

18 SAMPLE ESSAYS FOR IELTS LEARNERS.

By Practical IELTS

Getting practice and reading sample essays is one of the most important ways of practicing for the IELTS writing exam. That's why we put together this collection of essay questions and model answers.

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How to use this book

For the last five months, Practical English has been posting an 'Essay of the Week' every week. The way this works is:

- Every week I send out an essay question.
- During the week, people submit their answers to us.
- The following week, I send out a sample answer.

Over the last few months, this process has led to us having a fairly significant set of essays. Rather than letting these essays be forgotten, I wanted to collect them into a book so that students can use it as a resource for practising their writing. To use this book, we recommend that you take a look at the list of questions in the contents, they are grouped together by IELTS question type. Once or twice a week, write an essay on one of these topics then take a look at the sample essay. Compare your answer and the sample answer for:

- The approach to answering the question.
- The vocabulary used.
- The complex grammar structures used.

You shouldn't be comparing your essays to the sample answers negatively, but it is good to look for ideas in the sample answer to adopt for next time. It might also be worth looking at if you've reacted to the question type in the right way.

If you find this book useful and you want to take your learning to the next level, do think about taking a lesson with us. You can find out more at www.practicalIELTS.school.

The government should pay money to the parents of very young children so that one of them can stay at home and look after their children. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

In the modern age, mothers and fathers are often so busy that they do not get to see their children and governments are considering subsidising them to stay at home. In this essay, I will argue that this would be a positive development. First, because having a parent at home is good for children's development, and second, because this type of policy can save the government money in the long term.

Financially supporting parents to not work can be beneficial to their children's development. Because many parents only work because they have a financial need, this type of subsidy can encourage many of them to give up their careers and spend time at home. If children spend more time with their parents, this can help them with their emotional and intellectual development. For example, having a parent who is always at home to talk to can help toddlers learn to speak more fluently and be more in touch with their emotions.

Furthermore, while funding full-time parents can be expensive in the short term, it can save money long term. If children grow up close to their parents, they may be able to use their mother or father as a role model when they face difficulty in the future. As a result, they may be more economically productive members of society or less likely to get involved in crime, two factors that can be an economic boon to the government in the long term. For example, children who grew up close to their parents might be less likely to use drugs and as a result, the government may be able to spend less on policing and get more tax revenue.

In conclusion, financially encouraging parents to stay at home is beneficial long term. First, because it helps children grow up well, and second, because it is a good financial investment in the future.

Some people believe that spending money on experiences is more important than material possessions. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Today, many people prioritise spending their income on having a good time instead of on buying things. In this essay, I will argue that it is better to focus on activities you enjoy rather than consumerism. First, because experiences are more interesting, and second, because it is impractical to focus on shopping.

First, a life full of experiences is more interesting than one full of possessions. If someone has had a lot of fascinating experiences, such as going on vacation to many places or attending lots of events, they will always have lots of memories of doing those things. However, although someone might enjoy material goods when they first buy them, they will quickly lose their initial interest. In addition, it is easier to make friends through doing things than through owning things, so people who focus on having experiences are more likely to have an interesting circle of friends with similar interests.

Second, focusing on possessions can be impractical. Owning things means having somewhere to store them and this can lead to a cluttered house. For example, if someone enjoys collecting vinyl records, they may quickly run out of shelf space and end up with records all over the house. Furthermore, because people tend to care about their possessions, deciding what to throw away when decluttering can be a painful decision.

In conclusion, I believe that a life full of experiences is preferable to one full of material goods. First, because experiences are more interesting, and second because a life based around possessions can be impractical.

Many people believe it is better to be self-employed than work for a company. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

In the modern world, many people believe it is better to break free from the traditional workplace and work as a freelancer. In this essay, I will agree with this view. First, because working for yourself allows you to set your own priorities, and second, because it allows people to earn more money.

One advantage of freelancing is that it allows you to decide what you value when you work. If you are a freelancer, you have, to some extent, the option to pick and choose what work you do. While some people may want to prioritise earning as much money as possible, others will opt to take on projects that interest them or allow them to have more free time. For example, a freelancer with a family might decide to take on a few high paying projects to leave more time for their loved ones.

Furthermore, working for yourself allows you to earn more money. When you work for a corporation, some of the money you make for that company needs to be extracted as profit. In addition, if people who are self-employed do a good job, they will see more of the fruits of their labour. For example, when freelancers work hard and build a good reputation, they will be able to charge more and keep the increase in revenue. Conversely, although working hard for a company may eventually lead to a pay rise, there is less of a direct link between your performance and earnings.

In conclusion, because entrepreneurs are more able to set their priorities and are able to earn more, I believe that there are more advantages to entrepreneurship than employment.

Some people believe that we should knock down historical buildings to make way for more practical new builds. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

As our cities get more overpopulated, there is an increasing sentiment that we should demolish older buildings and replace them with contemporary ones. In this essay I will agree with this point of view. First because these buildings can be more accessible and second because it can help us solve our housing crisis.

First, replacing old buildings can allow us to make buildings that are accessible for everyone. Because many old buildings are not built with disabled people in mind, they do not have the facilities to be used by everyone. For example, some old buildings have lack elevators to allow people to get to every floor. While it is sometimes possible to adapt old buildings, this is not always the case and these adaptations can be impractical.

Furthermore, new buildings can help fix our housing crisis by allowing more people to live there. In a process called 'urbanisation', people are increasingly moving to cities which puts a drain on housing resources. By replacing old builds with new ones, which can be high rise buildings that can house far more people, we can provide housing for more of the population. In addition, because this increases the supply of housing, this can help reduce average rents.

In conclusion, replacing historical buildings with new ones is both more accessible and offers more housing. As a result, I believe replacing them would be a good way to improve our cities.

Some people believe that school children should not be given homework. What is your opinion?

There is considerable disagreement in society over whether homework is the best use of students' after-school time. In this essay, I will argue that it is better that students have no homework. First, because it makes students stressed and second because there are more worthwhile uses of students' extracurricular time.

First, many students are overburdened by homework resulting in stress. While they may wish to relax after a full day of school, they are forced to continue to work into the evening. As we know, it is important to take a break, so depriving them of this free time can have a negative impact on their mental health. If students fail to complete their work, they may be punished by their teacher, which creates even more stress. In the modern age, schools are a very competitive and high-pressure place and adding to this stress by taking away students' free time and making them afraid of punishment is not good for their anxiety level.

Furthermore, students time can be better used with other extracurricular activities. For example, students might use their after school time to learn an instrument, take up a hobby or practice a sport. These types of activities make students happier, and more well-rounded people as well as teaching an important lesson: that you should follow your interests. In addition, because these types of activities are highly valued by universities and employers, they are also better for students long term life prospects.

To conclude, taking homework away from students makes them less stressed and frees up time for more useful activities. As a result, I believe that it would be better for students to be free from homework.

Some people believe it is better to vacation in another country while others believe it is best to stay in one's home country. Compare both sides and give your point of view.

As the tourism sector has grown in importance in the modern world, whether people should travel abroad on holiday has also gained in importance. In this essay I will, first, look at the cultural understanding that can be gained from traveling abroad, and then second, explore the environmental harm this can cause. I will conclude that it is better to avoid foreign travel.

First, travelling to other countries can be a culturally enriching experience. When travelling abroad, they can discover new styles of music, art and food. If people have this type of experience, it can teach them to learn more about the world and appreciate their own and other cultures, something that can enrich their lives long term. For example, if someone travels to Japan, they might gain a deeper understanding of areas of Japanese culture, such as sumo, sushi and communal eating.

However, although there are many advantages to international travel, there is also a significant environmental cost. When people travel abroad, their flights cause carbon dioxide to be ejected in the high atmosphere, contributing to global warming. Furthermore, the infrastructure for these tourists, such as building new hotels, roads and restaurants, can have a detrimental impact on the local environment. Ironically, such developments can often lead to the destruction of the local environment that initially lead people to want to visit.

To conclude, while I appreciate the cultural benefits of international travel, I believe that the environmental costs are too high. As a result, in my view it is better to take a staycation than travel abroad.

Some people prefer to shop at small shops and local markets while others prefer to use large supermarkets. Compare both sides and give your opinion.

There is a tension on modern high streets between those who prefer superstores and those who prefer to shop locally. In this essay I will compare the idea that large shops offer convenience with the advantages of getting to know your local shopkeepers. I will conclude that, for most people, it is better to shop locally.

It is hard to deny that travelling out of town to go to a supermarket is incredibly convenient. First, they have an incredible range of goods and services, from fresh meat and fish to world foods and a great wine selection. Second, because these shops now often offer extra services, such as opticians and dry cleaning, they allow people to complete many of their other tasks alongside shopping. Finally, if you drive, these shops tend to have large parking areas meaning you can easily transport a big weekly shop to your car, this means people don't have to carry shopping too far.

Conversely, local shops are more personal and hands on, and this provides a significant advantage. As people who work in local shops are specialists, they are able to offer more detailed advice than supermarket workers. For example, while a large store will sell you fish, your local fishmonger will be able to give you expert advice on which fish are in season. In addition, because of the personal nature of these stores, know workers in local stores also means they can learn your preferences and assist you better.

To conclude, although superstores are more convenient, I believe that the benefits of local shops are worth the extra effort. This is because the service you get from them is personalised and more expert than you would be able to get in a supermarket.

Some people believe it is better for young people to work before attending university. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of this and give your own opinion.

For many people, it is advantageous for young adults to experience the world of work before starting higher education. In this essay I will compare the advantages this can bring to students' work ethic, with the disadvantage of lost time. I will conclude that this work ethic is worth taking the time to gain.

First, gaining some experience in the workplace can help students work independently when they arrive at university. While school is also hard work, university requires you to do much more work without supervision. If students come straight from high school to university without any work experience, they may struggle to make the transition to this independent style of work. Conversely, a student who has some work experience at a supermarket, where they are expected to work proactively, will be able to apply that mindset to their academic studies.

However, the cost of this is that students might lose a year or more of their time. Because most universities only admit students once a year, getting work experience for a short period of time is usually not possible. As a result, students start university a year later and will go on to finish a year later too. As graduate jobs tend to pay more than work experience jobs, students who gain work experience before university will likely miss out on a year of well paid work and earn less over their lifetime.

To conclude, while joining the workforce before university can help young people be better prepared for independent work, it can also cost them time and money in the long run. However, for me, it is more important for these students to get as much benefit as they can from their studies, so work experience is worth doing as an investment in the future.

Some people believe it is better to raise children in a city, while others believe the countryside is better. Compare both points of view and give your own opinion.

Many parents are concerned about whether it is better to bring up their children in an urban or rural setting. In this essay, I will compare an advantage of cities that they allow for more cultural experiences with an advantage of the countryside that it allows kids to connect with nature. I will conclude that it is better to raise kids in the city.

First, the city allows for more cultural experiences than the countryside. Because cities are more densely populated, they tend to have more art galleries, museums and theatres. As a result, children who grow up in cities have more access to cultural experiences, which can be beneficial to their education, than those who grow up in the countryside. For example, if you grow up in a city, you are more likely to be able to visit many museums and art galleries to improve your knowledge of art and history.

Conversely, raising children in the country means they will be more able to connect with nature. For children who grow up there, there are many places to explore, such as forests, canals, rivers and lakes. When children grow up around these features, the experience can help children learn about wildlife and the natural world. In addition, if they grow up near farms, they can learn more about where their food comes from, which can give them a deeper appreciation for it.

To conclude, while cities have more cultural opportunities for young people, rural areas have more nature. For me, because it is becoming increasingly easy to learn about culture online, I think it is better to raise children in the countryside than the city.

Some people believe it is important to pay attention to traditional wisdom while others believe people should embrace new ideas. Compare both sides and give your own opinion.

There has been a clash of cultures between those who respect long-established advice and iconoclasts, people who want to see new ideas come to the forefront of society. In this essay, I will, first, explore the advantage that traditional advice is well tested. Second, I will examine how embracing new ideas can promote positive changes in society.

Traditional beliefs become traditional because they have been tested many times. While people might pass on bad advice from time to time, if they don't work for other people, it won't be passed on again. As a result, because most advice that is around is based on a wealth of common experience, it can be trusted. For example, when parents hear advice from their parents, they will only hear the advice that worked in the past and be able to do a better job as a result of it.

However, challenging traditional beliefs is essential for making progress as a society. Throughout history, such as in the civil rights movement or the French revolution, making positive changes as a society has required a rejection of traditional beliefs. If we want to successfully deal with challenges, like global warming and inequality, we will need to rethink traditional ideas about how we live. For instance, to solve the climate crisis, we need to reconsider traditional beliefs about international travel and car ownership.

To conclude, although traditional ideas are well tested, new ideas are important to push society forward. Therefore, I believe that it is better to focus on new ideas than old ones.

Some people believe it is good to celebrate a wedding by spending lots of money on a large party while others prefer a small event with family and friends. Compare both sides and give your point of view.

For some people, throwing a lavish wedding reception is a worthwhile use of their wedding budget while others prefer a more personal ceremony. In this essay, I will compare both points of view. First, by looking at how large weddings can reunite people, and second, by exploring how saving money is important for newlyweds.

First, having a large wedding can serve as a reason for people to be reunited. Because they tend to have work and family commitments, people drift apart over time. However, when there is a large wedding, it provides a reason for those people to be reunited. For example, if a family is split over different parts of the country, it is easy for those parts to lose touch, but a big wedding gives them the chance to see each other and catch up with one another.

Conversely, these large weddings can be an expense that can negatively impact newlyweds at an important time in their lives. When people get married, they are often also looking for a home to live in together and may also be thinking about having children, two significant expenses. As a result, spending money on a wedding can detract from their other financial goals. Because these goals are more long term, they should be prioritised.

In conclusion, throwing an opulent wedding helps bring old friends together but is also pricey for the newlyweds at a costly time in their lives. In my view, it would be better for couples to prioritise their own needs over their acquaintances' and hold a more pared-down event.

A reliance on cars to get around causes issues in many cities. What are some of these problems and what are some solutions?

In modern cities, car dependency causes a range of problems. In this essay, I will look at the issues caused by air pollution and congestion. Then, I will look at some potential solutions.

One major problem with car culture is air pollution. When people drive, it releases harmful chemicals, such as carbon dioxide, into the air. If there is an increase in air pollution, this can cause issues such as respiratory problems. Furthermore, a reliance on driving increases traffic congestion, a situation where there are too many cars on the road and traffic slows to a crawl. This causes significant amounts of wasted time, which is a detriment to people's lives.

To solve this problem, it is important to encourage people to use alternative means of transportation, such as cycling or using public transport. For example, cities can build cycle lanes to make cycling quicker and safer. If they do this, people will be more likely to take their bike rather than their car, something which can lead to a decrease in congestion and air pollution. In addition, it is possible to subsidise public transportation, something that can encourage more bus and train use and lead to fewer cars on the road.

In conclusion, car culture causes serious problems such as pollution and congestions. However, there are also potential solutions to this such as building bike lanes and funding public transport.

An increasing number of professionals like teachers and doctors are leaving poorer countries where they grew up to work in richer countries. What are some problems this causes and what are some solutions?

In recent years, developed countries have seen an influx of educators and healthcare practitioners from the developing world. In this essay, I will look at two issues this causes and present some solutions. First, that these countries do not recoup their investments in these people's education, and second, that this leads to an unfair distribution of important workers.

First, professionals leaving the country after graduation is unfair to the countries who train them. When countries train public workers, they are making an investment in their education that they expect to recoup by having well trained staff in important jobs. If these professionals then leave the country for a high salary in the developed world, this means the country fails to get anything back for its investment. This is especially problematic for developing countries who have less public money available for education.

Second, this causes a shortage of professionals in those countries. Because these professionals have in-demand skills, it is easy for them to find jobs and visas abroad. This can cause staff shortages as poorer countries can lose staff to countries with more money causing a damaging shortage. For example, a country might lose teachers and then struggle to develop because of a lack of education provision.

To conclude, losing skilled professionals is both unfair and damaging to countries. However, there are several solutions to this problem. Developed countries should focus more on training their own workers rather than relying on the developing world. In addition, poorer countries should make training conditional on trainees working in that country for a period of time.

There are many different types of music in the world today. Why do we need music? Is the traditional music of a country more important than the international music that is heard everywhere nowadays?

There is a diverse array of music in the modern world. This essay will explore the value of this music and what type of music people should listen to. It will, first, explore the importance of music as a way of expressing emotions. Second, it will argue that the increased cultural exchange in music helps people understand one another.

Music is meaningful to people because it is highly emotive. This means that people can use music to mirror their feelings. For example, if you are feeling upset, you can listen to sad songs and this might be cathartic for you. Although music can't solve all people's problems, it can show them that other people have felt the same way, both through lyrics and melody. Because music is a good way of showing emotion publicly, it can be useful for showing emotion in group settings, such as weddings or funerals.

While some people believe that people should prioritise music from their own country, I would argue that it is more important to prioritise international music to help promote intercultural understanding. Understanding other cultures is essential in a globalised world and listening to music from other cultures can help with that. For instance, because Korean pop music has become internationally famous, people have become increasingly interested in Korean culture. If people's understanding of other cultures increases, it could lead to a less racist and a more harmonious world.

In conclusion, one reason music is valuable to people is because it helps them communicate how they are feeling. Although some people would prefer people to focus on music from their own culture, I have argued that it is more advantageous to focus on international music.

Students are increasingly interested in learning practical subjects like computing and engineering than learning about art and literature. Why is this change happening? What are some benefits of learning about art and literature?

In recent years, there has been a shift in interest towards STEM subjects and away from liberal arts. In this essay, I will argue first, that this change is caused by a lack of job security, and second, that art and literature are important to guide scientific endeavours.

One reason for the rising interest in practical subjects is that young people are worried about finding a job after graduation. Because of the number of economic crises in recent years, young adults are looking to study a subject that can land them a stable job. Although many people already work in fields like maths, computing and engineering, the constant growth of these fields means a steady flow of graduate jobs. In addition, new developments, such as artificial intelligence, means that these are areas where new graduates will feel less encumbered by a lack of experience, thus increasing their chances of finding employment.

However, having fewer liberal arts students may mean we have less of an idea of which direction science should go in. Artistic subjects are important because they help dictate the design of scientific projects. For example, Apple's most successful products, such as the iPhone and Apple Watch, were successful because of their beautiful and practical designs as well as their engineering. Furthermore, works of literature, like Blade Runner, can help us imagine the consequences of scientific projects and help us steer them in a positive direction.

To conclude, young people have recently become more and more interested in practical subjects. However, this has a disadvantage as a lack of students in the arts may result in scientific knowledge being misapplied.

Despite the health benefits and positive effect on traffic congestion, many people prefer to drive to work than to ride a bicycle. Why is this? What can be done to encourage cycling?

Although cycling is a great workout and beneficial for saving space on our busy roads, it is still common for people to get about by car. In this essay, I will, first, argue that people are often too afraid to cycle in cities. Second, I will explore how they can be coaxed back to cycling by making roads safer.

One reason for people's reticence to cycle is that roads in modern cities are very dangerous. As cities have become more populated, the number of cars on the road has increased, making roads more dangerous for cyclists. In addition, because of the increasing popularity of large cars, like SUVs, the consequences for cyclists of being in a car accident have become more severe. If the number and consequences of road traffic accidents becomes worse, it is only natural for cyclists to take to the road in fewer numbers.

However, it is possible to encourage cyclists to return to the road by making them safer. If cyclists felt reassured that roads were not dangerous, there are many good reasons to return. One measure that can achieve this is to introduce new bike lanes, which keep cars and bicycles separate. In addition, because driver education courses can make them more aware of cyclists, governments should invest in them. Finally, it is possible to add financial pressure by subsidising cycling and taxing cars.

In conclusion, one major reason for the lack of cyclists on city streets is the dangers associated with bike riding. However, it is possible to encourage cyclists to begin to ride again by making roads safer.

In the last year, many people have had to study online rather than in person. What are some advantages and disadvantages of online study?

One of the big changes people have had to make last year is from real-world to virtual classrooms. In this essay, I will, first, explore the practical benefits of learning online. Second, I will look at the disadvantage that collaborative learning is harder online.

Learning on the internet can be more practical than in person. For people who live in the suburbs, attending in person classes often means a long commute. In addition, if you want to study a niche course, doing so online means you have access to a school that is specialised in what you want to do. Finally, because it is far easier to record online lessons than in person lessons, students can often download these and learn at a time that is better suited to them.

Conversely, one major disadvantage to studying online is that it is harder for students to work together. Although teachers can try putting students in breakout rooms, the relationships you form with your classmates in person are hard to replicate. As a result, working together online may feel more like working with strangers than classmates. In addition, this type of learning is less enjoyable for students, for example, it's much more fun to discuss a project over lunch than over Zoom.

In conclusion, there are both strengths and weaknesses to online learning. Online study may be more practical in some ways; however, it is also less interactive and involves less collaborative study.

In recent years, more and more people have started going to the cinema on their own rather than with their friends. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?

These days, there are more ways than ever to watch the latest blockbuster movie. In this essay, I will evaluate the trend of people making solo trips to movie theatres. First, by looking at the advantage that it is easy to organise, and second, by looking at the lost social connections that come with watching a film alone.

One advantage of organising a trip to the cinema on your own is convenience. First, because people prefer different genres of films, it can be difficult to find something that everyone will enjoy watching. Furthermore, even if you find a movie everyone wants to watch, it can be difficult to find a time that everyone is available. Conversely, when making a trip to the cinema on your own, you can see whatever you want whenever you want and you can even make very last-minute plans.

However, although their lives are more convenient, solo moviegoers also miss out on a lot of the pleasure of going to the cinema. For example, it is more enjoyable to make an evening out of it and have dinner together first. In addition, if people attend a film alone, they do not get the pleasure of discussing the film afterwards. Given the cost of attending the cinema, it might not be worth going if you are going to miss out on these additional aspects.

In conclusion, there are pros and cons to viewing a film on your own. While it may be more convenient, it is also much less social and enjoyable than going with your friends.