

KRISTOF ABRATH · ENGLISH EXAM PREPARATION

IELTS Writing Task 2

Education Topic – Vocabulary & Practice Pack

Ten model essays on education, covering all five Task 2 question types, with useful education vocabulary and collocations highlighted in bold. Build your own vocabulary list, then write a full essay of your own for one of the ten exam questions.

IELTS Band 6.5+

10 Essays · 5 Question Types

WHAT'S INSIDE

How to Use This Pack
Opinion Essays (Q1–Q2)
Discussion Essays (Q3–Q4)
Advantages & Disadvantages (Q5–Q6)
Problem & Solution (Q7–Q8)
Two-Part Questions (Q9–Q10)
Vocabulary Log (all 10 essays)
Write Your Own Essay

Writing Practice — Instructions

Kristof Abrath · English Exam Preparation · IELTS Writing Task 2

By the end of this pack, I will be able to: build a personal education vocabulary list and write a complete IELTS Task 2 essay about education, using your own vocabulary and ideas.

Follow These Steps

- ① **Read.** Read the exam question. Then read the model essay.
- ② **Look.** Look at the **bold words**. These are useful education words and phrases.
- ③ **Choose.** Choose the words you want to learn. Write them in your Vocabulary Log at the back.
- ④ **Look up.** Look up any words or phrases you need. Use a dictionary or a translator.
- ⑤ **Compare.** Read both essays in the same section. Notice how they are organised.
- ⑥ **Choose a question.** At the end, choose 1 of the 10 exam questions.
- ⑦ **Write.** Write your own full essay for that question. Use your Vocabulary Log to help you.

TIP Do not copy sentences from the model essays into your own essay. Use them to learn vocabulary and structure, then write your ideas in your own words.



1. Opinion (Agree or Disagree)

State your position clearly and defend it with reasons and examples throughout.

QUESTION 1

Some people believe that governments should make university education free for all students, regardless of their financial background. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Higher education plays a central role in a country's economic development. Some people believe that governments should cover full **university tuition** for every student, regardless of financial background. I disagree that **university education** should be free for all students without exception.

The most significant drawback of universal **free tuition** is the scale of public spending it would demand. Covering tuition for wealthy students who could afford the fees diverts money away from other essential public services, such as healthcare and **primary education**. Since state budgets are limited, this often results in overcrowded **lecture halls** and outdated facilities. Moreover, **free tuition** for all is a relatively ineffective way of promoting equality. Students from wealthier families tend to attend better-resourced **schools**, so they already have an advantage in securing **university places**. Both the financial strain and the limited impact on equality show that funding every student equally is not the wisest use of public money.

A more effective policy would be to target financial support directly at low-income students rather than fund everyone equally. **Need-based grants** can be directed at families who genuinely cannot afford **tuition**, ensuring that public money reaches those who need it most. For example, a grant scheme based on household income prevents wealthy students from receiving support they do not need. Furthermore, **income-contingent loans** offer a second useful tool, allowing students to **attend university** now and repay costs once earning a stable salary. Such a system, already used in Australia, keeps **higher education** accessible without straining public funds. Overall, targeted grants and income-linked loans would achieve wider access more fairly and sustainably than **free tuition** for all.

In conclusion, governments should not provide **free university education** to all students irrespective of income, since this policy is financially unsustainable and poorly targeted. Looking ahead, policymakers should expand **needs-based grants** and **income-linked loans**, reviewing repayment thresholds regularly so that **higher education** remains accessible without straining public finances.

QUESTION 2

Some people believe that schools should focus more on teaching practical life skills that students will need in the future than on traditional academic subjects. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Schools today face growing debate over how to balance **academic subjects** with **practical life skills**. Some believe that schools should focus more on teaching skills such as budgeting and cooking than on traditional subjects like mathematics and science. I disagree that **practical life skills** should take priority over **academic subjects**.

Traditional **academic subjects** provide the analytical foundation that students need for **further study** and employment. Mathematics and science, for example, teach students how to evaluate evidence, recognise patterns and solve complex problems. Additionally, these skills are directly transferable to fields such as engineering and finance. If schools reduced the time devoted to these subjects, students would likely struggle to meet the analytical demands of **higher education** and a technical job market. A student who has not developed strong problem-solving skills, for instance, may find it harder to adapt to **university coursework**. For these reasons, **academic subjects** should remain central to the **curriculum** rather than being displaced by **practical training**.

Life skills, by contrast, do not require dedicated academic time because they can be integrated into existing **lessons** or learned outside school. Basic **financial literacy**, for instance, can be taught within **mathematics classes**, while time management can be reinforced through project work. This lets students gain practical competence without reducing time available for core **academic content**. Furthermore, parents play an important role in teaching everyday skills such as cooking and budgeting at home. Since these skills are often learned gradually through daily routines, formal **classroom instruction** is not the only way to acquire them. Consequently, replacing academic hours with separate **life-skills classes** would be an inefficient use of limited school time.

In conclusion, schools should continue to prioritise **academic subjects** while incorporating practical skills into existing lessons rather than replacing **rigorous coursework**. Looking ahead, education authorities should identify natural opportunities within the current **curriculum**, such as budgeting projects in mathematics, so that students gain practical competence without sacrificing academic depth.



2. Discussion (Discuss Both Views)

Present both sides fairly with equal development, then give your own opinion.

QUESTION 3

Some people think that going to university is the best way to prepare young people for a successful career, while others believe that getting a job or vocational training is a better option. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Young people face an important decision when planning their careers after **secondary school**. Some believe that university is the best way to prepare for a successful career, while others think that starting work or **vocational training** is a better option. In my opinion, both pathways can lead to success, depending on the individual's chosen profession.

Those who favour university argue that a **degree** provides specialised knowledge and credentials that many professions require. Fields such as medicine, law and engineering demand **accredited qualifications** before **graduates** can practise, so a degree is not optional in these professions. Without the required **qualification**, a **graduate** simply cannot be employed in these regulated fields, regardless of their practical ability. Furthermore, graduates with a degree often secure higher starting salaries and greater opportunities for advancement in corporate roles. This is partly because employers frequently associate a **university education** with strong analytical and communication skills. For students aiming at regulated or corporate professions, university remains the more practical route.

On the other hand, supporters of **vocational training** point out that it allows young people to gain practical skills and financial independence more quickly. **Vocational programmes** focus on specific technical competencies, such as plumbing or electrical work, that match immediate demand in the labour market. A trainee who completes an **apprenticeship**, for example, can begin earning a steady income while gaining hands-on experience. Moreover, this route lets students avoid the substantial debt that often comes with a **degree**. Since **apprentices** are paid while training, they achieve financial independence earlier than most **graduates**. For students interested in a skilled trade, **vocational training** offers a faster, more affordable path to a stable career.

In conclusion, neither pathway is universally superior, since the best option depends on an individual's chosen career and circumstances. Looking ahead, schools should offer clearer **career guidance** earlier on, helping students weigh their options based on evidence about outcomes rather than assumptions about which path is generally better.

QUESTION 4

Some people think that students should be required to study a wide range of subjects at school, while others believe they should be allowed to focus mainly on subjects they are most interested in. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Educators disagree about how **school curricula** should be structured as students grow older. Some believe that students should study a wide range of subjects throughout school, while others think they should focus mainly on subjects that interest them most. In my opinion, a **broad curriculum** should stay compulsory in the early years, with more choice introduced as students near the end of **secondary school**.

Supporters of a **wide curriculum** argue that exposure to diverse subjects gives students a well-rounded understanding of the world and keeps career options open. Since many teenagers have not yet chosen a career path, studying a range of subjects stops them closing off opportunities too early. A student who dislikes science, for example, might discover an interest through **compulsory lessons**, an interest otherwise missed. Additionally, a **broad curriculum** builds **transferable skills**, such as communication and logical reasoning, useful across many careers. These skills are hard to build if a student focuses narrowly on one subject from an early age. For these reasons, breadth in the early years gives students a stronger, more flexible foundation.

Conversely, those who favour early **specialisation** argue that focusing on preferred subjects increases motivation and lets students build advanced skills sooner. When students study only subjects they enjoy, they tend to engage more deeply and achieve stronger results. This is valuable for students with a clear ambition, such as becoming a musician or programmer, who benefit from extra time on their chosen field. Moreover, **specialisation** can reduce stress, since students spend less time on subjects that do not motivate them. A student who dislikes mathematics but excels in art, for instance, may perform far better focusing on their strongest subject. For motivated students with a clear direction, earlier specialisation offers real advantages.

In conclusion, a balanced approach combining breadth with increasing choice best serves most students. Looking ahead, schools should introduce structured **subject-selection points**, supported by **career counselling**, so students narrow their focus based on informed decisions rather than early, uninformed preferences.



3. Advantages and Disadvantages

Weigh both sides objectively, then reach a clear overall judgement.

QUESTION 5

In recent years, online learning has increasingly replaced traditional classroom-based teaching. Do the advantages of this trend outweigh the disadvantages?

Online learning has expanded rapidly in recent years, changing the way many students access education. In many institutions, **online learning** has increasingly replaced traditional **classroom-based teaching**. I believe the advantages of this trend outweigh the disadvantages.

One major advantage of **online learning** is that it removes geographical barriers to education. Students who live far from universities or who have work and family commitments can access courses from anywhere with an internet connection. This flexibility significantly widens participation in **higher education**, particularly for people who could not otherwise attend classes in person. Additionally, online platforms allow learners to study at their own pace, revisiting **recorded lectures** whenever a concept is unclear. This kind of repeated, self-paced review is rarely possible in a traditional **classroom setting**, where lessons move at a fixed speed for the whole group. Together, wider access and flexible pacing make online learning a genuinely valuable option for many students.

Nevertheless, **online learning** does present genuine disadvantages, particularly regarding social interaction and **practical training**. Students studying remotely often have fewer opportunities to build relationships with peers and instructors. This reduced contact can lower motivation and increase feelings of isolation, especially for students who live and study alone. Furthermore, subjects that require hands-on practice, such as laboratory sciences or **medical training**, are difficult to teach effectively through a screen. These fields depend heavily on physical demonstration and supervised practice, neither of which can be fully replicated online. Despite these limitations, institutions can address them by combining **online instruction** with occasional in-person sessions.

In conclusion, **online learning** offers more advantages than disadvantages overall, although it works best when blended with some face-to-face contact rather than used in complete isolation. Looking ahead, universities should invest further in hybrid models and virtual laboratories, so that practical subjects can also benefit from the flexibility that **online education** provides.

QUESTION 6

Some universities require students to complete continuous assessment throughout the year rather than relying on final written exams. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?

Universities use different methods to evaluate student performance throughout a **degree programme**. Many universities now require students to complete **continuous assessment** throughout the **academic year** rather than depending solely on **final written examinations**. I believe the advantages of this approach outweigh its disadvantages.

A key advantage of **continuous assessment** is that it reduces the pressure associated with a single high-stakes **examination**. Since grades are distributed across several **assignments** and tests throughout the year, students are less likely to experience severe exam-related stress. Their final grade reflects sustained effort rather than performance on one particular day, which many students consider fairer. Additionally, **continuous assessment** allows **lecturers** to identify struggling students early. Regular assignments reveal gaps in understanding well before the end of the **course**, giving both students and teachers time to address them. For these reasons, continuous assessment tends to produce a more accurate and supportive picture of student performance.

However, this method also has notable disadvantages, particularly regarding workload. **Continuous assessment** can create a persistent workload throughout the semester. This leaves students with less time for **independent study** or **extracurricular activities** compared with a system based on a single **final exam**. Moreover, some students may find it harder to manage several overlapping deadlines across different **modules**. This pressure can lead to superficial work completed under time pressure, rather than deep engagement with the material. These drawbacks show that continuous assessment must be carefully managed if it is to achieve its intended benefits.

In conclusion, **continuous assessment** is generally preferable to relying solely on **final exams**, although institutions must ensure that deadlines are reasonably spaced. Looking ahead, universities should coordinate **assignment schedules** across departments and **modules**, so that continuous assessment eases pressure on students rather than replacing one stressful moment with several smaller ones.



4. Problem and Solution

Identify the causes of a problem clearly, then propose realistic, matching solutions.

QUESTION 7

Many students today find it difficult to concentrate in class. What are the main reasons for this, and what solutions can you suggest?

Concentration difficulties among students have become a significant concern for teachers and parents. Many students today find it difficult to concentrate in **class**, and this problem has grown alongside the widespread use of digital devices. This essay will explore the primary cause and outline solutions that schools can adopt.

The most significant cause of poor concentration is the constant availability of smartphones and social media. Since young people are accustomed to frequent notifications and instant entertainment, they often find it difficult to sustain attention during longer **classroom activities**. Many are tempted to check their phones rather than listen to the teacher, even during short **lessons**. Furthermore, traditional **lecture-style teaching**, in which students listen passively for extended periods, fails to engage learners used to interactive digital content. A forty-minute **lecture** without any **student participation**, for instance, frequently results in boredom and a noticeable drop in attention. Together, constant digital distraction and passive **teaching methods** explain much of the decline in student concentration.

To address this problem, schools should introduce clear measures to reduce distractions and modernise their **teaching approach**. Firstly, requiring students to store their phones in lockers during **lessons** removes the temptation to check devices. This simple measure helps restore focus by eliminating the source of distraction entirely, rather than relying on students' self-control. Secondly, teachers should adopt more interactive methods, such as **group discussions**, short practical tasks and multimedia presentations. Consequently, when students participate directly in a task rather than simply listening, they tend to remain engaged for considerably longer. By combining phone restrictions with more engaging teaching, schools can address both major causes of the problem at once.

In conclusion, the widespread use of digital devices and reliance on passive **teaching methods** are the main reasons behind declining concentration in **classrooms**. Looking ahead, schools should combine phone restrictions with ongoing **teacher training** in interactive methods, ensuring that these changes are reviewed and adjusted as new distractions, such as emerging technologies, continue to develop.

QUESTION 8

In many countries, an increasing number of students are leaving school before completing their education. What are the reasons for this, and what can be done to solve the problem?

Completing **secondary education** is widely regarded as an important step toward long-term career success. In many countries, however, a growing number of students **leave school** before finishing their **education**, which limits their future career prospects. This essay will examine the main reasons for this trend and suggest measures that governments can take to solve it.

The most common reason for **early school leaving** is economic pressure within families. In low-income households, teenagers often feel obliged to leave school and start working in order to contribute to household income. This pressure is particularly strong when families struggle to cover basic living costs such as food and housing. Additionally, a second major factor is that many students see little connection between the **academic curriculum** and their future employment. When **lessons** focus almost entirely on theoretical content, students who prefer practical work can quickly lose motivation and eventually **drop out**. Financial hardship and an overly theoretical **curriculum** therefore combine to push many students toward **leaving school early**.

To tackle this problem, governments and schools should implement two complementary measures. Firstly, financial assistance, such as means-tested stipends, should be provided to low-income families on the condition that their children remain in school. This kind of support would reduce the immediate pressure on teenagers to seek paid work instead of completing their studies. Secondly, schools should broaden the **curriculum** by introducing **vocational tracks** in fields such as construction, digital technology and automotive repair. Consequently, this change would allow students to see a clearer link between what they study and their future employment prospects. Combining financial support with more relevant curriculum options addresses both the economic and academic causes of **early school leaving**.

In conclusion, economic hardship and an overly theoretical **curriculum** are the primary reasons behind rising rates of **early school leaving**. Looking ahead, governments should monitor **dropout rates** closely after introducing these measures and adjust the scale of financial support and **vocational offerings** based on which regions or groups remain most at risk.



5. Two-Part / Direct Questions

Make sure you fully answer every part of the question, giving each roughly equal attention.

QUESTION 9

Today, more people than ever are pursuing university degrees, yet many graduates struggle to find suitable employment. Why is this happening, and what should universities do to better prepare students for the workforce?

University enrolment has reached record levels in many countries, opening **higher education** to more people than ever. Yet a considerable number of **graduates** struggle to find suitable employment, a trend that raises questions about the true value of a **degree**. This essay will explain why this mismatch occurs and suggest what universities should do to prepare students better.

One major reason for **graduate unemployment** is that many **degree programmes** emphasise theoretical knowledge over practical skills. As a result, **graduates** frequently enter the job market lacking the hands-on experience that employers now expect, even for entry-level positions. A **graduate** with strong theoretical knowledge but no work experience, for example, is often overlooked in favour of a less qualified but more experienced candidate. Furthermore, a second factor is **degree inflation**, since so many people now hold a **bachelor's degree**. This **qualification** alone often fails to distinguish candidates, pushing many employers to demand additional experience or further **qualifications**. Together, a lack of **practical training** and an oversupply of **degree holders** make it harder for graduates to secure suitable employment.

To better prepare students for employment, universities should adopt several practical reforms. Firstly, **internships** and structured **work placements** should become a mandatory part of **degree programmes**. This requirement would allow students to build professional networks and gain relevant experience before **graduating**. Secondly, universities should review their **curricula** regularly in consultation with industry professionals. Moreover, computer science departments, for example, could collaborate with technology companies so that students learn programming tools that are actually used in industry, rather than outdated material. Combining practical placements with industry-aligned **curricula** would give **graduates** the experience and relevant skills that employers are actually looking for.

In conclusion, **graduate unemployment** results primarily from a gap between **academic training** and workplace requirements, worsened by the sheer number of **degree holders** competing for similar roles. Looking ahead, universities should track **graduate employment outcomes** over time and use this data to continuously refine which skills and placements are added to their programmes.

QUESTION 10

Many parents put significant pressure on their children to achieve high academic success at school. Why do parents do this, and do you think this pressure has a positive or negative effect on children?

In many societies, parents place considerable importance on their children's **academic performance** at **school**. Many parents put significant pressure on their children to achieve high **academic success**, hoping to secure a better future. While this behaviour is usually driven by genuine concern, I believe the overall effect on children tends to be negative.

Parents generally push their children towards high **academic achievement** because they associate strong **grades** with future financial security and social status. In a competitive global economy, **admission to a respected university** is widely regarded as one of the most reliable routes to a stable, well-paid career. Consequently, many parents believe that demanding rigorous **study habits**, and sometimes **private tutoring**, is necessary to secure this outcome. Additionally, parents may feel that their own social standing is connected to their children's success, particularly in communities where achievement is highly valued. In several Asian countries, for example, families devote considerable time and money to preparing children for **entrance examinations**. These motivations show that parental pressure usually comes from genuine concern rather than unreasonable expectations.

Despite these understandable motivations, excessive **academic pressure** often has damaging consequences for children. When young people face relentless expectations, they frequently experience heightened stress, anxiety and emotional exhaustion. This can diminish their natural curiosity and turn **learning** into a source of fear rather than enjoyment. Furthermore, constant **academic demands** leave little time for hobbies, friendships or rest, all important for healthy development. Research has repeatedly linked intense parental pressure to higher rates of anxiety and lower self-esteem among **students**. For these reasons, the negative effects of **academic pressure** generally outweigh its intended benefits.

In conclusion, although parents pressure their children academically out of genuine concern for their future, this pressure generally does more harm than good, particularly to children's mental wellbeing. Looking ahead, schools and parents should work together to set realistic expectations, balancing achievement with time for rest and social development, so that wellbeing is not sacrificed for short-term results.



Kristof Abrath · English Exam Preparation · IELTS Writing Task 2



Kristof Abrath · English Exam Preparation · IELTS Writing Task 2



Kristof Abrath · English Exam Preparation · IELTS Writing Task 2

