



STUDY NOTES

EPISODE 2: WRITING TASK RESPONSE

WRITING TASK RESPONSE

It is important when answering an IELTS Writing Task 2 to address all parts of the question and write at least 250 words. Your ideas must be relevant to the topic and appropriately developed and supported in the body of your essay. You will need to state your own position or view on the topic. The introduction and conclusion need to be clear and relevant to the topic. These are the features that will be assessed under the criterion Task Response.

Analysing the Task

Analysing the writing task will help you understand what the requirements are so that you focus on all parts of the task.

IELTS Writing Task 2 questions are presented in the following format.

IELTS Tips

It is good practice to spend approximately 3-4 minutes analysing and brainstorming the topic before you start writing your essay.

Remember to state your position on the topic in the introduction or conclusion.

Practise writing 150 and 250 words within the times allotted, so you become familiar with the time constraints for Task 1 and Task 2.

IELTS WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic.

The ageing populations of more developed countries are going to cause social and economic problems for society in the future, especially for the younger generation.

Question Topic

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement.

Question Task

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

Write at least 250 words.



This is one of the questions analysed in the Study English, Series 3, Episode Two. Follow the strategies below when analysing Writing Task 2 IELTS questions.

| Strategies for Analysing Writing Task 2 | |
|---|---|
| i | Read the question topic and question task carefully. |
| ii | Identify the key words in the question topic. Think of synonyms and other word forms of these key words. This begins the process of paraphrasing and helps you get started with the writing, especially the introductory paragraph. |
| iii | Identify viewpoints expressed in the question topic. These can be paraphrased as follows: The younger generation will experience social and economic difficulties because people are living longer. |
| iv | Identify the stakeholders, i.e. the people, group or organisation who or which are directly relevant to, or affected by the issue or topic you will be writing about. |
| v | Identify the question task key words, i.e. what you will need to write about and how many parts. |

Introduction

The purpose of the introductory paragraph is to provide some background information on the topic and state the purpose of the essay, i.e. what you will be writing about.

Here is a sample introduction answering the above task.

In the modern world today, people are expected to live longer because of better health care resources, the availability of better quality foods and the higher standards of living. While the changing age structure of society might be problematic, it should not always be viewed as something threatening.

The first sentence provides background information, leading into the subject of the essay and referring back to the main stakeholder – the ageing populations – which is paraphrased as ‘people are expected to live longer’.

The second sentence provides the purpose of the essay and refers back to the two parts in the question task: agree and disagree.

Agree: While the changing age structure of society might be problematic ...

Disagree: ...it should not always be viewed as something threatening.



Guidelines for Writing the Introduction

- The background information must be relevant to the topic.
- The statement of purpose should relate to the question task.
- Main ideas should not be previewed in the introduction.
- It is sufficient to write 2-3 sentences for an introduction.

Presenting two sides of an issue

The question task requires you to present two sides of an issue: agree and disagree. You will need to consider ideas on both sides and present a balanced argument.

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Issue | |
| The younger generation will experience social and economic difficulties because people are living longer. | |
| Agree | Disagree |
| | |

Brainstorming

You should spend about 2-3 minutes brainstorming the main points. They will form the body of your essay. There are two sides to this issue, so your essay will consist of two body paragraphs:

| | |
|------------|--|
| BP1 | Body Paragraph 1: reasons why you agree and include supporting examples |
| BP2 | Body Paragraph 2: reasons why you disagree and include supporting examples |

Here are two body paragraphs answering the task.

BP1

There is no denying that constraints of time, money and space are placed on modern industrial societies with growing aged populations and declining birth rates. The most obvious would be the costs associated with caring for the elderly, funding their retirement pensions and providing residential care accommodation. Governments cannot be expected to carry this burden alone. They would need to impose additional taxes on the younger population and shift some of the caring responsibilities onto the extended families.

BP2

However, the valuable contributions that active and healthy aged individuals can make should not be overlooked. Firstly, these retired individuals could take on the role of carers for their grandchildren, allowing both parents to work longer hours and save on day care expenses. The extra earnings and savings could be used to improve the family's living standards. Secondly, the retirees could volunteer their services as drivers for the very old and sick. For example, they could deliver meals directly to those who are very elderly and infirm or assist with transportation to and from specialist appointments or hospital.



Body Paragraph 1 presents arguments agreeing with the topic. This is clearly indicated in the topic sentence of the paragraph.

There is no denying that constraints of time, money and space are placed on modern industrial societies with growing aged populations and declining birth rates.

Body Paragraph 2 presents arguments disagreeing with the topic. This is clearly stated in the topic sentence of the paragraph.

However, the valuable contributions that active and healthy aged individuals can make should not be overlooked.

Conclusion

The purpose of the concluding paragraph is to provide a summary of the main points made in the body of the essay and to state what your position or view on the topic is. The conclusion should give the reader a clear understanding of what the essay was about.

You can also state your position as part of your introduction, but be careful that your view doesn't change later in your essay and contradict what you have said. Here is a sample conclusion answering the question.

In conclusion, there are both positive and negative issues associated with ageing populations. It is best to take a balanced approach. People need to work together and recognise that all members of society contribute in many diverse ways to the well-being of the whole community.

Position

You need to take a position and state it clearly. This writer's position is to take a balanced approach, i.e. recognising the contributions that both ageing populations and the younger generations make. The last sentence states this in the form of a recommendation.

People need to work together and recognise that all members of society contribute in many diverse ways to the well-being of the whole community.

Remember: The concluding paragraph should never introduce new information.

Use the sample Writing Answer Sheets at:

http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach/ielts/academic_writing/data/Pages%20from%20ielts_specimats_80_83_test.pdf to practise your writing.