



How to Write Band 9 Essays

IELTS Preparation Guide for Writing Task 2

For new and repeat IELTS students, Writing Task 2 is often the most daunting aspect of IELTS. The open-ended nature of the question can paralyze even a fluent and gifted writer.

Let's take some of the mystery out of the air. This article will dissect and analyze a band 9 Task 2 essay. The essay presented is a model answer from the official IELTS website.

What You Will Learn

Often times, seeing an A+ paper of one of your fellow students doesn't help. Instead, it only builds more frustration and doubt. No explanation of how or why that grade was earned can leave you feeling a bit deflated.

By the end of this post you will have a stronger understanding of what's expected. You'll also have greater feelings of confidence in your approach to Writing Task 2.

You will learn:

- What an actual band 9 Writing Task 2 essay looks like
- What 'Type' of question the Task Prompt is
- How the essay is structured
- Why the essay followed this pattern
- How to practice this information
- Excellent resources to help you

The Essay

Not knowing what an actual essay looks leaves room for imagination and uncertainty.

First, let's cement an idea in your mind. Expectations give you something to work towards.

This essay is considered to be the *model answer* for Writing Task 2 by the IELTS official website. In other words, this essay represents your end goal for the written aspect of IELTS.

Give the task prompt and essay a quick read. We'll break it down as simply and mechanically as possible throughout the article.

IELTS Writing Task 2 Topic

A person's worth nowadays seems to be judged according to social status and material possessions. Old-fashioned values, such as honour, kindness and trust, no longer seem important.

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

- **Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.**
- **Write at least 250 words.**

IELTS Writing Task 2 Sample – Model Answer

Given the power and influence of the super rich, it might seem as if social status and material possessions are the new symbols of personal worth, but in everyday life I do not think this is true.

It is apparent that most celebrities today are admired or envied solely for their material wealth or position in various social hierarchies. Many of these people are known to turn their backs on friends, cheat on their spouses or spend their evenings over-indulging in alcohol and/or drugs. Things like owning a mansion, driving an expensive car and getting into A-list parties are exalted above old-fashioned values. Ultimately, though, it is the many readers of gossip magazines and celebrity blogs who reinforce these ideas.

Nevertheless, I do believe that in their day-to-day lives most people still believe in values such as honour, kindness and trust. In some way most of us want to form loving families, raise our children to be good citizens, stand

up for the downtrodden and protect our communities from harm. We still form friendships, romances and business partnerships based on old-fashioned criteria. When our trust is abused or we are unfairly treated, we see that as a major violation of our relationship and we judge the wrongdoer accordingly.

In conclusion, I believe there is some truth to the notion that status and possessions have superseded old-fashioned values as a measure of a person's worth. Looking beyond the tabloids, however, it is apparent that most ordinary people have still preserved an old-fashioned conscience.

Identify the Question Type

Let's start with the question that was asked in the prompt. This is called the **Task Prompt**. You won't know what the prompt will be going into the exam. It could ask you to solve a current problem that exists in international business affairs, or to list the pros and cons of space exploration.

This is the first problem students face, ***not having a specific plan for each individual question type.***

A person's worth nowadays seems to be judged according to social status and material possessions. Old-fashioned values, such as honour, kindness and trust, no longer seem important.

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

IELTS Online teaches students how to identify a Task Prompt as one of 5 different question types. Instead of having to come up with a response to the question, the question *type* tells you what your response should be.

This particular prompt is what we identify as an 'Opinion Question'. Writing an essay for an Opinion Question is different than writing an essay for a 'Solutions Question', or any other question type.

(If you want to learn everything about how to identify the Question Type, we have that included in our course: [Ultimate IELTS Writing: Learn to Master Task 2](#)).

Essay Structure

You may know the question type, but that alone doesn't help.

We need to understand what's expected of an 'Opinion Question' type. This means the structure, in addition to a few other things.

Next, we break down the structure of the model essay by paragraph, then by sentence.

1st Paragraph - Introduction

IELTS Online teaches a 4-paragraph structure for all task 2 essays. The topics and sentences vary depending on the question type.

Every Writing Task 2 essay should include these paragraphs:

- Introduction
- Body Paragraph 1
- Body Paragraph 2
- Conclusion

Sentence 1

Given the power and influence of the super rich, it might seem as if social status and material possessions are the new symbols of personal worth, but in everyday life I do not think this is true.

Above is the introductory paragraph. For an *opinion essay*, this paragraph should include 2 key parts.

- Rephrase the question
- State your **opinion** clearly and completely

The author could have done this in two or more sentences. However, you can see that both key parts are covered.

Rephrase the question: The author reworded and rearranged the Task Prompt and included it in this sentence. This is called **Paraphrasing**. It's an essential skill to have for Writing Task 2.

One sign that a question is paraphrased well is by not needing to read the prompt to know what's being asked. All the relevant information is there.

State your opinion clearly and completely: The author concludes the first paragraph by stating "*but in everyday life I do not think this is true.*"

The phrase "I do not think..." is a firm affirmation that this is the author's opinion. They also mentioned "in everyday life...", which shows the *full extent* of the author's opinion.

Second Paragraph - Body Paragraph 1

Body Paragraph 1 of an Opinion Question Type should follow this structure:

- Topic sentence paraphrases thesis statement.
- Introduce first argument and support with examples and explanation.
- Introduce second point that supports topic sentence.

Let's look at how the author's essay stacks up.

Sentence 1

It is apparent that most celebrities today are admired or envied solely for their material wealth or position in various social hierarchies.

This Paragraph should be anywhere from 3-5 sentences. Our first sentence ought to be a topic sentence, which means it connects back to the **Thesis Statement**. The thesis statement is our essay's main argument, which should be highly specific.

Topic sentence paraphrases thesis statement: We are given an example of “celebrities” which is an example of “the super rich”. It is also an example of a situation that is NOT “everyday life.”

Can you see how this sentence cleverly paraphrases the introduction paragraph? It also distinguishes itself as a **Topic Sentence** because it's looking at a specific example or *topic*. The topic in this case is celebrity admiration.

Sentence 2 and 3

Many of these people are known to turn their backs on friends, cheat on their spouses or spend their evenings over-indulging in alcohol and/or drugs. Things like owning a mansion, driving an expensive car and getting into A-list parties are exalted above old-fashioned values.

Introduce first argument and support with examples and explanation: The author decided to use two sentences to cover this point.

The first sentence introduced a topic sentence. It's here that the author *fully* introduces the argument using example and explanation.

Sentence 4

Ultimately, though, it is the many readers of gossip magazines and celebrity blogs who reinforce these ideas.

Introduce second point that supports topic sentence: Here the author introduces another *point* that supports the *topic sentence*.

The topic sentence had to do with celebrities being envied and admired for material wealth. In the 4th sentence, the author cites gossip media as another contributing factor. The second point is given as it relates to celebrities, so it's in line with the topic sentence.

Third Paragraph - Body Paragraph 2

Body Paragraph 2 is not just a continuation of Body Paragraph 1. It has a specific structure that is unique to the Opinion Question Type. This paragraph should also contain 3 to 5 sentences.

Here's the structure:

- Transitional phrase lets the grader know this paragraph will be an opposing or conflicting opinion that you hold.
- Introduce conflicting/opposing argument.
- Explanation and example support.
- Introduce second point or flesh out first point so that it leads to a second point.

Sentence 1

Nevertheless, I do believe that in their day-to-day lives most people still believe in values such as honour, kindness and trust.

Transitional phrase lets the grader know this paragraph will be an opposing or conflicting opinion that you hold: The linking word “Nevertheless” provides an excellent transition. It shows that this paragraph will have a different focus, one that is in opposition to the previous.

The sentence also paves the way for a new argument but does not give it specifically.

Sentence 2

In some way most of us want to form loving families, raise our children to be good citizens, stand up for the downtrodden and protect our communities from harm.

Introduce conflicting/opposing argument: The argument is that people want to form a good community for family life.

Explanation and example support: The first clause, “*In some way most of us want to form loving families,*” is the explanation. “*Raise our children...be good citizens...stand up for the downtrodden...*” shows examples of what this means.

Sentence 3 and 4

We still form friendships, romances and business partnerships based on old-fashioned criteria. When our trust is abused or we are unfairly treated, we see that as a major violation of our relationship and we judge the wrongdoer accordingly.

Introduce second point or flesh out first point so that it leads to a second point: We can see a continuation of the family and community. In the 4th sentence we see a new point developing. It changes from raising children and having a family to “*we judge the wrongdoer accordingly*”.

In this case, a second point was not clearly stated at the start. Instead, the author fleshed out the first point so that it leads to a second point.

Fourth Paragraph - Conclusion

IELTS Online teaches that, for an Opinion Question Type, the conclusion should be 2-3 sentences in length.

Here’s the exact structure for this question type that we teach in our [comprehensive online course](#).

- Summarize main arguments.
- Offer your final opinion.

Sentence 1

In conclusion, I believe there is some truth to the notion that status and possessions have superseded old-fashioned values as a measure of a person’s worth.

Summarize main arguments: We can see a direct reference to the main arguments in body paragraph 1.

Sentence 2

Looking beyond the tabloids, however, it is apparent that most ordinary people have still preserved an old-fashioned conscience.

Summarize main arguments: “*Looking beyond the tabloids,*” and “*most ordinary people have still preserved an old-fashioned conscience.*” completes the summary of main arguments throughout the essay.

Offer your final opinion: “*it is apparent that most ordinary people have still preserved an old-fashioned conscience.*” offers a clear and final opinion.

You can see now how precisely the essay fits the structure of the question type. This is not a coincidence.

IELTS Online has become an expert at arming students with everything they need to succeed at IELTS.

How to Practice

If you’ve ever heard about the 10,000-hour rule, you know that it states that 10,000 hours of practice is required to become an expert at anything. What many people do not know is that the original rule meant 10,000 hours of **meaningful** practice.

For *The Beatles*, that meant **performing** 1000s of times for **live audiences** in Hamburg before anyone knew who they were.

You can scour the web for task prompts, sample essays, online courses, and various training resources. Many of these sites and services provide useful insights into IELTS.

However, working on your own, not being graded, and not receiving feedback from experienced IELTS experts diminishes the quality of your practice. ***There's simply no way around that fact.***

For this reason, IELTS Online has launched [LiveWrite](#). If you want the essential constructive criticism required to boost your band score, then this service is for you.

Another method of practicing is 1-on-1 lessons. There is something integral about learning that has shown online educators everywhere that students learn best by spending time with a real-life human being. IELTS Online provides [such lessons](#). We've taught English in various forms to all ages, levels, incomes, and nationalities with great success.

Live video lessons are a great investment not only for your success at IELTS, but for your fluency in English. Certain finer points of Writing, Speaking, Reading, and Listening can be difficult to learn from an article or video format. A live expert, listening and working with you directly can uncover the hidden issues that are holding you back.

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