

Test section – Writing Task 2

Developing paragraphs

Activities

1. Matching
2. Sentence writing
3. Complex sentences
4. Re-ordering sentences to form a paragraph

Aims

- to help students understand how to develop a logical paragraph
- to give students practice in writing paragraphs

Learning outcomes

- Students will have understood how to develop a paragraph using examples, counter arguments and reasons.
- Students will have practised writing logical and connected paragraphs.

Information about this section of IELTS

In Writing Task 2, test takers will be asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem. They will be expected to write at least 250 words and are advised to spend 40 minutes on this task. The essay should be written in formal, academic English.

Time	60-70 minutes (can be separated into different activities)
Level	B1+
Class	Suitable for groups / large classes F2F / Online
Interaction	Pair or group work Individual work
Materials	Worksheets x3 attached

Activity 1: Matching task

Material: Worksheet 1

Time: 15 minutes

Procedure:

- introduce focus of the lesson: Writing Task 2 – developing paragraphs.
- give each student a copy of Worksheet 1 and tell them to read through the introduction.
- working alone, students match sentences (1-4) with the appropriate follow-on sentence (i-iv), and then decide what the relationship (a-d) is between each pair of sentences.
- students work in pairs and compare their answers.
- get class feedback.

Answers

- 1 iv d) listing
- 2 ii c) opinion + supporting reason
- 3 i b) opinion + supporting example
- 4 iii a) argument + counter argument

Activity 2: Writing follow-on sentences

Material: Worksheet 1

Time: 15-20 minutes

Procedure:

- tell students to work alone and write a follow-on sentence for each of the five sentences using the patterns in Activity 1.
- put students into pairs to compare their sentences and to peer correct.
- get class feedback.

Example answers

Most road accidents are a result of careless and irresponsible driving rather than poor road design. *Scrolling on mobile phones, road rage and speeding are some of the most common ways that drivers can lose control of their vehicles.*

It can be argued that recent technological developments in communications have helped create greater understanding between nations. *While this is true to some extent, it has also led to a wider spread of misinformation.*

In my view, there should be a total ban on the advertising of all alcoholic and tobacco products. *These types of products, which cause disease and social problems, should not be made to seem attractive.*

Some people argue that drug companies should make new life-saving drugs available to poorer countries at cost price rather than making a profit on them. *Pharmaceutical giants have an ethical responsibility to use their wealth to ensure an equal distribution of their essential vaccines and other medications.*

It's undoubtedly true that working from home has many advantages. *However, the loss of the work environment can have a negative impact on an individual working in isolation.*

Activity 3: Complex sentences

Material: Worksheet 2

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure:

- give each student a copy of Worksheet 2.
- go through the introduction with the class.
- working alone, students link the sentences in 1-5 using the given linking word or phrase.
- students work in pairs and compare their answers.
- get class feedback.

Answers

1 **Apart from wasting** huge amounts of water, industries are also responsible for the contamination of water supplies.

2 **Contrary to** the popular belief that machines have replaced workers everywhere, there is a huge and increasing demand for skilled artisans all over the world.

3 Millions of people in developing countries still live in absolute poverty **despite** billions of dollars **having been sent**.

Despite billions of dollars **having been sent** to developing countries, millions of people still live in absolute poverty.

4 **While** people claim to have concern for the environment, **they** compromise their ecological values almost daily.

People claim to have concern for the environment **while compromising** their ecological values almost daily.

5 **Not only is there** an epidemic of obesity amongst Western adults, **but it also** is becoming widespread in Western children.

You may wish to go through the necessary grammatical and lexical changes that are required when using these linking devices.

Activity 4: Paragraph organisation

Material: Worksheet 3

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure:

- give each student a copy of Worksheet 3.
- go through the introduction with the class.
- working alone, students organise the paragraph along the lines of topic sentence, developing sentences, and re-stating / rounding off sentence.
- students work in pairs and compare their answers.
- get class feedback.

Answers

3, 2, 6, 1, 4, 5, 7

3 The problem is that the university education system was designed for an employment-centred economy. 2 People would dedicate anything from five to seven years to diligent study in order to get a guaranteed career at the end of it. 6 There is no guarantee of that anymore. 1 A more realistic scenario now is for workers to balance two separate income streams while studying on the side. 4 The solution is for university education to accommodate new working arrangements. 5 Study options need to be broken down into shorter “booster” qualifications taken on an as-needed basis with more part-time, evening and distance options. 7 This could be perhaps for the length of their working life rather than studying full-time for six years and then working full-time until retirement.

Follow-up activities

Use sample and model answers from ielts.org and takeielts.org to give students further example questions and the topic sentences for the body paragraphs for them to write the rest of the paragraph using developing and re-stating / rounding off sentences
https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/bc_ac_writing_answers.pdf

Writing Task 2

Worksheet 1

Developing paragraphs

One of the features of strong academic writing is that it has a logical 'flow' to it. Sentences should not be isolated, but each sentence should follow on logically from the one before it. They should all build into a coherent and cohesive paragraph.

Sentences can follow each other in the following ways (among others):

- a) argument + counter argument*
- b) opinion + supporting example(s)*
- c) opinion + supporting reason(s)*
- d) listing (reasons or examples)*

1 *Match a sentence 1-4 with its follow-on sentence i-iv.
What type of pairs (a-d) are they?*

1 Firstly, television news reports are often too short or superficial to explain the full context of a story.

2 In my view, products such as cosmetics or soaps should not be tested on animals.

3 I am convinced that governments' economic policies do harm to the environment.

4 Some people believe that the only way to prevent crime is to enforce stricter punishments.

i For instance, governments do very little to encourage people to use public transport instead of their cars, and are reluctant to pursue private companies that pollute the environment.

ii Such items are not essential, and there is no need to make creatures suffer for the sake of making money.

iii However, statistics show that more severe punishments do nothing to reduce crime rates.

iv Secondly, television news editors tend to favour stories which offer sensational images that make 'entertaining' viewing.

2 *Work in pairs. Compare your answers.*

3 *Write a suitable follow-on sentence for the following:*

Most road accidents are a result of careless and irresponsible driving rather than poor road design.

.....
.....

It can be argued that recent technological developments in communications have helped create greater understanding between nations.

.....
.....

In my view, there should be a total ban on the advertising of all alcoholic and tobacco products.

.....
.....

Some people argue that drug companies should make new life-saving drugs available to poorer countries at cost price rather than making a profit on them.

.....
.....

It's undoubtedly true that working from home has many advantages.

.....
.....

4 *Compare your ideas with a partner. Which patterns did you use?*

Writing Task 2

Worksheet 2

Complex sentences

To achieve a higher band score for writing, you should try to include examples of more complex sentences. You can do this by linking your ideas within one sentence using linking word.

For example: *apart from* *despite* *not only* *contrary to*

Space exploration has huge scientific value.

The money spent on space exploration could be better spent on dealing with the current climate crisis.

Even though *space exploration has huge scientific value, the money spent on it could be better spent on dealing with the current climate crisis.*

1 *Join the following pairs of sentences using the linking device in brackets.*

- 1 Industries waste huge amounts of water.
Industries are also responsible for the contamination of water supplies.
(*apart from*)

.....
.....

- 2 The popular belief is that machines have replaced skilled workers everywhere.
There is a huge and increasing demand for skilled artisans all over the world.
(*contrary to*)

.....
.....

3 Billions of dollars in aid have been sent to developing countries.
Millions of people in developing countries still live in absolute poverty.
(despite)

.....
.....

4 People claim to have concern for the environment.
People compromise their ecological values almost daily.
(While)

.....
.....

5 There is an epidemic of obesity amongst Western adults.
Obesity is becoming widespread in Western children.
(Not only)

.....
.....

2 *Compare your ideas with a partner.*

Writing Task 2

Worksheet 3

Paragraph organisation

A good paragraph consists of:

- a topic sentence (TS)
- developing sentences (D1, D2, D3 etc.)
- a rounding off / re-stating sentence (RO)

Example question

In many countries today there are many highly qualified graduates without employment. What factors may have caused this situation and what, in your opinion, can/should be done about it?

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

Write at least 250 words.

Introduction

Across the world there are many countries where people with advanced degrees are struggling to find employment. In my opinion, this is because full-time employment is no longer the cornerstone of modern economies. Universities need to re-structure study options in order to keep abreast of this development.

Body paragraph 1

People often declare that there is no work around anymore but, in fact, there is plenty of work. Casual, on-call, contract, part-time and temporary positions have proliferated in recent years. What is much rarer now is permanent employment, meaning positions with a long-term contract, benefits, stability, internal promotion and skills development organised by employers. So, there is work around but the nature of that work has changed.

red = topic sentence

purple = developing sentence 2

blue = developing sentence 1

black = re-stating/rounding off sentence

Body paragraph 2

Re-order the following sentences to form a cohesive and logical paragraph.

1 A more realistic scenario now is for workers to balance two separate income streams while studying on the side.

2 People would dedicate anything from five to seven years to diligent study in order to get a guaranteed career at the end of it.

3 The problem is that the university education system was designed for an employment-centred economy.

4 The solution is for university education to accommodate new working arrangements.

5 Study options need to be broken down into shorter “booster” qualifications taken on an as-needed basis with more part-time, evening and distance options.

6 There is no guarantee of that anymore.

7 This could be perhaps for the length of their working life rather than studying full-time for six years and then working full-time until retirement.

Conclusion

The post full-time permanent employment economy is only a problem for people who are not prepared for it. Unfortunately, many of these people are highly-qualified graduates who are the product of an antiquated education system. Revamping university study should resolve this issue.