular saying which summarises the phenomenon, "Time is money." But still it is highly debatable to what extent this is true, and in what conditions.

Of course, in ordinary cases, time is one of the key factors in making money, because to make money we need high efficiency in our work, and that means highly efficient use of our time. In other words, under certain conditions, more time means more money.

But on the other hand, we cannot forget the condition when we use this proposition. That is to say that only in combination with other necessary factors can time be meaningful to the moneymaker. The most important factors are, among others, material resources, knowledge and technology, and money itself. Without these factors, time is meaningless in making money. That is why so many poor and lazy people, although they have a lot of time, cannot succeed in making money.

Therefore, we must emphasise the efficient use of our time on the one hand, and rationally organise our resources on the other, if we are eventually to produce more wealth.

Sample opinion essay 2

In the modern business world, the saying "Time is money" has been widely accepted as one of the most important guidelines leading to success in business. However, the saying is open to challenge.

With regard to business efficiency and productivity, this saying is quite reasonable. If, during the same time period, a company can produce more goods of a high quality than its rivals, the company certainly can gain more profit and even defeat its rivals.

In a newly developed industry, if several companies try to enter the new product market, it is the first entrance which can occupy a larger market share and make more money for itself. In this case, a race to construct plants and introduce production lines between the competitors will take place. In a stock exchange, timely information is indeed vital. The amount of money you can make is directly related to how quickly and efficiently you can grasp the vital information.

With regard to economic development, too, the saying has meaning. A country which has faster economic development than other countries will become stronger and accumulate wealth at a higher speed. Consequently, the national income of the country will increase faster than that of other countries. The people of the country will receive more income and improve their living standards more quickly.

It is worth making the proviso that as far as decision-making is concerned, the truth of the saying could be brought into question. Decision-making needs a thorough investigation and a detailed analysis. Any indiscreet and harsh decision-making is likely to lead to failure. Moreover, economic decision-making needs to take international law into consideration. Economic development and business success is related to strictly following basic economic law. Too fast economic expansion is bound to lead to fast decline because of malstructuring of industries.

So, it should be only when the right decision has been made that the principle "Time is money" should be followed in conducting business practice.

Title 2

"Learning depends not upon the personality or methodology of the teacher, but rather on the student's attitude to his or her own learning."

Do you agree with this statement?

Sample discussion essay

It is true that all students expect their teachers to be not only knowledgeable in their teaching, but also influential in personality. And they attribute the success of their own knowledge acquisition to the performance of their teachers. But there is a different point of view among teachers. It is often put forward in this way: whether or not the students' examination results are good is largely dependent on how hard they work, how much they learn during their spare time, and what kind of study method each student adopts in his or her self-study.

We cannot deny that in all kinds of schools, teachers play an important role in implanting knowledge in students. Only qualified teachers with a suitable personality can work effectively during the process of their teaching. Otherwise, students are not only at a loss about what they are going to learn, but also discouraged in their efforts. They will make very little progress with their studies.

But another consideration should be taken into account. Learning is a process of co-operation. If students do not like to study, how can teachers persuade them to bury themselves in their books? And there is no point even in pushing these students in their learning. And teachers will be affected by this negative attitude on the part of the students. So, in other words, students must also study hard and try to work more effectively.

The conclusion will be reached as follows. We cannot say that either one of these two factions, the teachers or the students, is more important. In fact, the activities of neither students nor teachers can be overemphasised. Good methodology can only work well in tandem with strong student motivation.

Title 3

Do you think that education should be paid for by the government or by the students?

Sample opinion essay 1

Education, as one important contributor to human society, plays an important role in the development and in the improvement of human living conditions. Meanwhile, it is also an expensive commodity, which costs a great deal of money for those who provide it. So, it is interesting to investigate who should be required to pay, the students or the government.

It is said that the students who pay for their studies generally study harder than the students whose education fees are paid by the government. In some cases, this situation may occur. For example, in China, some students who are supported by the government do not study hard. But the reason does not lie in the question of who pays for the education. In fact, it is because education in China does not really function as a proper selection mechanism. In other words, in some areas of China, you can get a good job and earn a lot of money without having received a good education. And if we investigate some other countries which use education as an important selector in employment, it will be found that there is almost no difference in the attitude to study between the students who are supported by the government and those who support themselves.

Meanwhile, it should be pointed out that if education is paid for by the students themselves, many poor children will be excluded from the schools just because they have

no money. In fact, everyone should have equal rights to go to school. And this dream can be realised if the government pays for education.

In conclusion, therefore, while there is something to be said for the viewpoint that tuition fees should be paid by individuals, the state should pay for education, in particular, sponsor those who cannot afford their education.

Sample opinion essay 2

Education is valued as one of the major institutions in almost every society. Meanwhile, it is a very expensive operation, so it is important to consider carefully who should pay for it.

It is argued that education, as a precious commodity, should be paid for by its recipients, the students. This view is, to some extent, justifiable. The recipients can get a lot of benefits after receiving education. For example, the people who have received higher education have more chances to get a good job and can earn more money than those who have not received higher education. In this sense, the recipients should pay for the advantages that they receive.

However, it should not be neglected that, in fact, those who have most to gain from education are the members of society itself, whose administrator, the government, should pay for this education. This is because we are dealing with a very special commodity, which equips those people who receive it to use what they have learnt in the service of society. And compared with what these educated people, the products of the education system, can contribute to society, the rewards which the recipients get are of less significance.

Meanwhile, the law regulates that all people should have equal rights to receive education. If this education is paid for by the recipients themselves, many poor children will be excluded from schools just because their parents do not have the money to pay for it. In fact, this is a policy of discrimination, which offends the law. So, it should indeed be, not the students, but the government, who should pay for the education system.

Title 4

Education is sometimes seen as a selection process. Are examinations good selectors in society?

Sample discussion essay

Society looks to education to provide qualified people it needs. And education, in turn, looks to examinations to measure the level of so-called qualification. It is worth evaluating the success of this operation.

First, the education process should meet the needs of society by teaching everyone some useful skills to perform jobs in society according to what they are suited to. This means, perhaps, that it must first help children to identify what they are good at, and then provide them with opportunities to develop those skills. At the same time it must, of course, give people sufficient knowledge to understand the society they are living in and how to co-ordinate in it. These aims are surely practical enough to achieve or at least to attempt in the classroom. Education can provide opportunities, for example, to learn about the natural world and social world in history, science, geography classes. To keep pace with the changing world, learners have also, of course, be taught about up-to-date developments in the areas of technology and economy. And at the same time, education must give young people chances to meet challenges and to improve their ability to deal with them, both in the academic spheres and in the wider, practical spheres.

But, it is not, perhaps, so easy to ascertain what has been achieved, for the purposes of making the best use of this achievement in society. Examination is not the only method of making such judgements, but it is widely used as the only practical way of making them sufficiently on a large scale. And examinations, the world over, are notoriously flawed as predictors of people's ability to be of use to society. In many cases, they can only tell what some people have memorised, and all those people who have not passed the tests remain an unknown quantity, because it cannot be established what they can do.

So, unless some better form of assessment can be devised which will tell us more about what a person can contribute to society in terms of his abilities and personal qualities, we should not allow the results of examinations to play such a dominating role in the selection of people for particular jobs in society.

Essay Writing Practice

1. Reading the essay titles

Read the titles from (1) to (10) below, and then match them with the right explanations from (a) to (s) on the next pages.

Example:

Charges for entrance to museums are seen by many as a tax on education. What do you think the consequences of such charging would be?

Explanation

The title asks the candidate about the possible consequences of charging for entrance to museums.

Titles

1. Charges for entrance to places like museums are seen by many as a tax on education. How far do you agree with this statement?
2. Some people are very much concerned that the next world war will happen as a result of conflicts over oil. Is this fear justified? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Happiness is the goal for many people. What factors help to make an individual happy?
4. Some people believe that it would be better if there were only one language in the world. Others are of the opinion that if this ever occurred, it would cause more problems than it solved. Discuss the problems that might arise if, in fact, there were only one language in the world and give your own opinion.
5. Some people believe that the influence that television exerts over society is largely detrimental and are calling for it to be more strictly controlled. Should television be more tightly controlled to protect society and, if so, how? Or should it have even fewer restrictions placed on it?
6. Air pollution is most certainly increasing at an alarming rate in many industrialised countries. In what ways can this problem be overcome?
7. Many people point to the number of presidents and other rulers who come to power at an advanced age, or artists and famous people who achieve success late in life as one of the arguments against age discrimination in the workplace. What are the dangers of such discrimination? Do you feel age discrimination should be banned, or do you feel that there are certain jobs that should only be open to younger people?

8. Some people think that euthanasia, mercy killing, as a way to terminate one's suffering, should be legalised as some countries in the world have done so. Others are horrified and argue against its application by pointing to the immoral side of this issue. To what extent do you agree with euthanasia? Do you have any reservations?
9. Money has always been a prime driving force for people, but as we move into the technological age, we seem to be driven more and more by the pursuit of money. Discuss the arguments for and against the idea and give your own views.
10. People generally believe that knowledge is power, but rather, it is the ability to manipulate knowledge, not knowledge itself, which bestows power. To what extent do you agree?

Explanations

- a. The title makes a distinction between the use of knowledge and knowledge. It says that the latter gives an individual power. One has to give his/her opinion about the distinction, i.e. which is more important?
- b. This title asks the candidate to what extent he/she agrees with the idea that charges for places such as museums are a tax on education. One can state his/ her opinion and give his/ her reasons. Or one can state his/ her own opinion generally, then give other people's views, and then demolish them by supporting his/ her own opinion. Or the candidate can give other people's views and then demolish them by giving his/ her own.
- c. The candidate is being asked to describe what contributes to making an individual happy.
- d. This title asks what one thinks about the next world war being fought over oil. One can state his/ her opinion and show the consequences.
- e. Describe the arguments against money being the main driving force for human beings.
- f. This title asks one's opinion about whether we should be afraid of a war resulting from fights over oil supplies and also asks the candidate to give his/ her reasons.
- g. The question is asking the candidate to state his/ her opinion about the positive effects of TV on society.
- h. Describe the risks of age discrimination in the workplace and state whether it should be banned. Also give one's opinion about whether certain jobs should be done by younger people.
- i. The candidate is being asked to describe why people feel sad more often than happy.
- j. The candidate is being asked to state how far he/she agrees or disagrees with euthanasia being legalised to end the suffering of the human beings and also to say whether he/she has any doubts about the subject.
- k. The candidate is being asked to describe the problems involved if there were only one language in the world and what his/ her opinion is on this matter.
- l. The candidate is being asked to state how far he/she agrees or disagrees with euthanasia being practised to end some incurable illness that somebody has suffered.

- m. One is being asked to describe the advantages and problems involved if there were only one language in the world.
- n. Describe the arguments for and against and also give one's opinion about money being the main driving force for human beings.
- o. The question is asking the candidate to state his/her opinion about whether television should be restricted or not. It also asks him/her to describe how to control TV, if he/she agrees.
- p. Describe some measures to reduce air pollution.
- q. Discuss the problems faced by industrialised nations.
- r. The title makes a distinction between knowledge and the use of knowledge. It says that the latter gives an individual power, not knowledge itself. The candidate has to give his/her opinion about this distinction, i.e. which is more important?
- s. Describe the arguments for and against age discrimination in the workplace and state whether it should be banned.

2. Writing practice

Read the following categorised essay titles, and then write essays based on the outlines and vocabulary provided.

2.1. Computers

Computers have been widely used in our daily life. How important is the computer in the development of modern society?

Outline

Introduction

The world has stepped into the computer era. As a symbol of modern society, it has come into wide use and greatly promoted the development of our society.

Body

- a. The computer, as we all know, is a powerful instrument of calculation.
- b. Furthermore, the computer as a perfect communication device has brought human beings much benefit.
- c. It is quite true that the use of computers is not without its problems.

Conclusion

But all in all, the advent of the computer brings many exciting prospects to our society. This precious gift will further benefit the world, and hopefully it will help us to create a newer and nicer world.

2. What is the contribution of the computer in the world of business?

Outline

Introduction

Soon after the innovation of the first computer in 1946, computers have been applied in the field of business. It is not exaggerated to say that most of the computers in the world are used in business nowadays. The changes the computer brings to business are, therefore, tremendous.

Body

- It is the introduction of the computer that releases businessmen from the tiresome, repetitive calculation work.
- Furthermore, the development of computer application in business promotes progress, especially in the area of information processing.
- In addition, the computer application in business brings dramatic changes.

Conclusion

So in this way, the computer brings structural change in business, higher efficiency and more profits.

Suggested phrases

a powerful instrument of calculation
to perform all kinds of computations
to do research

to make a significant contribution
a perfect communication device
the advent of the computer

Additional words and phrases for reference

to have a great impact on
to have a close relationship with
to make good use of
accelerating pace of life
to take part in
to depend excessively on
to be indulged in
to enhance
to surf the Net

all walks of life
market environment
network world
to meet the needs of
information technology
work requirement
all-round information
e-commerce
the Internet

2.2. Legal issues

1. Discuss the relationship between poverty and crime.

Outline

Introduction

Statistics may show a certain relationship between poverty and crime. The positive correlation between unemployment and the crime rate in many countries could be taken as evidence for this. However, if we investigate this question further, we may find this kind of statistical phenomenon both superficial and misleading.

Body

- It is true that, under certain conditions, poverty may induce crime.
- The issue could be even better clarified by making comparisons between nations.

Conclusion

In short, there is no direct relationship between poverty and crime. So long as the system of legal enforcement and prosecution can enforce justice, social conditions are kept in order, and the government's authority is obeyed by the rich and the poor alike, crime will be limited in both rich and poor areas as well as in both rich and poor countries.

2. In your opinion, what attitude should be taken by the legal system for dealing with young offenders?

Outline

Introduction

As one of the major social problems today, juvenile delinquency is a subject of major concern in society. It is important to put some thought into how to deal with this problem.

Body

- Juvenile delinquents differ greatly from adult criminals.
- Juvenile reform schools are suitable places for correcting young people's behaviour.

Conclusion

In fact, it is clear that juvenile offenders should be punished in a special way, and the purpose of this punishment should be to diminish the number of future criminals and set these young people back on the path to good citizenship.

3. How far do you consider that increased spending on police protection is the most effective way to prevent crime?

Outline 1

Introduction

The open policy and economic reform bring Vietnam to a period of rapid economic development. At the same time, seeking money and material satisfaction has become the quest of many people. As a result, the crime rate is increasing surprisingly, so it is reasonable to invest more money to enhance the police power to control crime. However, there is some argument about whether it is the best method.

Body

- a. There is no denying that the police force should be strengthened.
- b. However, spending more money on the police does not mean that we can control crime efficiently.
- c. As we all know, educating people to abide by the law, organising people to monitor and fight against criminals, and enhancing the relationship between the police and the public are three powerful weapons available to minimise the crime rate in our country.

Conclusion

All of these three methods require a lower expenditure, but more effort on the part of all members of society than simple police funding. But a well-equipped police force, if it successfully grasps these three weapons, will be the most powerful force in the world to control crime.

Outline 2

Introduction

Police protection, functioning as a deterrent force, plays a very important role in our society in maintaining social order and ensuring social security. However, it is often arguable whether police protection can be regarded as the most effective way to control crime.

Body

- a. There is no doubt that police protection can largely prevent people from being attacked by criminals, and the police can help to enforce justice by arresting criminals and bringing them to court.
- b. Effective control of crime lies in a thorough understanding of the causes of crime.
- c. In general, there is more crime where the population density is higher.
- d. In addition, people's sense of security is by no means improved proportionally by the increase in spending on police protection.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can only say that crime control is really a complicated matter. Police protection is one of the effective ways to control crime, and it should be strengthened whenever necessary. But eradicating crime from its roots is altogether more fundamental and effective.

Suggested words and phrases

to seek money and material satisfaction	to ensure social security
to enhance the police power/the relationship between the police and the public	to enforce justice
cunning	to bring sb to court
unscrupulous	to stem from the social environment
to necessitate increased spending	to breed corruption
to abide by the law	to give rise to
to minimise the crime rate	to have a profound effect upon crime
to commit a crime	the population density
to win sb's trust	to be induced to commit a crime
a deterrent force/effect	to eradicate crime from its roots

Additional words and phrases for reference

juvenile delinquency	to deter crimes
to observe rules and regulations	to equip ... with ...
social problems/stability	in pursuit of
to live under the poverty line	capital punishment
to diminish the number of	psychological problems
to put the blame on	illiteracy
to exaggerate sth	the mass media
domestic violence	negative influence
law and order	as the saying goes, ...

2.3. Education

To what extent do you think psychological factors play a role in approaching important examinations?

Outline

Introduction

Examinations are designed to be objective measures of our ability or our proficiency in a particular subject. So, we ought to be able to relax and trust that they will do their work fairly. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to be our position.

Body

- a. Everyone knows that examinations are number one anxiety producers.
- b. But those of us who are brave and have a fighting spirit know that we must learn to rise above this problem, know ourselves, and do battle against our nervous "selves".

Conclusion

Thus, it is quite clear that taking examinations is indeed a skill in itself, and being successful has much to do with how we understand and deal with the situation in our own minds. Perhaps we could even say that those who are most successful are those who are able to use the nervous tension to generate excitement and inspiration to perform better than ever before.

2. "Television is for entertainment, not for education."

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Use the outline suggested below to write your own essay.

Outline**Introduction**

The reasons for investing in a television set vary greatly from person to person, but arguably the two most popular purposes are for entertainment and for education. It is interesting to consider which is the more important factor.

Body

- a. We cannot deny that some people buy TV sets mainly because they regard them as an aid to education.
- b. However, we can hardly deny either that most people buy TV sets not because they teach people, but because they can provide a form of relaxation.
- c. It is interesting to mention, too, that arguably even the people who bought the TV set mainly for educational purposes gradually change their minds, though some of them are reluctant to admit this.

Conclusion

So generally speaking, I agree that the main function of TV is for entertainment, although we cannot dispute its educational function. And the programme makers should always be aware that the prime purpose is to divert and amuse even while providing educational information.

3. Some people believe that co-education is an important system for students to learn to live in the real world made up of two different sexes. However, others are of the opinion that segregated school is a better system to solve the existing problems in schools.

What is your opinion?

Use the outline suggested below to write your own essay.

Outline

Introduction

With the growing number of behavioural and other problems in students, some people have put forward a proposal to start more segregated schools to solve these problems. This essay would like to discuss this issue from different aspects.

Body

- Society is composed of men and women, who will play different roles necessary for the progress of human life.
- Many problems arise not because of sex but because of other factors.
- History tells us that segregated schools did no good to young students' psychological and physical development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, many of the existing problems cannot be solved by putting girls and boys into different schools. While co-educational schools may not be the ideal solution to the existing problems, there are more disadvantages than advantages in segregated schools.

Suggested words and phrases

detrimental	to cheat at exams
adolescent rebellion	to do more harm than good
prestigious university	knowledge economy
diploma	quality education
optional course	academic
law-abiding citizen	illiterate
institution of higher learning	future citizen
ambitious	extracurricular activity
compulsory course	to teach with multimedia
segregated school	interactive process
co-educational	educational reform
pre-school education	exam-oriented education
in miniature	to sit an exam

2.4. Social and cultural issues

1. What are the most important factors motivating people to work hard?

Use the outline suggested below to write your own essay.

Outline

Introduction

What could make people devote themselves to their work has been a challenging question in the area of management for many years. The problem is that people are motivated by different factors in different countries, different cultural backgrounds, different situations and even in different periods of time.

Body

- a. Under certain conditions, ideological concepts, from religion or propaganda, can help to persuade people to work hard.
- b. In our materialistic society, this kind of ideological stimulus cannot last long.
- c. And there are plenty of material incentives.

Conclusion

So, because different situations require different incentives to motivate people, it is vital to make a thorough investigation of the particular working situation and environment before making management decisions.

Suggested words and phrases

multiculture/diversified culture	to speed up
ideological concepts	to confine ... to ...
stimulate/stimulus	material possession
economic globalisation	material incentives
cultural heritage	to improve the quality of the people
ethic	both spiritual and material rewards
patriotic propaganda	materialistic society
cultural exchange	human nature
cultural differences	

2. It is cultural diversity that pushes civilisation forwards. Discuss.

Outline

Introduction

Few people in our modern age can fail to be aware that the world presents a variety of cultures. And it is generally agreed that each culture makes its contribution towards civilisation. However, some people hold that cultural differences are likely to lead to conflicts between nations. This causes people to wonder whether cultural diversity is largely a constructive force or a destructive one.

Body

- It seems true that many regional conflicts are caused by cultural differences, but in fact, it is not the case.
- Meanwhile, it should also be pointed out that many nationality groups with different cultural backgrounds live together happily in the same areas, and marriages between nationalities are not uncommon, so long as no one group tries to violate the interests of another.
- As a matter of fact, it is cultural diversity, to a certain extent, that explains the richness of our present-day world.
- It is not difficult to imagine that in the eyes of tourists, costumes of different nationalities are fascinating, and various designs of architecture in different countries are marvellous.

Conclusion

Now we may conclude that whether cultural diversity is destructive or not depends on how people deal with it. What we have a right to express is that there should be no more abuses of cultural diversity as a tool for inflaming conflicts between races, and the world should be made more enjoyable with the contribution of different cultures.

Suggested phrases and sentences

to fail to be aware
cultural differences
to be likely to lead to conflicts
cultural diversity
many regional conflicts
it is not the case
a good case in point
Wars have broken out from time to time
political and economic interests
it should also be pointed out that
to be not uncommon
so long as no one group tries to violate the
interests of another

Just as different colours make our earth
beautiful, different cultural practices
make our world attractive.
in the eyes of tourists
Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say
that without cultural diversity, tourism
would no longer be a flourishing industry,
and even international trade would
be much less prosperous.
There should be no more abuses of
cultural diversity as a tool for inflaming
conflicts between races.

2.5. Health

A healthy person is often described as someone who has a good diet, gets lots of exercise and avoids stress. What do people do to stay healthy in your country?

Outline

Introduction

Over the last few years, people in Vietnam have become more health-conscious and are making greater efforts to stay healthy.

Body

- They do this by eating a balanced diet which includes foods from the five groups (proteins, carbohydrates, grains, dairy produce, and fats) with less emphasis on fats.
- Many Vietnamese people also do exercise to keep fit.
- Effective ways to relieve pressure also help to maintain fitness as more and more people have realised that psychological well-being is vital to a person's health.

Conclusion

Thus, an increased awareness of a healthier lifestyle has led many Vietnamese people to alter their dietary and exercise habits and the type of health care they embrace.

Suggested words and phrases

a balanced diet	competitive and social sporting activities
proteins	effective ways
carbohydrates	to relieve pressure/stress
grains	psychological well-being
dairy produce	vital/crucial/important to
fats	to cause/avoid stress
vegetarian	to communicate with each other
in an effort to	personal relaxation
to stay healthy/keep fit/maintain fitness	alternative forms of
fitness centre	medicinal herbs
a wide variety of activities	massage
sports/entertainment facilities	acupuncture
to ride a bicycle	aromatherapy
to take public transport	

2.6. Science and technology

Advances in science and technology have solved many problems. However, they also created new problems.

Discuss some of the new problems caused by technological advancement and give your opinion on how they should be dealt with.

Outline

Introduction

Nowadays, we have many conveniences in our society which have been brought through science and technology. However, these same advancements in science and technology have caused some very dangerous problems. These problems will not go away easily because people do not want to give up the conveniences of modern lifestyle. The most critical problems which should be dealt with immediately are those of pollution.

Body

- Pollution caused by chemicals is a very serious problem because it causes the loss of ozone layer.
- Perhaps the most serious threat to the planet is the warming of the earth's atmosphere, primarily through carbon dioxide emissions.
- There are other problems caused by pollution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the problems caused by pollution are growing daily. Because people do not want to change their lifestyle, we must invent a way to neutralise the pollutants we are putting into our environment. People need to be educated so that they will stop damaging the planet. Furthermore, governments must take action to prevent individuals and companies from harming their environment.

Suggested words and phrases

advancements in science and technology	to be submerged
the loss of ozone layer	pesticide
to be exposed to dangerous rays	to neutralise the pollutants
aerosol cans emit chemicals	to take action

Additional words and phrases for reference

with the development of science and technology	to be made redundant (to be laid off)
automation	infrastructure construction
e-commerce/online trade	to improve the quality of life
economic globalisation	

cloning technology	pollution
information technology	pollutant
environmentally friendly	the greenhouse effect
digital	euthanasia
to raise the awareness of environmental	interactive
protection	deforestation
endangered species (species facing extinction)	afforestation
working/living/housing conditions	white pollution
animal rights	disposable material
animal conservation	global warming
soil erosion	space technology

2.7. Animal protection

Wild animals have no place in the 21st century. Some people think that preventing the wild animals from dying out is a waste of resources.

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

Outline

Introduction

It is a universally accepted fact that biological diversity has never been so threatened as it is today as a result of the process of human civilisation. However, some people argue that with human beings still suffering from famine and natural disasters, it is not necessary to protect wild animals at the expense of human lives. This essay would like to discuss how far we should protect those animals from dying out.

Body

- a. It is an undeniable fact that every year, large quantities of resources have been used to protect those animals in the wilderness while many human beings in the war-torn countries or disaster-stricken areas are still suffering.
- b. It can also be argued, however, that animal conservation can facilitate the development of human civilisation.
- c. Animals and human beings share one earth, and it is hard to imagine what our world would be like without animals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, while we do spend some resources on animal conservation, it is a worthwhile course and deserves our joint efforts to keep the diversity of animals. In addition,

meat is a necessary part of our diet. We need not resort to wild animals, especially the endangered species, and we may use livestock or alternative forms of protein, which can provide us with sufficient nutritious produce. So, it is safe to say that to protect animals is to protect human beings ourselves. The coexistence of animals and human beings can create perfect harmony and bring about vividness to our planet.

Suggested words and phrases

a universally accepted fact
 biological diversity
 famine
 natural disaster
 animals in the wilderness
 war-torn countries
 disaster-stricken areas
 animal conservation
 a good case in point
 in the process of human evolution
 the domestication of livestock

the natural habitat
 the imbalance of the ecosystem
 propagation
 in the long run
 to pay off for
 the abuse of animals
 to resort to wild animals
 endangered species
 coexistence
 harmony
 vividness

Additional words and phrases for reference

to preserve
 biodiversity
 animals in captivity
 animal exploitation
 domesticated animal
 giant panda

with the accelerating pace of
 civilisation
 animal rights
 wildlife
 pet
 Tibetan antelope

2.8. Management

Some employers reward members of staff for their exceptional contributions to the company by giving them extra money. This practice can act as incentive for some, but it may have a negative effect on others.

To what extent is this style of management effective? Are there better ways of encouraging employees to work hard?

Outline

Introduction

With the fierce competition in the commercial market, many employers have struggled to find ways to stimulate their workers to work hard. One of these ways is giving their employees extra money for their exceptional contributions. But it is arguable whether this kind of stimulus is effective.

Body

- a. First of all, in most cases, giving more money to the contributor in a company is undeniably efficient.
- b. On the other hand, we must be aware of the importance of using a monetary stimulus appropriately.
- c. And, of course, financial reward is not the only method to stimulate productivity.

Conclusion

All in all, to get the best of their employees, employers should find various ways to stimulate their creative energies.

Suggested phrases and sentences

With the fierce competition in the commercial market, many employers have struggled to find ways to stimulate their workers to work hard.

But it is arguable whether this kind of stimulus is effective.

in most cases ... is undeniably efficient
for people who are engaged in a career
we must be aware of the importance of
avoiding biased judgement

to keep a good balance

financial reward

the only method to stimulate productivity

to realise their potential

all in all

Countdown to the Test

Now it is not time for intensive study any longer. It is high time you rehearsed useful statements for a coherent and effective essay.

1. Useful Statements

1.1. The introduction

It is generally/widely believed/accepted that ...

It is quite clear/apparent that ...

It is often said that ...

It is common nowadays for ... to ...

There is a public debate that ...

It goes without saying that ...

There is an ever-increasing/ever-growing number of ...

Recently the phenomenon has aroused wide/much concern ...

Recently the problem/issue has been brought into focus ...

Many nations have been faced with the problem ...

One of the controversial questions is ...

One of the heated issues is ...

... is another serious problem we have to face now.

Nowadays there is a growing tendency ...

As the saying goes, ...

Nothing is more dangerous than ...

Nowhere in history has the issue been more visible than ...

It is time we explored the myth ...

Now people are beginning to realise that ...

Now there is a growing awareness ...

It is interesting/worthwhile to investigate this issue from different aspects.

This essay would like to examine/look into some of the causes and give possible solutions.

I would like to examine/look into this issue in this essay.

This issue has aroused a heated debate/discussion recently.

There has been no shortage of heated discussion on the issue.

1.2. The first supporting sentences

- It is well known that ...
- Everybody knows that ...
- It is true/often the case that ...
- No one can deny (the fact) that ...
- There is no denying that ...
- There is no doubt that ...
- We may mention/point out the indisputable/undeniable fact that ...
- One thing that is of great significance is that ...
- It can be expressed as follows ...
- The chief reason why ... is that ...
- I am of the opinion that ...
- We have every reason to believe that ...
- It should be borne in mind that ...

1.3. The second supporting sentences

- However/On the other hand, ...
- It can also be argued that ...
- It is also well known that ...
- Another special consideration in this case is that ...
- ... should not be neglected.
- Others may find this to be true, but I do not. I believe that ...
- There is some truth in this, but there is much to be said for ...
- In spite of/Despite ..., ...
- But the opposite/reverse is also the case.
- One thing which is equally important is that ...
- But that is only part of the explanation. Perhaps the most significant/remarkable about ... is ...
- Another equally important/essential function/consideration is ... (Equally important/essential is ...)
- ... may be further supported by ...
- In addition to/Apart from this, another aspect/function is ...

1.4. The conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, although ..., ...
In conclusion, therefore, whereas/while ..., ...
From what has been discussed above, we may draw the conclusion that ...
In summary, it is important ...
Obviously, if no reaction is taken, it is likely that ...
Anyone who ignores the warning would ...
We need to take a second look at/give a second thought to ..., otherwise ...
It might be time to take ... into consideration/account.
It is time that we put an end to ...
It is urgent/necessary that effective measures should be taken to ...
Apparently, ... If we are to ..., it is essential ...
The greatest challenge we face today is ...
We may have a long way to go before ...

1.5. Offering causes and effects

There are many reasons for ... For one thing, ... For another, ...
It is no easy job to identify the reason for ...
The solution to this problem lies in/involves many factors.
... mainly arises/stems from the fact that ...
One may attribute ... to ...
... is attributable to ...
... is also responsible for the ...
A number of factors may account for ...
These factors, coupled with ..., contribute to ...
One of the factors that contribute to ... is ...
Among the most important reasons/factors cited by people is ...
... partly because ..., partly because ...
Part of the explanation lies in ...
We may blame ... for ..., but the causes go far deeper than ...
It may give rise to a number of problems.
This will exert/bring about a profound/far-reaching influence/effect/impact on ...
It leaves/entails some serious consequences of ...
The immediate result it produces/brings about is ... And perhaps the most obvious/
direct result of ... is ...

1.6. Giving comparisons and contrasts

Although X enjoys/has an enormous/a considerable advantage of/in ..., it cannot compete/be compared with Y in ...
 The advantages derived from X far outweigh/carry more weight than disadvantages.
 Indeed, serious as the problem may be, it carries/bears little weight as/when compared to/with Y/by comparison with Y.
 Certainly, X takes on special/much/little significance as/when compared to/with Y.
 X may be preferable/superior to Y, but it poses problems for those who ...
 In fact, the advantages derived from X may be offset/counterbalanced by the problems it entails.
 In spite of/Despite the drawbacks, ... has its beneficial effects.
 In spite of the fact that ..., its positive effects are obvious.
 There is no doubt that it has its drawbacks as well as merits.
 However, it is not without defects. The principal one is ...
 Similarly/In the same way/Likewise, ...
 The same (thing) is true of/goes for/applies to Y.
 X and Y have much in common/are alike in many respects.
 X bears much/little resemblance to Y.
 ..., while/whereas/on the other hand/on the contrary/by contrast ...
 While on the one hand ..., on the other hand ...
 X and Y differ/are different in several ways.
 There are some marked differences between X and Y.

1.7. Stating counter-arguments

Although everyone believes that ..., I doubt/wonder whether the argument bears much analysis.
 Although the commonly accepted belief/assumption is that ..., a recent investigation/close examination indicates/demonstrates that ...
 Although it is widely/commonly held/accepted that ..., it is unlikely to be true that ...
 People tend to think/maintain/argue/believe that ...
 They may be right/correct in saying/asserting that ..., but they seem to neglect the fact that ...
 It is perhaps true that ..., but one vital fact/point is being left out of our consideration.
 It is a common belief that ... Unfortunately/But, ...
 It is true that ..., but it does not follow that ...
 Some people propose/suggest/advocate that ... But what these people fail to take into consideration is that ...
 Some people argue that ... But this argument does not work.

Some people argue/claim that ... But more often than not, the opposite seems to be the case. (Maybe it is just the other way around.)
There is probably some truth/a certain plausibility in the arguments/ideas, but they ignore a deeper and more basic/important fact that ...
A closer examination/analysis, however, indicates/suggests that the argument/assumption may not be supported/borne out by the fact.
As opposed to/Contrary to/In contrast to the widely/commonly held/accepted belief/assumption that ..., new facts/studies cannot/fail to justify the opinion.
Some people object to the idea on the grounds that ...
The great problem with this argument/view is that it is ignorant of the bare/basic fact that ...
The obvious/serious flaw/drawback in the view/remark is that it fails to take ... into consideration.
There is absolutely no reason for us to believe/accept that ...

1.8. Analysing or inferring

It seems quite (un)likely/(im)possible that ...
There is every chance/liability/possibility that ...
The chances are that ...
It seems natural/worthy/appropriate/reasonable that/to ...
Fortunately/Unfortunately, it is often/usually/always the case that ...
It should/may well come as no surprise to learn/find that ...
Probably, there is some truth in the idea that ...
It makes no difference that/whether ...

1.9. Providing evidential examples

Take ... as an example/instance.
A good case in point is .../... is a good case in point.
A better example of this can be best provided by ...
The most familiar example of this is ...
... is often/generally cited/quoted as an example of ...
This provides a typical example/instance/illustration of ... to ...
There is much/little/insufficient justification for ...
The idea/view may be fully/hardly supported/justified by facts/statistic evidence.
There is every strong/considerable evidence in favour of ... (to show that ...)
All available evidence points to the fact that ...
Nothing could be more obvious/apparent than the evidence that ...

2. Writing Practice

Write several essays on the titles given below. Some can be written without a limited length of time, but some should be practised under test conditions (in approximately 40 minutes).

2.1. "What" questions

1. Different people hold different views as to whether parents should adopt instruction or punishment as the principal method for raising their children. If punishment is chosen as the main method, in what ways would you recommend that parents carry it out?
2. There is an increasing number of juvenile delinquents. Analyse the possible causes that give rise to this phenomenon and offer some feasible recommendations.
3. What are your opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of "fast food" and "traditional food"?
4. In Western countries, people spend a lot of money on their pets. They buy special food for their cats and dogs, buy them toys and often pay high fees for medical treatment. Some people think this is a waste of money and argue that pets are dirty and dangerous. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a pet? Do people spend too much money on pets? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Many young people choose to continue their education at colleges or universities in English-speaking countries such as Britain, Australia or America. What are the benefits of studying abroad? What are some of the problems that students might experience when studying in a foreign country? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Internet is becoming a dominant element in modern life. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet?
7. Many young people find their first day at high school or college difficult, because they feel very lonely. What do you think are the other difficulties they face on their first day? What can schools and colleges do to make them feel more comfortable?
8. Who should be responsible for children's education? Give your opinion and reasons for it.

2.2. "Agree or disagree" type

1. Giving education to its citizens is the responsibility of the government, so the government should see to it that every child gets free basic education. If this is the case, there is no need for the private schools which aim to make profits to exist. Do you agree or disagree with this point of view?
2. Some people think that the use of computers should be restricted. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Some people suggest that more courses promoting the psychological growth of students should be set up in high schools. They believe that such courses will help the students in their future careers. Do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

4. Some people believe that traditional culture will gradually be lost. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Many people think that the government should spend the large amount of money it is channelling into artistic and cultural projects on basic infrastructure projects instead. Do you agree or disagree?
6. The number of vacation days that an employee receives per year varies from job to job. Do you think people should have the same amount of holiday time regardless of their occupations? Give reasons for your answer.
7. Some businesses now say that no one can smoke cigarettes in any of their offices. Some governments have banned smoking in all public places. This is a good idea, but it also takes away some of our freedom. Do you agree or disagree?
8. Your school demands that you wear a school uniform. Do you think that you should have the right to wear whatever clothes you wish?
9. Nowadays the trend of fashion changes very rapidly, and gradually people become the slaves of it. Some people think that a person should choose comfortable clothes which he/she likes, regardless of fashion. Do you agree? Write an essay to state your opinion.
10. Some people regard traditional clothes as out of date and no longer suitable. But others advocate that we should encourage more and more people to wear traditional clothes. Write an essay to state your opinion and reasons.
11. Nowadays there are more and more advertisements. Some people think that they exercise a negative influence on youth, and therefore should be restricted. Do you agree or disagree?

2.3. "Discuss" type

1. In many countries, children participate in some paid work in their spare time. Some people think that this is wrong, but others believe that such work will extend children's knowledge and increase their sense of responsibility. What is your opinion?
2. Many people believe that zoos should be closed because it is cruel to keep animals locked up. Moreover, zoos do not have a positive role to play in society. Discuss.
3. Nowadays the age at which children start to attend school is becoming younger and younger. Some children go to school at the age of four. Some people think it is good for children to attend school earlier while others disagree. Discuss.
4. Nowadays surveillance cameras are widely used in supermarkets. Some people think that this is a violation of human rights, while others insist that they are for the benefit of the supermarkets. Discuss.
5. More than four decades ago, man for the first time set foot on the moon. Some people think that space research is a waste of energy and money. Discuss.

6. Many people think work nowadays is more stressful and less leisurely than in the past. What is your opinion?
7. The lottery does more good than harm. Discuss.
8. Some people think that genetically modified plants may be harmful and should be banned. What do you think?
9. At present, many people think that one language should be used as the common language, but others think that by doing so, the cultures of different nations will be lost. What do you think of these two opinions?
10. Sports events such as the World Cup may help reduce the tension between and bias towards countries. Discuss.
11. Some people believe that when a country begins to develop its science and technology, the traditional technology and methods are bound to die out. Therefore, the maintenance of the traditional technology and methods is futile. What do you think?
12. Today PC games are very popular among teenagers. But some parents consider that these games are not instructive and that teenagers should be kept away from them. What do you think?
13. Some people argue that students at middle school should learn more general subjects to obtain a wide range of knowledge. But other people argue that students should learn special subjects such as arts and sciences when they are at senior high school. What do you think?
14. Tourism is a multibillion-dollar industry that supports economic development. However, some people think that it causes too much damage to the local environment and culture. What do you think?

2.4. "To what extent" type

1. Nowadays many people think that sport stars are attracting too much public attention and earning too much money. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?
2. A great number of people think that those with university education should get higher pay than those without, for they believe that the former have sweated and sacrificed more. To what extent do you agree with this point of view?
3. The idea of going overseas for university study is an exciting prospect for many people. But while it may offer some advantages, it is probably better to stay home because of the difficulties a student inevitably encounters living and studying in a different culture. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.
4. The mass media, including television, radio and newspapers, have great influence in shaping people's ideas. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

5. Some people believe that the spread of TV has made family members less close, because it has taken the place of the visits and communication among relatives. To what degree do you support this opinion?
6. Poor countries have realised the importance of health care, education and trade for their development. Many people think that rich countries should give them more support. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this idea?

Sample Tests

Practice Writing Test 1 (General Training Module)

Task 1

You attended a 7-day course. You are asked to write a letter to the course organiser. Describe details about the course and suggest how to improve it.

Task 2

Television is for entertainment, not for education. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Practice Writing Test 2 (General Training Module)

Task 1

You hired a car from a company for your holiday. When you were driving during the holiday, there was a small accident. Write a report to the company to explain it. Your letter should include:

- when and where you hired it,
- a description of how the accident happened, and
- what kind of action you took after the accident.

Task 2

What are the most important factors motivating people to work hard?

Practice Writing Test 3

(Academic Module)

Task 1

The following table gives information about leisure activities in a certain country.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information in the table below.

You should write at least 150 words.

Leisure activities by different groups in 2008

Leisure activities	Professional and managerial	Clerical	Skilled	Semi-skilled and unskilled
Watching TV	95	99	98	95
Gardening	70	62	66	50
Playing with children	59	63	66	59
Home decorations/repairs	52	55	56	45
Car cleaning	55	44	51	35
Playing an instrument	10	8	5	4
Swimming	34	25	20	8
Fishing	9	3	9	5
Table tennis	10	10	4	2
Going for a drive	62	51	62	49
Going to a pub	51	42	54	58
Going for a walk	56	63	41	36
Going out for a meal	48	31	25	23
Meeting friends	22	20	12	7

Note: 3 different types of activities; home-based activities, sporting activities, and other leisure activities.

Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

You have to write about the following topic.

The world is experiencing a dramatic increase in population. This is causing problems not only for the poor, underdeveloped countries, but also for industrialised developed countries.

What are the problems that overpopulation causes? Give solutions.

You should use examples from your own experience to support your answer.

You should write at least 250 words.

Practice Writing Test 4

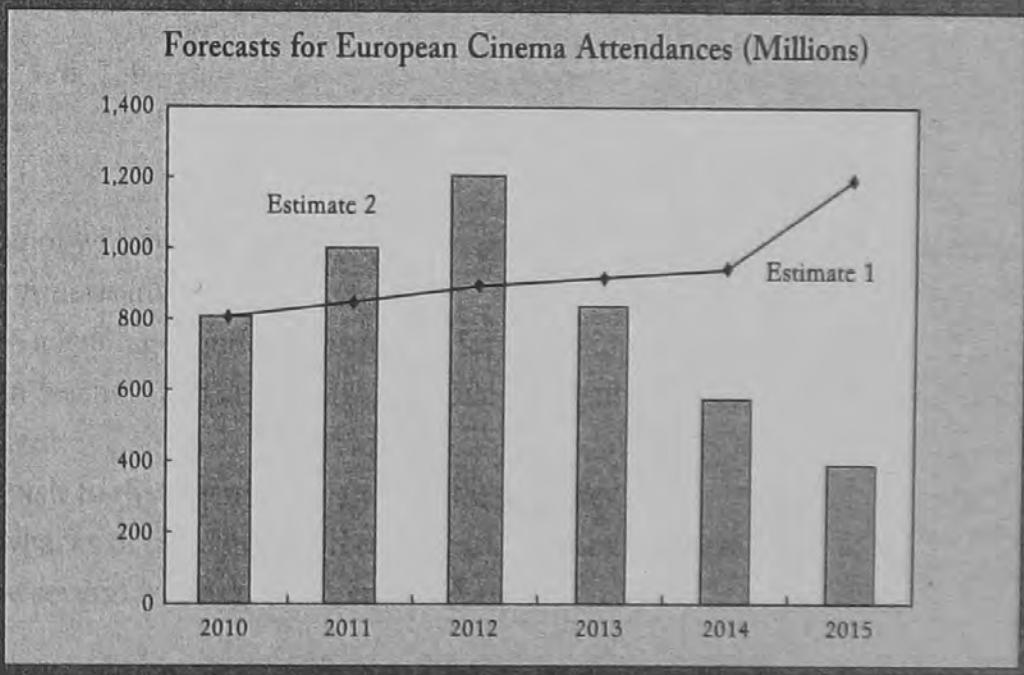
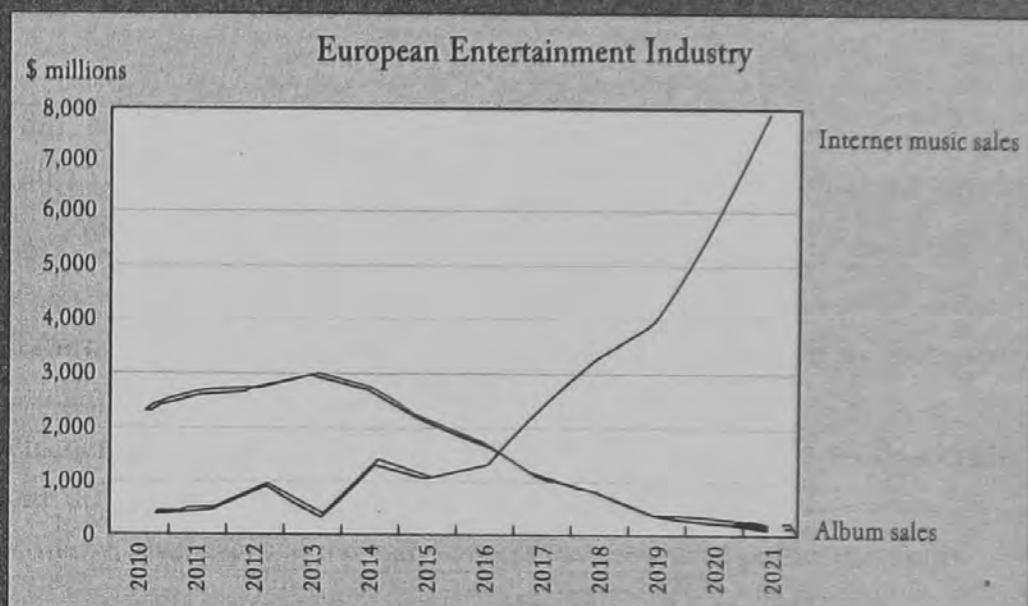
(Academic Module)

Task 1

The two charts below give information about the changing trends in leisure in Europe for certain industries.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information in the charts below.

You should write at least 150 words.



Task 2

To what extent do you think that economic development can benefit from rapid urbanisation?

Answer Key

Day 2

Mini-Writing Practice

1.

1. First (of all); Next; Then; Finally
2. First (of all); Second; Instead; Third; Furthermore; In addition; Consequently; In contrast

2.

1. Some Western holidays have a great influence on the young people in Vietnam.
2. College students take part-time jobs for different reasons.
3. The government is taking several effective measures to help the laid-off workers.
4. People take different attitudes towards censorship on the Internet.
5. There are many advantages and disadvantages for the use of public transport.

3.

- 2, 4, 5, 1, 6, 3, 8, 7, 9

4.

1. The issue of whether to inform a patient of cancer points up an important cultural difference between Americans and Japanese.
2. There are advantages and disadvantages for living in cities.
3. American teachers and administrators have different opinions over the issue of corporal punishment.
4. My first visit to the cinema was a very unhappy one.
5. The drawbacks of travelling with companions can be easily seen.
6. There are several advantages for studying alone.

5.

Paragraph 1: c, b, d, a

Paragraph 2: b, c, a, f, d, e

Paragraph 3: b, c, a, d

7.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Description | 2. Definition (expanded by using analogy, generalisation and example) |
| 3. Definition | 4. Compare and contrast |
| 6. Classification | 5. Space order |
| | 7. Argument |
| | 8. Cause and effect |

8.

1. While stress may occur as a result of busy life, it can be properly controlled by taking some effective measures.
2. Therefore, it is apparent that while we are enjoying the advantages that television has brought to us, the negative effects should not be neglected.

Day 6

Report Writing Practice

1.

1.

The average number of people attending the museum yearly stood at just under 700,000 at the beginning of 1995. Over the subsequent years, attendance saw a modest rise, followed by a period of volatility. During 1999, the museum suffered a steep decline in the number of visitors as a result of the introduction of voluntary charges. The recovery, fitful at first, lasted through to the beginning of 2003, by which time the number of people attending had climbed to a new peak of 750,000. In the first half of 2003, the attendance at the museum went into free fall, nose-diving to approximately 300,000 visitors after charging was introduced. Over the next two years and a half, the number of people coming to the museum fluctuated wildly; the trend, however, was obviously upwards.

2.

The graph shows the number of West Indians and Indians and Pakistanis immigrating to the UK from 1960 to 1990.

As can be seen, immigration of both West Indians and Indians and Pakistanis increased rapidly over a twenty-year period. After 1980, the number of West Indian immigrants decreased rapidly whereas the number of Indian and Pakistani immigrants continued to increase.

From 1960 to 1980, the number of Indian and Pakistani immigrants increased slightly to just under 10,000 people. Then, after an initial drop, there was a rapid increase to

over approximately 25,000 immigrants. Between 1985 and 1990, the number of immigrants fluctuated with an overall upward trend.

Similarly, the number of West Indian immigrants increased more moderately between 1960 and 1976 to roughly 18,000 people, and decreased to 10,000 in 1978. Then there was a very sharp increase over a two-year period to a peak of 35,000 people. From 1982 to 1990, the number of immigrants dropped dramatically with some fluctuations to just over 5,000 people.

In conclusion, it is possible to speculate that immigration from India and Pakistan may have continued to increase up to the present day, whereas West Indian immigration may have continued to decrease.

3.

The table shows the differences in the perceptions of a number of issues about stress of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and their spouses or partners.

As can be seen from the table, the three main sources of stress as far as CEOs were concerned were time pressures and deadlines (52%), demands of work on private life (48%), and demands of work on relationship with family (45%). The four main sources of stress nominated by their spouses or partners included work overload (62%), long working hours (62%), time pressures and deadlines (60%), and work-related travel (57%). Time pressures and deadlines are tangible factors that both groups were aware of. However, spouses or partners tended to be more specific in identifying work overload, long working hours, and work-related travel as problems, compared to CEOs who focused on more general "demands of work".

The biggest difference is in the numbers nominating long working hours as a source of stress: 62% of spouses or partners, compared to only 24% of CEOs.

4.

(m) As can be seen from the chart, in the first two months after the opening of the new shopping complex, the number of shoppers reached nearly 50,000, (r) doubling the estimate for the period/(o) which is twice as much as the estimated figures. During March, however, the number of shoppers dropped slightly, (s) before picking up/(k) before they went up during April and May, once again (f) outstripping projections by a wide margin/ (z) doing better than expected. The summer months (t) proved/(v) were not only erratic

with the shopper numbers at the end of August (i) being no higher than (c) those/(p) they were at the end of February, and also falling well below the numbers (l) of forecast for the period/(n) which were predicted for the period.

During September and October, the number of actual shoppers (h) declined further/(x) went down, but (j) November saw a noticeable turnaround/(a) in November the number of shoppers increased again with the volume of shoppers rising dramatically, (y) during which time they did better than the figures predicted/(g) outperforming the figures predicted. December saw this spectacular rise continue with the number of people shopping at the centre for the year (u) hitting a peak of nearly 160,000 visitors per month.

The sales figures (q) reveal a marked shift/(w) show that there was a change in spending patterns at the complex over the year with greater expenditure on toys, computers and other items at the expense of food and clothes. For example, toy sales soared from 5% to over 30%, while at the same time clothes sales (d) experienced a hefty fall/ (b) fell by a large amount.

5.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. A comparison | 4. the latter | 7. whereas |
| 2. fall into three categories | 5. By contrast | 8. however |
| 3. On the one hand | 6. by varying degrees | 9. In the third category come |

2.

The table uses four broad economic indicators to show the standard of living in five selected countries in 2007.

As can be seen, Country E – obviously an industrialised country – had the highest GNP and daily calorie intake, the longest life expectancy and the lowest infant mortality rate. The other developing countries had a considerably lower quality of life.

Countries C, D and B were similar in their range of indicators, with Country C having the highest quality of life amongst the three. However, Country C's infant mortality rate was slightly higher than Country D's, at 97 deaths per 1,000 compared to 87 in Country D.

Country A had by far the lowest quality of life in all the four indicators. Its GNP was one hundred times smaller than Country E's. Its calorie intake and life expectancy were about half those in Country E, and its infant mortality rate was ten times greater.

In conclusion, it can be seen from the economic indicators that the four developing countries have to develop a lot more before reaching the same level of quality of life as Country E.

3.

1.

The bar chart shows how many male and female first-year university students read a range of publications.

Whereas the female students appear to read more quality newspapers than their male counterparts by a margin of roughly 15%, male first-year students read more tabloids. When it comes to non-fiction, the same pattern is repeated; only this time the difference is more pronounced with approximately 65% of female students reading non-fiction as opposed to 30% of the males.

The pattern is reversed for comics. While over 65% of males read comics, only 25% of female students claim to do so. Where fiction is concerned, however, male students are ahead of females by a narrow margin, roughly 78% for the former and 73% for the latter. As regards magazines, both sexes are almost equal.

From the pie charts, a number of differences between the two groups can be seen. Although female students work more (20% of their time rather than 15% for males), they devote 15% more of their time to studying. Females also spend less time socialising and much less than men on sport, allowing them more time for studying.

2.

The two pie charts show the proportion of males and females arrested, and the bar chart shows the reasons why they were arrested.

In general, females were arrested much less frequently than males and were arrested mostly for public drinking and assault, whereas males were more likely to be arrested for a range of other reasons.

The pie charts show that about one third of the male population was arrested in 2008, while only 9% of the female population was arrested. The highest percentage of arrests of men, which was approximately 31%, was for public drinking. However, this percentage was less than the percentage of females arrested for the same reason, which was approximately 37%. Males were more commonly arrested for drink-driving, which constituted 26%, breach of order (about 18%), other reasons (approximately 18%), and theft (about 16%). Other offences in which females were more commonly arrested than males were for assault, where it constituted 19% of the arrests. 4% of men and about 6% of women refused to say why they were arrested.

It appears that women are either more law-abiding than men or that law enforcement officers are more reluctant to arrest women.

3.

The table shows the difference in salaries for males and females for several jobs at an organisation in a certain country.

As can be seen, men's salaries exceed those of women in all positions except for one job type. There are also many more males employed at this organisation than females.

It is clear that females at this organisation earn significantly less money than males with differences in salaries ranging between \$343 and \$9,121. For example, a male investigator with a PhD earns \$67,131 whereas a female in the same position earns \$61,164. It is only in the position of Lab Chief MD where salaries for females are higher (by \$10,511). However, it must be noted that there are only seven women in this position.

There are 483 males with MD qualifications compared to just 71 females. Similarly, there are 473 male employees who have a PhD whereas there are only 118 women. The biggest difference in numbers for any one position is in the position of investigator with a PhD. There are 251 males and only 85 females.

4.

Diagrams 1 and 2 illustrate the changes that took place at the Rainbow Cottage between 1986 and 2008.

The garden was considerably enlarged by the purchase of two plots of land: one adjacent to the southern border, which was bought in 1989, and which was almost equal in size to the original garden; and the other plot on the eastern border, which was bought in 1991, and which effectively doubled the area of the garden.

Between 1992 and 1994, an extension was built onto the southern side of the cottage and in the following year, an orchard was planted in the northern part of the land acquired in 1991. The year 1996 saw two additions to the property: a pond in the original garden and a vegetable garden on the other side of the garden from the orchard. A line of trees was planted along the southern edge of the garden and another above the orchard in 2002. Between 2006 and 2007, an open-air swimming pool was built in the land purchased in 1989.

In conclusion, in the two decades, the Rainbow Cottage has seen a great increase in size and new development.

5.

2.

The diagram demonstrates the cycle of nitrogen, showing how nitrogen is provided to living organisms and then returned to the atmosphere.

According to the diagram, most of the nitrogen exists as a gas in the atmosphere. To start with, the lightning contributes some nitrogen in the form of nitrates to the soil. The nitrates in the soil are absorbed by plant roots. When animals eat the plants, the nitrogen in the plants is transformed to protein. When plants or animals die, proteins are decomposed by bacteria into amino acids which are in turn broken down into ammonium, then into nitrates. Meanwhile, gaseous nitrogen is fixed by plants, followed by a transforming process into ammonium, with the work of bacteria.

The ammonium from decomposition changes in a cycle, from nitrites, then nitrates, and to protein. The nitrites are converted into nitrates by soil bacteria. Some of the nitrates are degraded into nitrogen gas in the denitrification process. The gaseous nitrogen is returned to the atmosphere.

Day 13

Essay Writing Practice

1.

1. b 2. f 3. c 4. k 5. o 6. p 7. h 8. j 9. n 10. r

2.

2.1. Computers

1. Computers have been widely used in our daily life. How important is the computer in the development of modern society?

The world has stepped into the computer era. As a symbol of modern society, it has come into wide use and greatly promoted the development of our society.

The computer, as we all know, is a powerful instrument of calculation. It can perform almost all kinds of computations. By means of a computer, scientists can do special research which could never be done in the past. And engineers can deal with complex problems in engineering within a short time, which perhaps took years to solve without the computer. In addition, from space travel to bacteria research, from central government planning to the modern family affairs, the computer can make a significant contribution.

Furthermore, the computer as a perfect communication device has brought human beings much benefit. In Vietnam, you can get a message or information about financial matters from Britain, or from any other corner of the world.

It is quite true that the use of computers is not without its problems. All types of computers can be manipulated. In this way, criminal activities are made possible, such as withdrawing someone else's money from the bank.

But all in all, the advent of the computer brings many exciting prospects to our society. This precious gift will further benefit the world, and hopefully it will help us to create a newer and nicer world.

What is the contribution of the computer in the world of business?

Soon after the innovation of the first computer in 1946, computers have been applied in the field of business. It is not exaggerated to say that most of the computers in the world are used in business nowadays. The changes the computer brings to business are, therefore, tremendous.

It is the introduction of the computer that releases businessmen from the tiresome, repetitive calculation work. The first application programme of the computer in the business area was to help the work of the accountant, to calculate the production costs and to distribute employees' salaries. It is so efficient that most of the calculation work of the accountant is done by the computer nowadays.

Furthermore, the development of computer application in business promotes progress, especially in the area of information processing. For example, with the help of the computer, we are able to build a uniform information system in a large corporation. Our organisation of information collection in the firm is quite different from what we had in the past. It is more efficient, quicker, and less prone to error. It is this advanced form of information system that brings the business in the world into a new era.

In addition, the computer application in business brings dramatic changes. For example, the introduction of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) exerts a great influence on world trade. The traditional form of paper trading is out of date. Using EDI, the speed of trade will be increased to ten times that of the old paper trading. EDI has become a symbol of evaluating a country's

business level. In order to use EDI, the employees in the business should be retrained, and the method we used to use in business should also be changed.

So in this way, the computer brings structural change in business, higher efficiency and more profits.

2.2. Legal issues

1. Discuss the relationship between poverty and crime.

Statistics may show a certain relationship between poverty and crime. The positive correlation between unemployment and the crime rate in many countries could be taken as evidence for this. However, if we investigate this question further, we may find this kind of statistical phenomenon both superficial and misleading.

It is true that, under certain conditions, poverty may induce crime. When some poor people become desperate, they may steal or rob in order to survive or to sustain their families. But this cannot lead to the conclusion that poverty is an inevitable cause of crime. First, it is preposterous to say that a person is more likely to be a criminal just because he is poor. Secondly, "white-collar crime" is the exclusive property of the affluent. And thirdly, poverty is the result of economic inferiority, while crime is the result of demoralisation and a lack of sense of legal enforcement. These are indeed different sources, and both the rich and the poor could be involved in crime. In anarchical circumstances, both the rich and the poor may challenge the authority of the government.

The issue could be even better clarified by making comparisons between nations. The people of developed countries on average enjoy a much higher living standard than the people of developing countries. However, this disparity in richness or wealth between the rich and poor countries in no way represents the disparity in the rate of crime between the two types of countries. For example, the USA is the number one developed country, and it has a number one crime rate. Yet Singapore, a developing country, has an extremely low crime rate.

In short, there is no direct relationship between poverty and crime. So long as the system of legal enforcement and prosecution can enforce justice, social conditions are kept in order, and the government's authority is obeyed by the rich and the poor alike, crime will be limited in both rich and poor areas as well as in both rich and poor countries.

2. In your opinion, what attitude should be taken by the legal system for dealing with young offenders?

As one of the major social problems today, juvenile delinquency is a subject of major concern in society. It is important to put some thought into how to deal with this problem.

Juvenile delinquents differ greatly from adult criminals. Young offenders are mentally immature. They may be unaware of the consequences of what they are about to do or even what they have done. They may commit a crime unwittingly or on impulse. Hence, they should not be punished in the same way as adult criminals. Many juvenile delinquents are indeed the victims of demoralised social conditions. They should not be severely punished by the legal system. Any unwise decision on the part of the law may blight the whole lives of these young people. And there is also the consideration that young criminals should not be imprisoned with older, more hardened criminals because of the possibility of harmful influence.

Juvenile reform schools are suitable places for correcting young people's behaviour. However, this kind of institution should be well organised and well managed. All activities should be kept under strict control, and such institutions should be regarded as a necessary adjunct to the legal system. At the same time, juvenile offenders should be treated differently according to their ages, and older children punished with greater severity because they are more aware of the implications of what they have done.

In fact, it is clear that juvenile offenders should be punished in a special way, and the purpose of this punishment should be to diminish the number of future criminals and set these young people back on the path to good citizenship.

How far do you consider that increased spending on police protection is the most effective way to prevent crime?

Version 1

The open policy and economic reform bring Vietnam to a period of rapid economic development. At the same time, seeking money and material satisfaction has become the quest of many people. As a result, the crime rate is increasing surprisingly, so it is reasonable to invest more money to enhance the police power to control crime. However, there is some argument about whether it is the best method.

There is no denying that the police force should be strengthened. Criminals nowadays always make full use of modern technology, and they are cunning and unscrupulous. If our police are not equipped with advanced technology, there will be more unnecessary sacrifice and less opportunity to catch the criminals. So, it is not justifiable to ignore this need. In addition, with the open-door policy of our country, the floating population has experienced a sharp increase, which adds to the difficulty of police control. More policemen are needed, and all of these things necessitate increased spending.

However, spending more money on the police does not mean that we can control crime efficiently. Western countries, for instance, spend far more money on their police forces than we do, but they still maintain a high crime rate. And we must be aware that our country is still

a developing country, and we cannot afford to spend money on our police force in the same way that developed countries have done. So, simply increasing spending in this area is not the most effective way to control crime. What other solutions are there?

As we all know, educating people to abide by the law, organising people to monitor and fight against criminals, and enhancing the relationship between the police and the public are three powerful weapons available to minimise the crime rate in our country. It was the creative use of these three weapons that made our country one of those with the lowest crime rate between the 1950s and the 1970s. Obviously, nowadays they are still powerful means for us to control crime. For example, many criminals commit a crime due to the lack of knowledge of the law, so educating people can greatly reduce the possibility of such crimes being committed, and by knowing more about the law, many victims can use the weapon of the law to protect themselves. Organising people to monitor and fight against criminals is also a very efficient way. Committees of residents in urban areas, for instance, play a very important role in monitoring suspects. No criminals can escape the eyes of the old ladies in the committees. In addition, if every member of society fights bravely against criminals, there will be less opportunity for criminals to commit a crime, and a better social environment can be created. And finally, the relationship between the police and the public is also important. That requires the police to serve the public whole-heartedly to win their trust. The public, in turn, will give the police more support, and the efficiency of the police will be enhanced.

All of these three methods require a lower expenditure, but more effort on the part of all members of society than simple police funding. But a well-equipped police force, if it successfully grasps these three weapons, will be the most powerful force in the world to control crime.

Version 2

Police protection, functioning as a deterrent force, plays a very important role in our society in maintaining social order and ensuring social security. However, it is often arguable whether police protection can be regarded as the most effective way to control crime.

There is no doubt that police protection can largely prevent people from being attacked by criminals, and the police can help to enforce justice by arresting criminals and bringing them to court. But it is, more often than not, the case that people are only able to receive police protection after becoming victims of crime. In such a case, police protection can only have a kind of weak deterrent effect.

Effective control of crime lies in a thorough understanding of the causes of crime. The objective causes of crime mainly stem from the social environment. It is often said that a degenerate social environment breeds corruption, and there is no shortage of evidence to show how abnormal social conditions can give rise to an undue rate of crime. Abnormal economic conditions also have a profound effect upon crime. Serious recessions, strikes and unemployment

result in a range of crime. Urbanisation and other conditions concerning the density and distribution of population, too, have a strong influence on the crime rate.

In general, there is more crime where the population density is higher. As people migrate from the countryside into the fast expanding cities, shortage of shelter and job opportunities often give rise to crime. As popular educators, pornographic publications and motion pictures can be considered as stimuli to crime as well. Unless we solve these social problems, which breed crime, any increased spending on police protection will be in vain.

In addition, people's sense of security is by no means improved proportionally by the increase in spending on police protection. Some countries spend huge sums of money on police protection, but the rate of crime is still extremely high, while others do not spend a great deal on the society we live in, yet they are such that no one could be induced to commit a crime, any spending on police protection would be completely unnecessary.

In conclusion, we can only say that crime control is really a complicated matter. Police protection is one of the effective ways to control crime, and it should be strengthened whenever necessary. But eradicating crime from its roots is altogether more fundamental and effective.

2.3. Education

1. To what extent do you think psychological factors play a role in approaching important examinations?

Examinations are designed to be objective measures of our ability or our proficiency in a particular subject. So, we ought to be able to relax and trust that they will do their work fairly. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to be our position.

Everyone knows that examinations are number one anxiety producers. In many cases, whether we pass or fail determines what happens to us next. The exam may be the key to promotion, or the door of some institutions of higher learning, or it may be the passport to going abroad. We fear to lose that chance. We fear losing face among our colleagues. And what is worse, this very anxiety generates more anxiety, in that we fear that our nerves may let us down – so in this way, we may actually bring failure on ourselves.

But those of us who are brave and have a fighting spirit know that we must learn to rise above this problem, know ourselves, and do battle against our nervous "selves". First, we have to recognise "panic", take a deep breath, and calm down. We have to know when to slow down and give ourselves time to understand what we are asked to do. We have to look after ourselves so that we remain as fresh as possible in every way, mentally and physically. And we have to isolate ourselves from the negative effects of "other people". This is a time when the individual should concentrate on himself.

Thus, it is quite clear that taking examinations is indeed a skill in itself, and being successful has much to do with how we understand and deal with the situation in our own minds. Perhaps

we could even say that those who are most successful are those who are able to use the nervous tension to generate excitement and inspiration to perform better than ever before.

2.4. Social and cultural issues

2. It is cultural diversity that pushes civilisation forwards. Discuss.

Few people in our modern age can fail to be aware that the world presents a variety of cultures. And it is generally agreed that each culture makes its contribution towards civilisation. However, some people hold that cultural differences are likely to lead to conflicts between nations. This causes people to wonder whether cultural diversity is largely a constructive force or a destructive one.

It seems true that many regional conflicts are caused by cultural differences, but in fact, it is not the case. The Middle East is a good case in point. Wars have broken out from time to time between Israel and Arab countries. This is not because of the cultural differences but because of their political and economic interests. The former idea is used as war propaganda to inflame the conflagration by both sides. If there were no territorial disputes and economic conflicts, they would arguably live peacefully in spite of the cultural differences, just as they did in history for many centuries.

Meanwhile, it should also be pointed out that many nationality groups with different cultural backgrounds live together happily in the same areas, and marriages between nationalities are not uncommon, so long as no one group tries to violate the interests of another. Therefore, it is unfair to regard cultural diversity itself as a destructive force.

As a matter of fact, it is cultural diversity, to a certain extent, that explains the richness of our present-day world. Just as different colours make our earth beautiful, different cultural practices make our world attractive. Similarly, if there were only one game, or one kind of costume for all people, life would be dull indeed.

It is not difficult to imagine that in the eyes of tourists, costumes of different nationalities are fascinating, and various designs of architecture in different countries are marvellous. And there is much pleasure from sampling the delights of foreign cuisine in different restaurants. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that without cultural diversity, tourism would no longer be a flourishing industry, and even international trade would be much less prosperous.

Now we may conclude that whether cultural diversity is destructive or not depends on how people deal with it. What we have a right to express is that there should be no more abuses of cultural diversity as a tool for inflaming conflicts between races, and the world should be made more enjoyable with the contribution of different cultures.

2.5. Health

A healthy person is often described as someone who has a good diet, gets lots of exercise, and has low stress. What do people do to stay healthy in your country?

Over the last few years, people in Vietnam have become more health-conscious and are making greater efforts to stay healthy.

They do this by eating a balanced diet which includes foods from the five groups (proteins, carbohydrates, grains, dairy produce, and fats) with less emphasis on fats, which used to be the favourite food of many Vietnamese people in the difficult times. In fact, many more Vietnamese people are becoming vegetarians in an effort to become healthier.

Many Vietnamese people also do exercise to keep fit. Fitness centres are very popular and offer a wide variety of activities and facilities while parks and open spaces have become the appealing places for senior people to do their morning or evening exercises such as dancing or jogging. A number of people also get exercise by walking or riding bicycles instead of driving or taking public transport. Competitive and social sporting activities are also popular forms of exercise.

Effective ways to relieve pressure also help to maintain fitness as more and more people have realised that psychological well-being is vital to a person's health. Everyday living can cause stress in people's lives, which is bad for their health. For this reason, people who want to stay healthy try to reduce stressful situations both at work and at home. To avoid stress in the workplace, some businesses offer opportunities for their employees to communicate with each other. Making a little time during the day for some personal relaxation provides an opportunity to relieve stress and thereby stay healthier. Many Vietnamese people are also in favour of using alternative forms of medicinal herbs and healing such as massage, acupuncture, and aromatherapy.

Thus, an increased awareness of a healthier lifestyle has led many Vietnamese people to alter their dietary and exercise habits and the type of health care they embrace.

2.6. Science and technology

Advances in science and technology have solved many problems. However, they also created new problems.

Please discuss some of the new problems caused by technological advancement and give your opinion on how they should be dealt with.

Nowadays, we have many conveniences in our society which have been brought through science and technology. However, these same advancements in science and technology have caused some very dangerous problems. These problems will not go away easily because people do not want to give up the conveniences of modern lifestyle. The most critical problems which should be dealt with immediately are those of pollution.

Pollution caused by chemicals is a very serious problem because it causes the loss of ozone layer. Without ozone, not only human beings but also all plant and animal life are exposed to dangerous rays from sun. Aerosol cans emit chemicals which break down the ozone layer. Refrigeration and air conditioning systems and cars also have dangerous emissions.

Perhaps the most serious threat to the planet is the warming of the earth's atmosphere, primarily through carbon dioxide emissions. Many scientists think that the warming could be sufficient to melt the polar ice caps, thus raising the sea level. This would mean that many parts of the world would be submerged below the sea level.

There are other problems caused by pollution. Factories which make our modern conveniences emit poisonous gases into the air we breathe. The chemicals we use for cleaning and wastes from factories go into our water systems and pollute the water we drink and the fish we eat. They also kill much of the wildlife we depend on for food. Some of the pesticides we have sprayed on our crops have been found to be dangerous. This kind of pollution may stay in the ground for a very long period of time.

In conclusion, the problems caused by pollution are growing daily. Because people do not want to change their lifestyle, we must invent a way to neutralise the pollutants we are putting into our environment. People need to be educated so that they will stop damaging the planet. Furthermore, governments must take action to prevent individuals and companies from harming their environment.

2.7. Animal protection

Wild animals have no place in the 21st century. Some people think that preventing those wild animals from dying out is a waste of resources.

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

It is a universally accepted fact that biological diversity has never been so threatened as it is today as a result of the process of human civilisation. However, some people argue that with human beings still suffering from famine and natural disasters, it is not necessary to protect wild animals at the expense of human lives. This essay would like to discuss how far we should protect those animals from dying out.

It is an undeniable fact that every year, large quantities of resources have been used to protect those animals in the wilderness while many human beings in the war-torn countries or disaster-stricken areas are still suffering. For example, the African countries are the places where the extreme weather conditions have made it impossible for human beings to expect an abundant harvest and a large number of people face the shortage of food, shelter and clothing. In spite of the international aid, the local people cannot feed themselves better than the wild animals which have attracted sufficient attention and obtained much investment in their protection.

It can also be argued, however, that animal conservation can facilitate the development of human civilisation. In the long process of human civilisation, animals have contributed considerably to the protection and development of human beings. A good case in point is the dog, which has developed together in the process of human evolution. Now with the domestication of livestock, human beings can have a certain source of protein. Furthermore, it is animals that we use to experiment with before a new drug is put to use on human beings to fight against countless plagues and diseases.

Animals and human beings share one earth, and it is hard to imagine what our world would be like without animals. As the pace of civilisation accelerates, human beings have destroyed the natural habitats of some wild animals, leading to the distortion of the food chain, thus the imbalance of the ecosystem. The extinction of the hawk, a rat-eating bird seen in many regions can be taken as an example. Its disappearance would certainly mean the propagation of rats, which, in turn, will destroy the prairies and threaten other animals like gazelles, zebras and others that live on grass and green lands. In the long run, it is human beings that will pay off for the abuse of animals.

In conclusion, therefore, while we do spend some resources on animal conservation, it is a worthwhile course and deserves our joint efforts to keep the diversity of animals. In addition, meat is a necessary part of our diet. We need not resort to wild animals, especially the endangered species, and we may use livestock or alternative forms of protein, which can provide us with sufficient nutritious produce. So, it is safe to say that to protect animals is to protect human beings ourselves. The coexistence of animals and human beings can create perfect harmony and bring about vividness to our planet.

2.8. Management

Some employers reward members of staff for their exceptional contributions to the company by giving them extra money. This practice can act as incentive for some, but it may have a negative effect on others.

To what extent is this style of management effective? Are there better ways of encouraging employees to work hard?

With the fierce competition in the commercial market, many employers have struggled to find ways to stimulate their workers to work hard. One of these ways is giving their employees extra money for their exceptional contributions. But it is arguable whether this kind of stimulus is effective.

First of all, in most cases, giving more money to the contributor in a company is undeniably efficient. For people who are engaged in a career, earning money to live a comfortable life is essential. With the money they earn they can do what they want; and when they enjoy what their money has brought, they will grasp the meaning of working hard in a practical way. So, they will

subsequently put all their energies into working to show their loyalty to the boss, and the results are inevitably productive.

On the other hand, we must be aware of the importance of using a monetary stimulus appropriately. Employers should give a reward to the right person who has really made a major contribution to the whole company. The criteria which are used to evaluate the particular contribution should be scrupulously fair and scientific, avoiding biased judgement so that the whole unit can keep a good balance.

And, of course, financial reward is not the only method to stimulate productivity. There are many other effective ways to choose. For example, some international companies which have great economic power can afford to send their best and most devoted employees abroad to learn the latest in management, science and technology. Also, employers can give them study and promotion opportunities to let them realise their potential.

All in all, to get the best of their employees, employers should find various ways to stimulate their creative energies.

Day 15

Sample Tests

Practice Writing Test 1 (General Training Module)

Task 1

Dear Prof. Smith,

My name is Minh Thy, a third-year student from the community college. I joined in your 7-day first-aid training course from the 16th to the 22nd of August. I am writing to give some comments and suggestions as to how you can improve your training quality.

Generally, the course is well organised. The trainees attend lectures in the first 5 days followed by a 2 days' experiment in the hospital. The trainers are nurses and doctors from the local hospitals. I found the lectures given by the experts from the Red Cross very interesting. All the trainers are so professional and knowledgeable that all of us feel the course rewarding and useful.

However, I think trainees could benefit more from this training course if there was more practice, in particular, about how to put on bandages and how to identify an emergency situation. In my training session, we were given more theory than practice, but I think experience counts more in first aid. Moreover, the size of the class is too big with 40 trainees in each. As a result, the trainers cannot give sufficient individual attention to the trainees.

Hope the suggestions would be useful. And the trainees would appreciate it if you could make some improvements.

Yours sincerely,

Ninh Thy

Task 2

Version 1

The reasons for investing in a television set vary greatly from person to person, but arguably the two most popular purposes are for entertainment and for education. It is interesting to consider which is the more important factor.

We cannot deny that some people buy TV sets mainly because they regard them as an aid to education. Nowadays there are many educational programmes on TV, and there is no doubt that people can get a lot of benefits from these programmes.

However, we can hardly deny either that most people buy TV sets not because they teach people, but because they can provide a form of relaxation. As an aid to relaxation, TV has some indisputable advantages. For example, if one has a TV set, one can sit down in one's home and enjoy the wonderful pictures on the screen, instead of going a long distance to see a film or a play. One can enjoy the programmes by oneself, even if one cannot find company. And TV is also one of the cheapest ways to entertain oneself. It is precisely because of these advantages that TV has become so popular, and almost every family has its own TV set.

It is interesting to mention, too, that arguably even the people who bought the TV set mainly for educational purposes gradually change their minds, though some of them are reluctant to admit this. We can easily draw this conclusion from the proportion of time that people spend on watching TV for entertainment and for relaxation.

So generally speaking, I agree that the main function of TV is for entertainment, although we cannot dispute its educational function. And the programme makers should always be aware that the prime purpose is to divert and amuse even while providing educational information.

Version 2

Undoubtedly television is playing a very important part in our modern society. Various TV programmes bring us a lot of things such as entertainment, education, current affairs, information, and commercial advertising. It is useful to consider whether the entertainment function of TV is more important than the educational function.

Many people think that TV is for entertainment only. And they see it as a cheap and convenient diversion after their work. From TV they can see films, comedies, and shows of every kind

and some kinds of sporting events. So, after a day's work, they like to sit in front of their TV sets enjoying themselves and finding relaxation by watching TV.

So, we cannot deny that TV is a means of amusement. But we should also bear in mind that TV also functions as an educator. It provides special broadcasts for the TV university. And primary and secondary education has also benefited from TV programmes. For example, teachers can improve their presentation and teaching skills. Through TV children can extend their knowledge, and TV provides vital fuel for their imagination and creativity.

Furthermore, we should also think twice about the entertainment function of TV. In fact, most programmes for entertainment are also instructive. From these programmes, people can learn a lot of things, which they cannot learn in classrooms or from textbooks. In these senses, television achieves its educational goal through entertaining and amusing the viewers. In other words, although some people claim that they watch TV purely for entertainment, the fact is that they are also educated at the same time, either consciously or subconsciously.

It is indeed true that it is difficult to separate one goal of TV from another, but if I have to evaluate the importance of TV, I would say that it is mainly for education.

Practice Writing Test 2 (General Training Module)

Task 1

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a postgraduate student in the local university. During the summer holiday, I rented a Maxi from your company for my family holiday in the Lake District from the 5th to the 19th of August. I am writing to explain an accident that happened on the journey.

I rented a car from your company for two weeks, and I picked it up in your city centre office in London on the 5th of August and planned to return it by the 19th of August. All went well until one day in a Manchester parking lot, when I was ready to pull out of the parking lot, a red Mini backed swiftly and crashed into two of the cars behind it, one of which is the Maxi I was driving. It severely damaged the front of the car with very bad scratches. I got out immediately and reasoned with the young driver who, I found out later, was drunk. He apologised but refused to pay for the damage. So, I called the police and the insurance company as well who went to examine the whole thing and took some actions. Afterwards, I sent the car to a garage for repair.

The fact is that I cannot get the car until tomorrow, which means I cannot return your car in time. I would appreciate it if you could accept my delay in getting the car back. I apologise for any inconvenience caused in this matter.

Looking forward to your early reply.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Jackson

Task 2

What could make people devote themselves to their work has been a challenging question in the area of management for many years. The problem is that people are motivated by different factors in different countries, different cultural backgrounds, different situations and even in different periods of time.

Under certain conditions, ideological concepts, from religion or propaganda, can help to persuade people to work hard. In Western countries, the old ethic rooted in Protestant reform 400 years ago once made people believe that diligent, hard-working people were good people who would go to heaven after their death. Thus, people willingly worked hard. And similarly, during wartime, patriotic propaganda can stimulate the same kind of hard-working spirit.

In our materialistic society, this kind of ideological stimulus cannot last long. But pursuit of material possession lies at the root of human nature, which means that material incentives are very effective. An increase in salary is a very efficient incentive for most people. Rewards, both spiritual and material, are also very important stimuli. When a person makes achievements in his work, and his success is recognised by society, he is encouraged to work towards greater achievement.

And there are plenty of material incentives. In the late 1970s, company managers of Western countries were astounded by the high efficiency and productivity of many Japanese companies. They began to study these companies, and drew the conclusion that the life working system was a very important incentive here. The key to it was the guarantee of a stable job.

So, because different situations require different incentives to motivate people, it is vital to make a thorough investigation of the particular working situation and environment before making management decisions.

Practice Writing Test 3 (Academic Module)

Task 1

The table shows the choice of different leisure activities by different social classes in a certain country in 2008.

It seems that home-based activities are, on the whole, more popular than sporting activities among all social classes, and, as one might expect, watching television is by far the most frequent

choice among all types of people. We may assume that their life is still very much centred around the home and family.

We may also observe that several of the activities referred to are practised more widely by professional people. These include hobbies that are associated with culture and intellectual development, for example, playing an instrument. They also include some activities which are somewhat expensive such as swimming and eating out.

It is also worth pointing out that other leisure activities like going for a drive or going to a pub are performed almost evenly by all social classes. Noticeably, going for a walk is practised most by clerical people, and fewer semi-skilled and unskilled groups go out for a meal than the remaining groups do. Last, meeting friends ranks highest among professional and managerial staff whereas semi-skilled and unskilled people do this three times less.

Task 2

In most countries of the world, the population is increasing alarmingly. The problem of overpopulation has attracted growing concern among people of insight. This essay would like to discuss the issue and give possible solutions.

The most serious problem overpopulation can bring about lies in the fact that it is difficult to provide enough food to feed the ever-increasing population. While the food production keeps increasing with the development of science and technology in farming and animal husbandry, the population of the world has created even greater demand on food supply. Compounded by frequent natural disasters and famines, especially in Africa, it is not uncommon to find some people on the edge of starvation.

In addition, population explosion has exerted great pressure on infrastructure of any country. A large population means more demand for education, medical care, transport, and energy consumption. As a result, it is very difficult for governments to provide effective public services in crowded cities. Moreover, there is usually a higher crime rate, attributable to high rates of unemployment, thus downgrading the quality of people's lives.

There are two major solutions to the overpopulation problem. Firstly, better education for women can reduce birth rate as more women will be busily engaged in work and they are likely to have fewer children or delay their age of pregnancy. Another effective way may rest with the governments, which must educate their citizens about the dangers of a large population and provide incentives to those who limit the size of their families. For example, the Chinese government has practised the policy of "One couple one child", which has achieved great success in the recent two decades in reducing the population. In return, the quality of life has been greatly improved in China.

In conclusion, therefore, overpopulation can lead to starvation and degradation of people's quality of life. If the world governments take effective measures, the world population can be stabilised.

Practice Writing Test 4 (Academic Module)

Task 1

The two charts show information about changes in what European people tend to spend on leisure activities related to such industries as Internet music sales, album sales, and cinema attendances.

The prediction is that European Internet music sales will go up a lot over the period which the graph covers. They will rise erratically at first and will then leap in two stages to reach a high of \$3,900 million in 2019, before going up to a new peak of \$8,000 million at the end of 2021. Album sales, on the other hand, which will climb at first until the end of 2013, are then set to drop steadily throughout the next five years, before they bottom out and end the period a lot below \$1,000 million.

With European cinema attendances, there are two diverging forecasts. The first estimate is for numbers to rise steadily between the year 2010 and 2015, and increase from just 800 million visitors to 1,200 million, and the biggest jump in cinema people is projected to be in the year 2015. But the second forecast is different. The projection for the first three years of the period shows a rise, but after that cinema attendances will fall to 400 million people.

Task 2

As a country's economy develops, it entails tremendous changes including urbanisation which usually develops fast as well. So, it is interesting to investigate the influence of urbanisation on economic development.

It is often argued that urbanisation blocks the development of the economy. Indeed, it often causes a series of problems such as pollution, which can decrease the output of agriculture, lack of labour on farms, which may be harmful to agri-economy, and so on. But these problems are not insoluble. For example, if some steps are taken towards pollution control when the city plan is made, the negative influence can be minimised.

In fact, economic development can get a lot of benefits from urbanisation. First of all, it can improve the industrial economy. As cities are enlarged, a lot of factories can be set up. Meanwhile, a lot of people migrate from the country to the cities, and it can meet the needs for labour in the factories. In addition, as the industry grows, it can provide more and more farming machines and insecticides for agriculture, which enables farming to be more effective and efficient. Furthermore, urbanisation increases the demand for advanced consumer goods, which drives the economy to reach a higher level. All of these inevitably lead to further development of the country's economy.

In conclusion, urbanisation, though imperfect in many ways, plays important roles in improving the economy. It speeds up the development in all fields. Production and service industries, agriculture, and the labour market all can gain benefits from urbanisation.