



THE ACADEMIC WRITING TEST - TASK 1

The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing is not an easy part of the exam. Describing a graph well in 20 minutes is not something most people can do straight away whether they are English speakers or not. The fact that it is in a foreign language for you as well doesn't help. Practice is the magic word though. Even good English users need practice with IELTS practice tests and it could mean all the difference between pass and fail. There is limited practice available and it's quite expensive. That's why we would recommend you download our IELTS practice tests. You will get more practice for less money. Go to the Home Page to find more information about our IELTS practice tests.

The Task

Basically the IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing is an information transfer task related to the factual content of an input text(s), graph(s), table(s) or diagram(s). It can be combinations of these inputs. Usually you will have to describe the information given in 1, 2 or 3 three inputs but sometimes you have will have to describe a process shown in a diagram.

Marking for the IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing will be marked in four areas. You will get a mark from 1 to 9 on Task Achievement, Coherence & Cohesion, Lexical Resource and Grammatical Range and Accuracy. Your final band for task 1 will be effectively an average of the four marks awarded in these areas. Task 1 writing is less important than task 2 and to calculate the final writing mark, more weight is assigned to the task 2 mark than to task 1's mark. To get a good overall mark for The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing though, both tasks have to be well answered so don't hold back on task 1 or give yourself too little time to answer it properly.

Task Achievement This where you can really make a difference through careful preparation. This mark grades you on basically "have you answered the question". It marks whether you have covered all requirements of the task sufficiently and whether you presented, highlighted and illustrate the key points appropriately.

Coherence and Cohesion These two are interrelated which is why they are done together. Cohesion is how your writing fits together. Does your writing with its ideas and content flow logically? Coherence is how you are making yourself understood and whether the reader of your writing understands what you are saying. An example of bad coherence and cohesion would be as follows:



1 We went to the beach because it was raining.

Probably the writer of this sentence does not mean "because" as people don't usually go to the beach when it is raining. The writer should have written:

2 We went to the beach although it was raining.

Sentence 1 has made a cohesion and coherence error (as well as a vocabulary one). "Because" does not join the ideas of the sentence together correctly and, as a result, the reader does not understand what the writer wants to say. This is an exaggerated example but it shows what I mean. Good cohesion and coherence is not noticeable as it allows the writing to be read easily. Good cohesion and coherence also includes good and appropriate paragraph usage.

Lexical Resource This area looks at the your choice of words. The marker will look at whether the right words are used and whether they are used at the right time in the right place and in the right way. To get a good mark here, the word choice should not only be accurate but wide ranging, natural and sophisticated.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy Here the examiner will mark your appropriate, flexible and accurate use of grammatical structures. Many people are worried about their grammar but, as you can see, grammar is only one section of four used to grade your writing. IELTS is much more interested in communication rather than grammatical accuracy. It is, of course, still part of the marking scheme and important as such.

Paragraphing for the IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

This is a very easy thing to do but it can have an enormous effect on the intelligibility of your writing and, of course, good use of paragraphing is part of the marking under the section Coherence and Cohesion. Very often people use no paragraphing in The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing and the examiner is faced with a "sea" of writing with no breaks from start to finish. For me, the best writings are those where there are paragraphs separated by an empty line and also indented. In this way your ideas are separated clearly. It shows and gives organization to your writing and makes it more readable. For the IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing, you should have a paragraph for your small introduction, a paragraph for each graph that you are describing and a paragraph for your ending. If there's only one graph to be described, then you should split your writing into 2 or maybe 3 paragraphs for the one graph. Make sure you practise on relevant questions from IELTS practice tests, so that you experienced at dealing with this issue.

For a longer section on paragraphing and how useful it can be, see Academic Writing Task 2 Tutorial.



Scales for the IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

What I mean by the scale is whether the graphs are marked in hundreds, thousands, millions, pounds, dollars (US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, etc.), kilograms, tons, metres, kilometres, percent and so on. It's important for you to make clear what your numbers mean for an accurate report of the graph. Don't just say that something costs 1000 for instance. Say it costs 1000 US dollars. You can either specify the scales at the start in your introduction so the reader knows it for the whole report or you can use the scale each time you quote a detail in the report.

Writing the Task for The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

The Introduction

You don't need much here. You only have 150 words to fully answer the question and this is not much. So, you need 1 or 2 sentences describing the following:

- The type(s) of graph you are describing
- The titles of the graph(s)
- The date of the graph(s)
- The scale (see the paragraph above)

You might not have all this information but you should report what you do have. So, for example, your beginning could look like this:

In this report I am going to describe 2 graphs. The first one is a bar chart showing the relationship between age and crime and the second is a pie chart showing the types of reported crime in the UK in 2002.

(This example gives an introduction to the Academic Writing Task 1 in Test 3 from ieltsishelpnow.com.)

Describing Graphs for The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

What you need to do here is factually describe the graphs. You don't need to analyse the data, For example you don't need to give reasons for why figures are high or low. Sometimes, when there is more than 1 graph, there is a relationship between the two and you can bring in some comparison but more than this is not necessary. In the same way, no specialised knowledge of your own is needed or wanted nor your opinions.



Remember the function of many graphs is to describe a trend so be sure that you describe the trends. A trend is how values change generally over time and it is important to describe the changes along with some of the individual values. We will look at trends a bit later under line graphs.

One important issue with The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing is how much detail to include in your report. This depends really on how much detail there is in the question. If there is only 1 graph and it doesn't have much numerical data in it, then you will be expected to include all or nearly all of the numerical detail. If, however, you have 2 graphs, both of which are very complicated with lots of values, you will not be expected to include everything as you only have 150 words to do the job. What you will have to do is to include a selection of what you feel is the most important and significant detail that needs to be included to accurately describe the graph. With practice from good IELTS practice tests, you will improve at including all the necessary detail with the right amount of words.

You must always have some numerical detail though.

Now let's look individually at the types of graph that you are likely to meet in the exam and how to describe them.

Bar Charts for The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

Hopefully you will have described the title of the bar chart in your introduction so you can go straight into the description. Basically, with a bar chart, you need to describe the bars and their values. When describing a bar chart you first have to decide in what order to describe the bars, highest value to lowest value or lowest value to highest value. It may be a mixture of this. If there are very many bars, you can sometimes group together for description 1 or 2 or 3 bars which have similar or the same values. If there are very many and you can't group them, then just describe the ones that are the most significant.

Pie Charts for The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

Pie charts are relatively straightforward as they only usually have a few sections though this is not always the case. You need to describe the segments and their values. If there are very many then just describe the ones that are the most significant. The values are often expressed in percentages but not always so be careful what scale you are using.

Tables for The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing



These can sometimes be tricky as they provide a lot of information and it is often awkward and difficult to describe every piece of information. You have to decide and describe the values and sections that are the most significant.

Line Graphs for The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

The function of a line graph is to describe a TREND pictorially. You therefore should try and describe the trend in it. If there are many lines in the graph(s), then just generally describe the trend. If there is only one or two, then use more detail. So, describe the movement of the line(s) of the graph giving numerical detail at the important points of the line.

To describe the movement, there is some language which will always be useful. Below is a list of language you can use. Check with your dictionary words that you don't understand and practice using the words/phrases so you use them in the right way. As you will see, there are a number of words which are similar in meaning. This means that you will be able to use a variety of vocabulary which gives a good impression to the examiner who will read and mark your writing. The words below are particularly useful for line graphs but they can also be used where appropriate to describe the other types of graph.

Expressing the Movement of a Line

Verbs

Nouns

Rise (to)

a rise

Increase (to)

an increase

Go up to

Grow (to)

growth

Climb (to)

a climb

Boom

a boom

Peak (at)

(reach) a peak (at)

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Fall (to)	a fall (of)
Decline (to)	a decline (of)
Decrease (to)	a decrease (of)
Dip (to)	a dip (of)
Drop (to)	a drop (of)
Go down (to)	
Reduce (to)	a reduction (of)
	A slump

Level out	a leveling out
No change	no change
Remain stable (at)	
Remain steady (at)	
Stay (at)	
Stay constant (at)	
Maintain the same level	

Adjectives	Adverbs
Dramatic	dramatically
Sharp	sharply

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Huge	hugely
Enormous	enormously
Steep	steeply
Substantial	substantially
Considerable	considerably
Significant	significantly
Marked	markedly
Moderate	moderately
Slight	slightly
Small	
Minimal	minimally

Describing the Speed of a Change

Adjectives	Adverbs
Rapid	rapidly
Quick	quickly
Swift	swiftly
Sudden	suddenly
Steady	steadily



Gradual gradually

Slow slowly

The Ending for the IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

You do not need a long and analytical conclusion for The IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing, but I do feel that you need to write something to end the report for reasons of structure. All you need to do is to write:

This ends my report.

This is all you need to end your Task 1; I think it's important to do this as it rounds off the report for the reader.

Describing a Process for the IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

We have looked at the various types of graph that you might be asked to describe but you also might have to describe a diagram representing a process.

First of all, the introduction and the ending should be more or less the same.

Then, work out the various stages of the process. Take each one separately (it's only probably going to have a limited number of stages) and describe them fully. Fully is the important word as reaching the word limit has proved harder in this task. If you have this problem, don't be afraid to use your imagination to add to detail about the process.

Other Hints for the IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing

- DON'T copy any part of the question in your answer. This is not your own work and therefore will be disregarded by the examiner and deducted from the word count. You can use individual words but be careful of using long "chunks" of the question text.
- Don't repeat yourself or the same ideas. This gives a bad impression and the examiner realises that it isn't adding to the content of your report.
- If you are weak at English grammar, try to use short sentences. This allows you to control the grammar and the meaning of your writing much more easily and contributes to a better cohesion and coherence mark. It's much easier to make things clear in a foreign language if you keep your sentences short!
- Think about the tenses of your verbs. If you're writing about something that happened in the past, your verbs will need to be in the past tenses. If you're describing the future, you will need to use the future tenses. If it's a habitual action, you'll need the present simple tense



and so on. If you have time, a quick check of your verbs at the end of the exam can help you find errors. For describing graphs you will probably need past tenses whereas, for describing a process, you will probably need the present simple. Think about the verbs while practising and then it will become easier when you do the exam.

- As I just said, if you have finished the exam with time to spare, DON'T just sit there!! Check what you have done. If you have time after the check, check again. And so on....
- Don't be irrelevant. Although you can use your imagination to expand on your answer, if any part of your report is totally unrelated to the question and put in to just put up the word count, then the examiner will not take it into account and deduct it from the word count.
- If you want to improve, there's no secret. Practice. Practice. Practice. You won't get better sitting and doing nothing. Even good English users need practice with IELTS practice tests. It could make all the difference between your getting the band that you need, and getting half a band less than you need and having to do the exam again.

Finally, there are no correct answers or methods. Here I've given you some ideas to guide you and hopefully to help you but the questions can be answered well in different ways. Good luck with the IELTS Academic Task 1 Writing. I hope that this free tutorial has helped you! Below are links to the other free IELTS academic tutorials. We strongly recommend that you practice for the tests with good IELTS practice tests. Of course, we would like you to use ours as we believe ours are excellent and the cheapest on the market, but any good IELTS practice tests will do.

THE ACADEMIC WRITING TEST - TASK 2

Task 2 in the IELTS Academic Writing Test is more important than task 1. You have to write more, it's a more difficult task and it is worth more to your final band for writing as more weight is given to Task 2 than to Task 1. Practice on IELTS practice tests is important for both tasks.

The IELTS Academic Writing Test

The IELTS Academic Writing Test lasts for 1 hour and includes 2 tasks. Task 1 is a letter and you must write at least 150 words. You should spend about 20 minutes out of the hour for Task 1. Task 2 is an essay and you must write at least 250 words. You should spend about 40 minutes for Task 2.

The Task for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

The IELTS Academic Writing Task 2 asks you to write a short essay of a minimum of 250 words. The essay is usually a discussion of a subject of general interest. You may have to present and justify your opinion about something, give the solution to a problem or compare differing ideas or viewpoints. It is



important that you consider finding IELTS practice tests, so that you can practice this part of the IELTS in order to achieve your true potential.

Marking for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

Your task will be marked in four areas. You will get a mark from 1 to 9 on Task response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource and Grammatical Range and Accuracy. Your final band for Task 2 will be effectively an average of the four marks awarded in these areas. Task 2 writing is more important than Task 1 and to calculate the final writing mark, more weight is assigned to the Task 2 mark than to Task 1's mark. To get a good overall mark though, both tasks have to be well answered so don't hold back on Task 1 or give yourself too little time to answer it properly.

Task Response

This mark grades you on the content of your essay. It marks whether you have fully addressed all parts of task. The examiner wants you in your essay to have a fully developed answer to the question given with relevant and extended ideas and support. The support is the facts that you use to back up your ideas. Support is very important in Task 2. You need to bring in facts from your own experience in order to support your ideas.

Coherence and Cohesion

These two are interrelated which is why they are done together. Cohesion is how your writing fits together. Does your writing with its ideas and content flow logically? Coherence is how you are making yourself understood and whether the reader of your writing understands what you are saying. An example of bad coherence and cohesion would be as follows:

1 We went to the beach because it was raining.

Probably the writer of this sentence does not mean "because" as people don't usually go to the beach when it is raining. The writer should have written:

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Sentence 1 has made a cohesion and coherence error (as well as a vocabulary one). "Because" does not join the ideas of the sentence together correctly and, as a result, the reader does not understand what the writer wants to say. This is an exaggerated example but it shows what I mean. Good cohesion and coherence is not noticeable as it allows the writing to be read easily. Good cohesion and coherence also includes good and appropriate paragraph usage.



Lexical Resource

This area looks at the your choice of words. The marker will look at whether the right words are used and whether they are used at the right time in the right place and in the right way. To get a good mark here, the word choice should not only be accurate but wide ranging, natural and sophisticated.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Here the examiner will mark your appropriate, flexible and accurate use of grammatical structures. Many people are worried about their grammar but, as you can see, grammar is only one section of four used to grade your writing. IELTS is much more interested in communication rather than grammatical accuracy. It is, of course, still part of the marking scheme and important as such.

Paragraphing for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

This is a very easy thing to do but it can have an enormous effect on the clarity of your writing and it directly affects your mark in the section on Coherence and Cohesion. I have said this for Task 1 but for Task 2 it's even more important. In Task 2 you will be writing more and it is therefore more important to divide your writing up into divisions to make it easier to read.

Very often people use no paragraphing and the examiner is faced with a "sea" of writing with no breaks from start to finish. For me, the best writings are those where there are paragraphs separated by an empty line and also indented. In this way your ideas are separated clearly. It shows and gives organization to your writing and makes it more readable.

For Task 2, have a paragraph break after your introduction, and then for every differing section of your separate ideas with the supporting evidence. Then have a final paragraph for your conclusion. You should aim to have 3 or 4 paragraphs plus the introduction and conclusion.

Look at this section on paragraphing. It is divided into 5 separate paragraphs dividing the 5 different areas that I want to present to you, the reader. The 5 areas are:

- Paragraph 1 Why paragraphing is important for Task 2.
- Paragraph 2 How to divide your paragraphing.
- Paragraph 3 Where your paragraph divisions should occur.
- Paragraph 4 The division of paragraphs in this section.
- Paragraph 5 Explaining the comparison with this section and the one below to show how paragraphing can work.



Below I will repeat paragraphs 1 - 4 of this section on paragraphing but I am going to remove all the paragraphs and line breaks and make it a "sea of writing" as I said can happen above. I hope you feel that this section is easier to understand than the one below!! (By the way, I haven't used line breaks through this entire tutorial as there would be too many and it would be too confusing).

Paragraphing (bad example section)

This is a very easy thing to do but it can have an enormous effect on the clarity of your writing. I have said this for Task 1 but for Task 2 it's even more important. In Task 2 you will be writing more and it is therefore more important to divide your writing up into divisions to make it easier to read. Very often people use no paragraphing and the examiner is faced with a "sea" of writing with no breaks from start to finish. For me, the best writings are those where there are paragraphs separated by an empty line and also indented. In this way your ideas are separated clearly. It shows and gives organization to your writing and makes it more readable. For Task 2, have a paragraph break after your introduction, and then for every differing section of your separate ideas with the evidence. Then have a final paragraph for your conclusion. You should aim to have 3 or 4 paragraphs plus the introduction and conclusion. Look at this section on paragraphing. It is divided into 4 separate paragraphs dividing the 4 different areas that I want to present to you the reader. The 4 areas are: Paragraph 1: Why paragraphing is important for task 2: Paragraph 2: How to divide your paragraphing. Paragraph 3: Where your paragraph divisions should occur. Paragraph 4: An example to show you how paragraphing works.

I hope you feel that the first section was easier to understand than this second one!!

Ideas to Think About for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

1 Timing

The exam paper recommends that you spend about 40 minutes on this question and this is about right. Remember that Task 2 gives more to your final writing band and so you should make sure that you have enough time after Task 1 to properly answer Task 2. Some students do Task 2 first in order to make sure that Task 2 is answered well before they get onto Task 1. There is no problem with this but make sure you write the 150 words to give a good answer for Task 1 as well.

So, whatever you decide to do about your approach to Task 1 and Task 2 in the writing paper, make sure that you spend approximately 20 minutes on Task 1 and 40 minutes on Task 2. This should give you the right amount of time to provide good answers to both tasks.

Practice from IELTS practice tests on writing both tasks in under an hour is an important part of your preparation for the IELTS exam.



2 Answering the question.

Although this sounds very straightforward, people don't often properly answer the question set and therefore don't get the band that they should even if the writing is very good.

First of all read the question very carefully in order to see exactly what it asks you. Very often there will be more than 1 part to the question; sometimes even 3 or 4 parts. When you produce your answer you must answer all the different parts of the question. How much you produce on each part depends on how important you think it is.

You have to write a formal academic English essay of the type that would be required for teachers or tertiary education courses. Formulate and develop an argument and show a personal response. Give your opinions and back them up with evidence and examples. Your answer should persuade, be consistent and develop logically towards a conclusion, which answers all parts of the question.

Another important basic is to write at least 250 words. Writing less does not answer the question, which tells you to write at least 250 words. If you write less than 250 words, the examiner marking your paper will give you a maximum of 5 for Arguments, Ideas and Evidence or even less. It is no problem to write more than the 250 words; there is no upward word limit on the essay. Time is your only constraint. Writing more than the minimum under the time limit requires practice on proper questions from IELTS practice tests.

The question wants you to produce an essay. Therefore don't give a list of numbered notes (your paragraphs should not be numbered). Give the examiner a proper essay with an introduction, a main body with your ideas and evidence and a conclusion, all divided of course with the paragraphing techniques discussed above.

3 Planning

Many students that I have taught have regarded writing an essay plan as a waste of time. The only answer I can give is that it depends on the individual. If you are a good essay writer who can automatically organize your ideas and structure in your head so well that you can produce a good structured essay without planning, then I say that's it's fine not to write an essay plan.

Also if you're really short of time and you need to get writing on page, then you don't want to waste time on planning. However, if none of these conditions apply, then 1 or 2 minutes thinking about your ideas and how you are going to present them will not be wasted. I'm not saying that you should spend 10 minutes on this. Just take a scrap of paper and jot down some ideas that you are going to use in your essay.



Then you can divide the ideas into 3 or 4 paragraphs in a logical order. This shouldn't take you long and the structure that this will give your essay will be well worth the time that you spend doing it.

The above skills do not come easily and it is important that you practice planning with proper IELTS writing questions from IELTS practice tests.

Writing The Essay in the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

1 The Introduction

First of all, don't repeat any part of the question in your introduction. This is not your own work and therefore will be disregarded by the examiner and deducted from the word count. You can use individual words but be careful of using "chunks" of the question text.

Your introduction should first say what you understand by the question. Then give the main issue or issues that you intend to bring into your answer. Don't go into any detail; you can save that for the later paragraphs.

Finally, the question often asks you to take up a position over an issue. There is no right answer for putting your views at the start and then explaining this through the essay, or developing your opinion through your essay and stating your final stance at the end. I personally like the opinion at the start of the essay. Quickly and clearly answer the question, making your attitude plain. Don't give any reasons. Again, that's what the body of your essay is for. You don't have to do it this way though. You can wait until your conclusion to give your position as regards the question.

2 The Body of Your Essay

You should aim to have 3 or 4 paragraphs in your answer. This is not exact. You can write more or fewer paragraphs, as your answer requires. Remember you've only got about 40 minutes to cover all the question areas so don't be too ambitious and try to write too much.

In the body of your essay you should do several things. You need to examine all parts of the question. Remember there is often more than 1 question contained in the essay question text. You need to look at all that is asked and look at both sides of every issue. IELTS essay questions usually ask you something which has two or more points of view, and you need to consider both sides of every argument no matter what your opinion is.

Look below at the example. The question asks whether or not you believe whether societies should use capital punishment. There are, of course, two points of view:



(1) capital punishment should be used and

(2) capital punishment shouldn't be used.

Let's say for example that you don't believe that capital punishment should be used by societies. No matter what point of view you have, you should look at both sides, though naturally your writing will favour the position that you have taken. Give the reasons why you don't believe in capital punishment but then look at the opposing view and say why you don't accept it. In this way you will show the reader your powers of analysis when looking at such an issue.

Don't forget that when you have finished looking at this issue there is a second part of the question to be analysed too.

As we said earlier, your ideas need to be supported by examples and it is in the body of your essay that they should appear. For every idea that you present try and give an example from your own experience that shows that your idea is right.

An example from your own experience means something that you know from your life, from your country's news or history or anything that you have read anywhere. You can actually invent examples if you need as long as they seem realistic and believable. The examiner is probably not going to research anything you write about.

The example below should illustrate what we have been discussing here.

3 The Conclusion

This doesn't need to be a long paragraph. You need to sum up your points providing a final perspective on your topic. All the conclusion needs is three or four strong sentences, which do not need to follow any set formula. Simply review the main points (being careful not to restate them exactly or repeat all your examples) and briefly describe your feelings about the topic; this provides an answer to all parts of the question. An anecdote can also end your essay in a useful way.

An Example of the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

It's very difficult to visualize and understand all the things that I have said above. You need to practice with good quality questions from IELTS practice tests. Here I will try and provide you with an example question and then go through the stages of thought to show you how to approach an IELTS Task 2 essay.



Here is a possible question that would be typical for a Task 2 essay question.

"Do you believe that societies ought to enforce capital punishment or Are there alternative forms of punishment that would be better used?"

First of all you need to consider the question. What does it ask? Straight away, you can see that it asks 2 things.

It wants to know if you believe that society should use capital punishment (cp) and it also wants to know if you can offer any alternatives to capital punishment. Your answer should give a balanced view of both parts of this question. What is important to realize is that there is no correct answer here. You can present any point of view as long as you can support it.

So, in your planning stage you should have a roadmap for the introduction, each paragraph and the conclusion. Here is my brief plan for the essay.

Intro

- What cp is. Where it's used. (not my country). Differing opinions.
- I don't believe in cp.
- There are alternative punishments.

Body

1. Inhumane - we shouldn't sink to the level of criminals.
2. We can get convictions wrong; prisoners can be released if there's an error. Mentally ill. Examples.
3. Alternative punishments: life means life; hospitals for criminally insane. Costs more but society has a duty to care.
4. Many countries favour it and they say it works. Prisons too full. Killers deserve nothing less. Some crimes deserve it. Not my morals though.

Conclusion

I don't agree. We can do other things. Avoid mistakes and make modern society a humane one.

The above is a basic plan of how I want to write my essay. It's not rigid. I can change my ideas and format as I write if I feel I can do better.



I can also add things that I've forgotten as the essay goes on. It's normal of course for you to have new, good ideas as you write and the skill is to get them into your essay without upsetting the balance of the essay. How do you do this? It's practice again. You won't get good at writing essays and adapting your writing well without practice with relevant questions from quality IELTS practice tests.

So, below is an example essay using the plan above as a basis.

Example Essay for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

Capital punishment is the killing of a criminal for a crime that he has committed. Previously most countries employed this method of punishment but nowadays it is much less widely used. I personally do not believe that societies today should use capital punishment and I also believe that there are alternative punishments that can be used.

My main argument against capital punishment is that I believe we do not have the right to kill another human being regardless of the crime. I don't believe in the old religious maxim of "an eye for an eye." Modern societies shouldn't turn to such barbaric punishments.

Another argument against capital punishment is that people can be wrongly convicted and executed. If a man is in prison, he can be released if later proved not guilty. If he is dead, there is nothing that can be done. In the UK, a group of supposed terrorists were convicted of murder in Birmingham in the 1970s. They were proved innocent about 15 years later and released. If they had been executed, innocent people would have died.

There are alternative punishments available. For bad crimes prison life sentences can be given with criminals imprisoned for the rest of their lives. Also a lot of horrific crimes are committed by people who are mentally sick. These people are not responsible for their actions and can be kept safely and permanently in secure hospitals. Yes, this costs a lot more but I believe it is the duty of society to do this.

There are arguments for capital punishment. Many people feel its threat stops serious crime and that criminals deserve nothing less. It's cheaper and keeps the prisons manageable. I can understand this point of view but I cannot agree with it.

So, in conclusion, I don't believe in capital punishment, as there are less barbaric alternatives available. We can avoid horrific mistakes and make modern society a humane one.

Final Comment for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing



I hope that this essay shows how to approach the Task 2 question and illustrates the ideas that I have written above.

Finally I will leave you with the message that I always do. To really improve your skills at writing essays, you need to practice. Get some essay titles from good quality IELTS practice tests, sit down when you get the chance, give yourself 40 minutes and write some essays. Try and do it as I have directed with a couple of minutes for planning, as this will train you to make a better-constructed essay in the long run.

You can get essay titles probably from surfing the internet or you can use the IELTS practice tests at ieltsishelpnow.com which are available to download on this site at a fraction of the cost of books in the shops. In addition to example questions in our IELTS practice tests, we provide you with example essays on all our questions, for both Tasks 1 and 2. Good luck with the IELTS Academic Writing Test! Below are links to the other free IELTS Academic tutorials. We strongly recommend that you practice for the tests with good IELTS practice tests. Of course, we would like you to use ours as we believe ours are excellent and the cheapest on the market, but any good IELTS practice tests will do.