

# Brainstorming for IELTS Writing Task 2

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*"Finding ideas you can actually explain — not the smartest ideas."*

# The Myth vs. The Reality

## ✗ Brainstorming is NOT:

- ✗ Thinking of the smartest or most original ideas
- ✗ Finding arguments you think the examiner will "agree" with
- ✗ Writing down as many ideas as possible

## ✓ Brainstorming IS:

- ✓ Finding ideas you can explain clearly
- ✓ Finding an example quickly
- ✓ Choosing ideas that make writing easier, not harder

“ The examiner marks how well you develop an idea — not how clever it is.”

# Why Brainstorm? The 40-Minute Golden Rule

| Without Brainstorming                | With Brainstorming                            |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| ⚠️ Stop mid-essay & run out of ideas | ✅ Essay stays organised from start to finish  |
| ⚠️ Repeat the same point twice       | ✅ Arguments connect logically and seamlessly  |
| ⚠️ Drift off-topic halfway through   | ✅ Every paragraph answers the prompt directly |

## The Ideal 40-Minute Exam Strategy



4-6 Min Planning = High Score Advantage

# What Examiners Actually Look For

## 1 Task Achievement

Did you answer **every part** of the prompt with clear, fully supported, and well-developed ideas?

## 2 Coherence & Cohesion

Does the essay flow logically with a clear overall progression and **one main idea per paragraph**?

### COMMON MYTH

"I need a genius, highly intellectual idea to get Band 8."

### EXAMINER REALITY

Examiners reward **simple, realistic ideas** explained with clarity and logic.

# Where Do Ideas Come From? The Perspective Method

USE IDEAS FROM: Personal experience, family, school, work, news, common sense

NO statistics or expert research needed!



## Individual

How does this affect a person's health, wallet, stress, or daily life?



## Society

How does this affect communities, families, crime, or culture?



## Economy

Does this cost money, create jobs, boost trade, or hurt business?



## Environment

Does this help or harm nature, pollution, and sustainability?

# Choosing Ideas — The Easy Idea Test

## The 3-Question Test

Before keeping any idea, ask yourself:

- |                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Can I explain it clearly?      | <b>YES</b> |
| 2. Can I think of a real example? | <b>YES</b> |
| 3. Can I write ~80 words on it?   | <b>YES</b> |

If NO to ANY question → SWAP IT OUT IMMEDIATELY!

**1 Generate (90 Seconds)**  
Jot down 3–4 quick thoughts rapidly without judging them.

**2 Filter (Choose 2)**  
Keep the 2 ideas you can explain most clearly, not the smartest.

**3 Plan (Match & Pair)**  
Pair each chosen idea with a specific example and consequence.

# From Idea to Paragraph – The PEER Method

**P**

**Point**

What is my main idea?

**E**

**Explain**

Why is it true?

**E**

**Example**

What is a real example?

**R**

**Result**

What is the consequence?

## WORKED EXAMPLE: "Cars should be banned from city centres."

FULL BODY PARAGRAPH CHAIN

**Point:** Agree — less air pollution

**Explain:** Fewer vehicles directly means cleaner urban air

**Example:** London's ULEZ low-emission scheme

**Result:** Public health & air quality improves

# Live Demo — Full Walkthrough

## SAMPLE PROMPT

"Some people believe social media has a positive effect on society, while others believe it has a negative effect. Discuss both views and give your own opinion."

### STEP 1: Unpack

**Topic:** Social media

**Task:** Both views + opinion

### STEP 2: Perspectives

- + Individual: stay connected
- + Economy: marketing
- Society: misinformation
- Individual: mental health

### STEP 3: Easy Test

**Chosen:**

1. Connection benefit
2. Misinformation risk

### STEP 4: Run PEER

Modelled live in class — pair each point with an example + result.



# Weak vs. Strong Brainstorming

| Weak Brainstorm (Topic Label) | Strong Brainstorm (Fully Developed Idea)                                             |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✗ Environment                 | ✓ <b>Environment</b> → fewer emissions, cleaner air, better public transport         |
| ✗ Health                      | ✓ <b>Health</b> → people walk more daily, lower obesity rates                        |
| ✗ Economy                     | ✓ <b>Economy</b> → tourists enjoy walkable cities, local businesses attract visitors |

**Key Takeaway:** A single word is just a topic label — it is NOT an idea yet. Push every point at least one level deeper before you start writing!

## Common Mistakes That Cost Marks

**01 The Listing Trap:** Putting 4 different ideas in one paragraph without developing any of them.

**02 The "Smart" Idea Trap:** Choosing an impressive idea that is far too difficult to explain in accurate English.

**03 Half-Prompt Trap:** Answering only half the prompt (e.g., giving causes but forgetting solutions).

**04 Template Trap:** Relying on a memorised template that doesn't actually fit the question asked.

**05 Vague Support:** Writing empty support like "many people think..." with no real, concrete example.

# The Brainstorm Checklist

Before writing a single word of your essay, tick every box on your exam paper:

- |                                                                                 |                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do I know my exact opinion / position?      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do I have two clear main ideas?               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can I explain each idea clearly in English? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do I have a realistic example for each point? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does every idea directly answer the prompt? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Have I picked the easiest idea to develop?    |
- 
- ☒ **GOLDEN RULE: Is it strictly ONE main idea per paragraph?**

## Your Turn — Practice Exercise

### PRACTICE PROMPT

*"Governments should invest more in public transport than in building new roads. To what extent do you agree or disagree?"*

**You Have 3 Minutes:**

INTERACTIVE TASK

#### 1. Position

Choose your position immediately.

#### 2. Perspectives

Find angles using the method.

#### 3. Easy Test

Pick your best 2 clear ideas.

#### 4. PEER Chain

Run PEER chain on one idea.



**Next: Share your two ideas with a partner and compare your choices!**