

Test section – Writing Task 2

Problems and Solutions essays

Activities

1. Generating ideas (1)
2. Generating ideas (2)
3. Language for expressing cause and effect
4. Language for expressing purpose
5. Practice writing task

Aims

- to help students practise generating ideas to prepare to write
- to provide students with language to express cause and effect / purpose

Learning outcomes

- students will have worked together to generate ideas related to a Problems and Solutions IELTS essay.
- students will have practised using language for expressing cause and effect as well as purpose.

Information about this section of IELTS

In Academic Writing Task 2, test takers will be asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem. Test takers should write at least 250 words in a formal, academic style. The recommended time for this task is 40 minutes.

Time	45-60 minutes
Level	B1+
Class	Suitable for groups / large classes F2F / Online
Interaction	Pair or group work Individual work
Materials	Worksheets x4 attached

Activity 1: Generating ideas (1)

Material: Worksheet 1

Time: 5-10 minutes

Procedure:

- introduce the focus of the lesson: Academic Writing Task 2 – Problems and Solutions essays.
- elicit environmental problems in general or show the class some pictures related to overfishing and elicit the topic.
- give students a copy of Worksheet 1 and draw attention to the essay question.
- elicit keywords from the question to identify what they have to write about, i.e. describe causes of overfishing and outline possible solutions.
- draw attention to the brainstorming table and elicit initial ideas for each column.
- students work in pairs / groups to generate further ideas for both columns.
- get class feedback.

Activity 2: Generating ideas (2)

Material: Worksheet 1

Time: 5-10 minutes

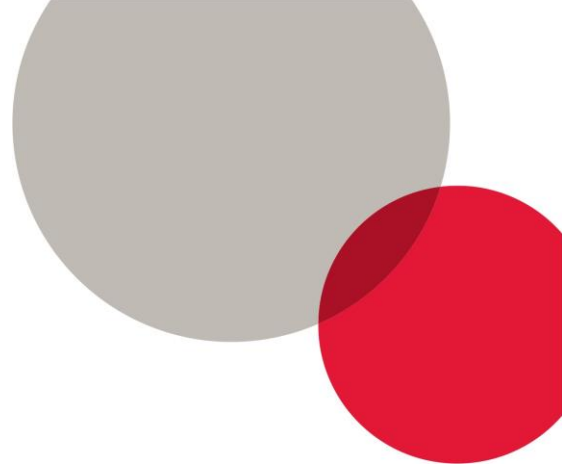
Procedure:

- draw attention to Ex. 2, the list of potential arguments, and elicit if any ideas matched students' own.
- students work in pairs to put ideas under the correct headings
- ask students to add their own ideas from the previous exercise (optional)
- get class feedback.

Answers

Causes of overfishing

- 'factory fishing' makes huge catches too easy
- huge areas of the world's oceans are not protected by environmental laws
- illegal fishing is difficult to police
- the problem does not get enough publicity
- there's a growing demand for fish worldwide
- fishing provides a quick return for companies and governments



Ways to prevent overfishing

- bring in laws to protect fish species and limit fishing
- create an international body to police the oceans and enforce laws
- put taxes on fishing to make it less attractive to companies
- raise public awareness through the media
- ban the fishing of certain species of fish

Activity 3: Language for expressing cause and effect

Material: Worksheet 3

Time: 10-15 minutes

Procedure:

- elicit expressions related to cause and effect.
- give students a copy of Worksheet 3 and draw attention to the language provided, especially any matches to students' own ideas from the previous elicitation.
- elicit some example sentences using the target language.
- draw attention to exercise 1 and complete a) in open class.
- allow students time to complete the sentences alone before checking with a partner.
- get class feedback.

Answers Exercise 1

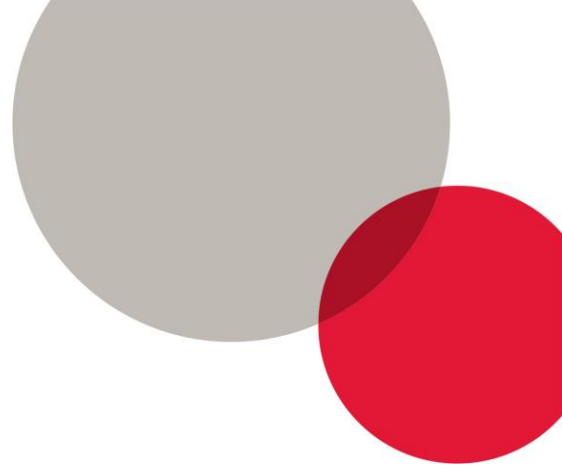
- a) Global warming is partly **a result of** increasing emissions of greenhouse gases.
- b) The decline of the manufacturing industry **brought about** high unemployment in many countries.
- c) People are more worried about crime **on account of** exaggerated reports in the media.
- d) Increasing pressure to work overtime **causes** parents to spend less time with their children.
- e) Many medicines remain unavailable to millions **owing to** their high cost.
- f) Globalisation **has given rise to** a bland 'pop culture' followed by young people worldwide.
- g) The increase in childhood obesity **is due to** the easy availability of unhealthy food products.

h) The desire for higher profits **leads to** companies setting up in countries where labour is cheap.

- draw attention to exercise 2, where students complete the paragraph using the language of cause and effect.
- complete the first example in open class.
- allow students time to complete the paragraph alone before checking with a partner.
- get class feedback.

Answers Exercise 2

There are a number of reasons why overfishing of the world's fish stocks has reached crisis levels. Firstly, catching large numbers of fish has become very easy **1 because of/as a result of/owing to** modern methods of factory fishing. Secondly, the scarcity of fish **2 results in/gives rise to/leads to** higher prices, making fishing a more attractive industry for governments and companies to invest in. This **3 results in/gives rise to/leads to/brings about** even more fishing and **4 results in/gives rise to/leads to/accounts for/causes** a vicious circle of increasing demand and diminishing supply. Furthermore, fishing in most parts of the world remains uncontrolled **5 due to/owing to/because of/on account of/as a result of** the lack of environmental laws. Finally, where laws do exist they are difficult to enforce **6 due to/owing to/because of/on account of/as a result of** the lack of an international maritime police authority.



Activity 4: Language for expressing purpose

Material: Worksheet 4

Time: 10-15 minutes

Procedure:

- give students a copy of Worksheet 4.
- students work alone and match phrases with appropriate endings.
- get class feedback
- draw attention to the verb form, the infinitive following these phrases.

Answers Exercise 1

1 B, 2 C, 3 A

- write the first gapped sentence from the paragraph on the whiteboard *There are many things that can be done 1..... to prevent fish species from being wiped out by overfishing.*
- elicit answers, from the phrases provided, to complete the gap.
- put students into pairs to complete the rest of the paragraph using the phrases provided.
- get class feedback.

There are many things that can be done **1 in order/so as** to prevent fish species from being wiped out by overfishing. One immediate measure is to put a complete ban on the fishing of certain species of fish **2 in order/so as** to save them from extinction. Environmental agencies should work to give the problem a higher profile in the media **3 so that** the public become more aware. Governments can help by imposing taxes on the fishing industry. **4 In this way**, companies may be less likely to see fishing as an easy way to make money. Governments should also bring in stricter laws in order to protect fish stocks from uncontrolled factory fishing. Finally, an international body ought to be created **5 with the purpose of** enforcing these laws worldwide.

Activity 5: Practice writing task

Material: Worksheet 5

Time: 15-20 minutes

Procedure:

- give students a copy of Worksheet 5.
- depending on your students, you may wish to work through the stages of this final activity as a whole class, in pairs or individually.
- give students time to read and identify the keywords of the question to identify what they must write.
- give students time to generate ideas for writing by completing the brainstorming table with their ideas.
- students work alone / in pairs / groups to write a “problems” paragraph and a “solutions” paragraph using the expressions from the earlier worksheets.
- monitor and get class feedback.
- if you are short of time, this can be set as a homework task.

Extra information

- You may wish to download the Public Band Descriptors for Writing Task 2 or tell your students to do so.
https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/ielts_task_2_writing_band_descriptors.pdf
- You can then point out the important differences in the criteria for the levels appropriate to your class.

Academic Writing Task 2

Worksheet 1

Generating ideas (1)

Overfishing of the world's oceans threatens many species with extinction and is putting the livelihood of millions of people around the world at risk. What are the causes of this problem and what can be done to prevent it from happening?

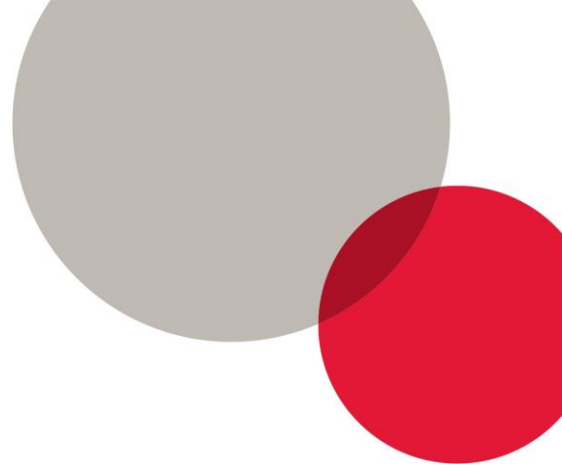
Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

1 Spend 5 minutes brainstorming ideas for the example question above underneath the headings below:

Causes of overfishing

Ways to prevent overfishing



Generating ideas (2)

2 Put each idea under the appropriate heading.

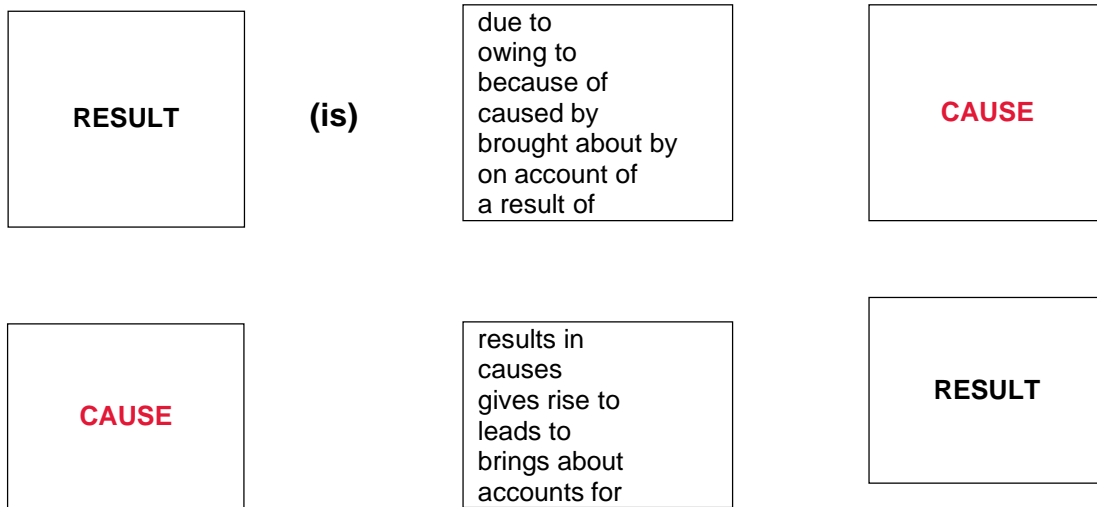
- 'factory fishing' makes huge catches too easy
- bring in laws to protect fish species and limit fishing
- create an international body to police the oceans and enforce laws
- fishing provides a quick return for companies and governments
- huge areas of the world's oceans are not protected by environmental laws
- illegal fishing is difficult to police
- put taxes on fishing to make it less attractive to companies
- raise public awareness through the media
- the problem does not get enough publicity
- there's a growing demand for fish worldwide
- ban the fishing of certain species of fish

<u>Causes of overfishing</u>	<u>Ways to prevent overfishing</u>

Academic Writing Task 2

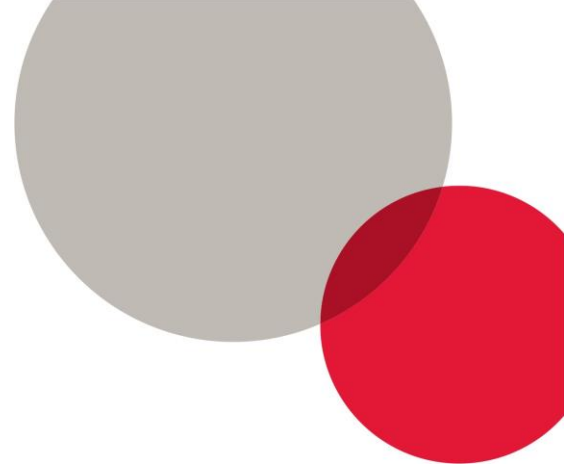
Worksheet 2

Language for expressing cause and effect



1 Each of the sentences below describes a cause and effect relationship. Choose the best expression to complete the gap. Use the information above to help you.

- a) Global warming is partly **[a result of/causes]** increasing emissions of greenhouse gases.
- b) The decline of the manufacturing industry **[on account of/brought about]** high unemployment in many countries.
- c) People are more worried about crime **[on account of/brings about]** exaggerated reports in the media.
- d) Increasing pressure to work overtime **[owing to/causes]** parents to spend less



time with their children.

e) Many medicines remain unavailable to millions **[owing to/gives rise to]** their high cost.

f) Globalisation **[a result of/has given rise to]** a bland ‘pop culture’ followed by young people worldwide.

g) The increase in childhood obesity **[is due to/leads to]** the easy availability of unhealthy food products.

h) The desire for higher profits **[on account of/leads to]** companies setting up in countries where labour is cheap.

2 Complete the paragraph below by using the cause and effect expressions from the previous activity.

There are a number of reasons why overfishing of the world’s fish stocks has reached crisis levels. Firstly, catching large numbers of fish has become very easy **1**..... modern methods of factory fishing. Secondly, the scarcity of fish **2**..... higher prices, making fishing a more attractive industry for governments and companies to invest in. This **3**..... even more fishing and **4**..... a vicious circle of increasing demand and diminishing supply. Furthermore, fishing in most parts of the world remains uncontrolled **5**..... the lack of environmental laws. Finally, where laws do exist they are difficult to enforce **6**..... the lack of an international maritime police authority.

Academic Writing Task 2

Worksheet 3

Language for expressing purpose

1 The phrases below are used to show the purpose or the reason for doing something. Match each one (1-3) with the verb form A-C) which follows it.

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | so (that)
in this way | A | to prevent overfishing |
| 2 | with the purpose of | B | overfishing is prevented |
| 3 | in order
so as | C | preventing overfishing |

2 Now complete the paragraph below with the phrases above.

There are many things that can be done **1**..... to prevent fish species from being wiped out by overfishing. One immediate measure is to put a complete ban on the fishing of certain species of fish **2**..... save them from extinction. Environmental agencies should work to give the problem a higher profile in the media **3**..... the public become more aware. Governments can help by imposing taxes on the fishing industry. **4**....., companies may be less likely to see fishing as an easy way to make money. Governments should also bring in stricter laws in order to protect fish stocks from uncontrolled factory fishing. Finally, an international body ought to be created **5**..... enforcing these laws worldwide.

Academic Writing Task 2

Worksheet 4

Practice writing task

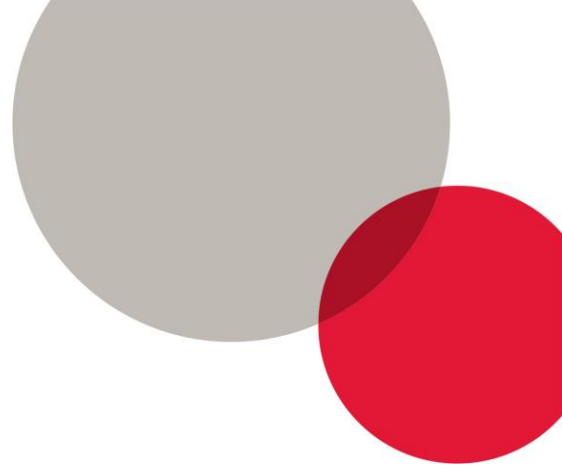
A rise in childhood obesity is a real threat to health with an increasing number of children now classified as overweight. What are the causes of the problem and what measures can be taken to solve them?

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

Write at least 250 words.

1 Working with a partner, try to generate ideas using the table below.





2 Write a “problems” paragraph about your ideas with the language of cause and effect.

3 Write a “solutions” paragraph about your ideas with the language of purpose.
