

COURSE FOUNDATION

IELTS Writing Task 2: The Complete Overview

A masterclass on structure, marking criteria, and exam success strategies.

What Is IELTS Writing Task 2?



Formal Essay Response

Write a structured academic essay responding to a given point of view, argument, or problem.



250 Words Minimum

Aim for **260–290 words**. There is no maximum penalty, but quality beats excessive quantity.



40 Minutes Recommended

Allocate 40 minutes out of the total 60-minute IELTS Writing section for Task 2.



Worth 2/3 of Total Score

Task 2 carries **double the weight** of Task 1 in calculating your final band score.



Identical Format

Both Academic and General Training candidates follow the exact same Task 2 rules.



Formal Register

Maintain academic tone: strictly no contractions, slang, or personal storytelling.

What Will You Write About?

 Education

 Health

 Environment

 Technology

 Crime

 Government

 Business

 Culture

 Family

 Work

 Transport

 Globalisation

✓ Key Reassurance: Language over Knowledge

You are **NOT** tested on specialist or technical knowledge. Ideas based on common sense, general logic, and everyday experience are completely sufficient to achieve a Band 9.

The 5 Standard Essay Types

Essay Category	Typical Prompt Formulation
1. Opinion	<i>"To what extent do you agree or disagree?"</i>
2. Discussion	<i>"Discuss both views and give your opinion."</i>
3. Advantages & Disadvantages	<i>"Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?"</i>
4. Problem & Solution	<i>"What problems does this cause and what solutions can you suggest?"</i>
5. Double Question	<i>"Why is this the case? Is this a positive or negative development?"</i>

Understanding the Question: Worked Example

SAMPLE PROMPT

"Some people think that governments should spend money on public transportation. Others believe this money should be spent on building more roads. Discuss both views and give your own opinion."

GENERAL TOPIC

Public spending on transport infrastructure.

TASK REQUIREMENT

Discuss **BOTH** perspectives + declare your personal position.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

Public transport development vs. new road construction.

STRICT CONSTRAINT

Failing to cover both sides equally will cap Task Response at Band 5/6.

The 40-Minute Time Management Plan

0 – 5 MIN

1. Planning

Analyse prompt, brainstorm 2 solid ideas, outline layout.

5 – 35 MIN

2. Writing

Draft full essay strictly adhering to your paragraph plan.

35 – 40 MIN

3. Proofreading

Verify word count, fix spelling, grammar & punctuation errors.

⚠ Common Time Traps to Avoid:

- Writing without planning (leads to dead ends)
- Editing sentence-by-sentence while drafting
- Overlong introductions (consumes time)
- Running out of time for a proper conclusion

Essay Structure: The 4-Paragraph Formula

Introduction

2–3 sentences

Hook to capture + paraphrase the prompt + clear thesis statement / position.

1

Body Paragraph 1

5–6 sentences

Focus on main idea 1. Fully explained and supported.

2

Body Paragraph 2

5–6 sentences

Focus on main idea 2. Fully explained and supported.

3

Conclusion

2 sentences

Restate thesis + give a recommendation for the future.

4

BODY ANATOMY

Topic Sentence → Explanation → Concrete Example → Concluding Link

The Four Marking Criteria (25% Each)

25%

Task Response

Fully addressing all parts of the prompt with a well-developed, clear position throughout the response.

25%

Coherence & Cohesion

Logical organization of ideas, clear paragraphing structure, and seamless cohesive device usage.

25%

Lexical Resource

Range and precision of vocabulary, appropriate academic register, and accurate collocation usage.

25%

Grammatical Range

Variety and accuracy of complex sentence structures, punctuation control, and error frequency.

Understanding Band Score Performance

Band	Examiner Performance Summary
Band 5	Limited response; partial prompt coverage; repetitive vocabulary; frequent grammatical errors.
Band 6	Addresses main parts; relevant ideas but underdeveloped; noticeable errors in grammar/vocab.
Band 7	Clear position throughout; well-developed paragraphs; good vocabulary range with minor errors.
Band 8–9	Fluent, precise, and sophisticated expression; natural tone; thorough development and mastery.

Reality Check: Perfection Is Not Required

A Band 7 essay is **NOT** error-free. It has minor, occasional slips, but consistently answers the task, stays logically organised, and communicates with absolute clarity.

Common Myths & Critical Mistakes

✗ **Myth:** Longer essays always score higher

✓ **Fact:** Quality beats quantity beyond 260–290 words.

✗ **Myth:** You must use obscure, fancy words

✓ **Fact:** Accurate, natural vocabulary beats forced slang.

✗ **Myth:** You need official statistics/data

✓ **Fact:** Logical, common-sense reasoning is enough.

✗ **Myth:** Examiners judge your personal opinion

✓ **Fact:** Any opinion scores well if logically supported.

Top 3 Reasons Candidates Lose Marks:

1. Misunderstanding the prompt or going off-topic.
2. Undeveloped ideas with missing explanations.
3. Overusing mechanical linking terms ("*Firstly*", "*Secondly*", "*In addition*" in every line).

Hierarchy of Exam Priorities

- 1 Understand the question precisely
- 2 Answer all parts of the prompt fully
- 3 Organise ideas logically into paragraphs
- 4 Develop main ideas with explanations
- 5 Use appropriate academic vocabulary
- 6 Apply accurate grammar & punctuation

Mindset Shifts

- ✓ Clear ideas beat clever ideas
- ✓ Fully developed paragraphs beats undevelopment
- ✓ Consistency matters more than perfection

Submission Checklist & Course Roadmap

✓ Final Essay Checklist

- ☐ Did I answer every part of the question?
- ☐ Is my opinion clear in the intro & conclusion?
- ☐ Does each paragraph have 1 clear main idea?
- ☐ Are my body paragraphs fully developed?
- ☐ Did I proofread for basic grammar & word count?

📍 What We Build Next

- 1 **Lesson 2:** Question Decoding & Idea Generation
- 2 **Lesson 3:** Writing High-Scoring Introductions
- 3 **Lesson 4:** Mastering Body Paragraph Development
- 4 **Lesson 5:** Conclusions & Timed Practice Strategies
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