

DESIGNING AND TEACHING  
PREPARATION COURSES FOR  
**IELTS WRITING**  
**TASK TWO (ESSAY)**

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# TASK 2

## THE TASK

- ◉ Write an essay on a given topic
  - Cover the question(s) asked
  - Give reasons for your answer
  - Provide examples
    - from your own knowledge
    - from your own experience
  
- ◉ Write at least 250 words → 265-270 words
- ◉ No maximum word limit
- ◉ Write in about 40 minutes

# TASKS TYPES

- ◉ Opinion
- ◉ Debate
- ◉ Cause/Effect/Solution
  - Causes + Solutions
  - Consequences + Solutions
  - Causes + Consequences
- ◉ Advantages/Disadvantages
- ◉ Mixed
  - Two questions from different task types
  - An opinion question + an 'item' question

## GENERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONS FOCUS ON ACADEMIC REGISTER

- ⦿ Longer sentences (~20-30 words)
- ⦿ Formal linkers
- ⦿ Formal phrases
- ⦿ No “get” phrases
- ⦿ No contractions
- ⦿ Avoid phrasal verbs
- ⦿ Avoid personal tone
- ⦿ Avoid over-generalisation
  - Non-absolute statements
  - Introducing probability/possibility

# GENERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONS

## TASK RESPONSE

- ◉ Practice brainstorming
- ◉ Focus on idea development
  - Avoid listing ideas
- ◉ Clarity
- ◉ Repetition
- ◉ Avoiding faulty support
  - Feelings, emotional arguments (... it makes one feel much better.)
  - Irrelevant examples (wandering off the topic) (... he would then be able to take his girlfriend to expensive restaurants.)
  - Oversimplification (... only then would he understand what it means to be an adult.)
  - Hasty generalizations (... it is a widely known fact that all adolescents look forward to earning money.)
  - Unreliable, even false outside sources (... according to [www.doubtme.com](http://www.doubtme.com), 80% of working men wish they quit school when they were at university and started working at an earlier age.)

# GENERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONS

## COHESION

### ○ Focus on pronouns

- Relative pronouns (e.g. 'which')
- Demonstrative pronouns (e.g. 'this')
- Reciprocals (one another, each other)
- Gender neutrality
  - he or she
  - Alternation

### ○ Focus on linkers

- Type
  - Addition
  - Contrast
  - Consequence/conclusion
- Place in the sentence
  - Beginning
  - Middle

# GENERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONS

## PUNCTUATION

- ⦿ Capitalisation

- ⦿ Comma

- None after conj. 'that'
- None after 'while' and 'whereas'
- None after 'although'
- Required after 'if' and time clauses
- Required after certain linkers

# OUTLINE OF A TASK-BASED LESSON

Introduce  
the task  
type

Discuss the  
philosophy  
of the task

Introduce  
an outline  
for the  
essay

Go through  
paragraphs  
one by one



# GENERAL OUTLINE OF AN ESSAY

## Introduction

- Possibly present a background to or explanation of the context
- Introduce the opinions discussed in the essay or its focus

## Body

- Discuss the main ideas
- Extend and support them with reasons, explanations and/or examples
- Logically divide them into separate paragraphs

## Conclusion

- Restate any opinions discussed or give a final opinion
- Make suggestions on the issue
- Speculate on the future of the issue

# OPINION ESSAY

# OPINION ESSAY

## INTRODUCTION

- ◉ Optional: Write a background to the subject
  - Present situation
  - History
  - Paraphrase the opinion given
- ◉ Give your opinion
  - Give your opinion
  - Agree or disagree with the point given
- ◉ Optional: focus statement

# OPINION ESSAY

## BODY

- ⊙ Accepting an extreme
  - One point per paragraph → 3 paragraphs
- ⊙ Giving a mixed opinion
  - Divide points by side → 2 paragraphs
  - One point per paragraph → 3 paragraphs

# OPINION ESSAY

## CONCLUSION

- ◉ Optional: Summarise the points discussed
- ◉ Accepting an extreme
  - Restate your opinion
- ◉ Giving a mixed idea
  - Restate your opinion
  - Optional: Recommendations
- ◉ Optional: Advice
- ◉ Optional: Future statement

# OPINION ESSAY

## IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONS

- ◉ Giving opinions
  - Directly answer the questions
  - Clear
- ◉ Idea development



- ◉ Longer points in each body paragraph
- ◉ Giving examples
  - In-line examples
  - Case examples

# OPINION ESSAY

## COMMON TASK RESPONSE PROBLEMS

### ⊙ Opinions

- Uncertainty
- Avoiding a direct answer
- Partial answers
- Unfocused opinions

### ⊙ Idea development

- False premise
- Over-generalisation
- Repetition of main ideas
- Unclear conclusions

### ⊙ Giving examples

- Too many personal examples

# OPINION ESSAY

## COMMON COHERENCE AND COHESION PROBLEMS

### ⦿ Coherence

- Long introductions
- Organisation
- Order of ideas
- Paragraphing
- Missing conclusion paragraph

### ⦿ Cohesion

- Linker misuse/abuse



DEBATE

ESSAY

# DEBATE ESSAY

## INTRODUCTION

- ◉ Optional: Write a background to the subject
  - Present situation
  - history
- ◉ Introduce the debate
  - Paraphrase
  - Debate statement
  - Focus statement
- ◉ Avoid long introductions

# DEBATE ESSAY

## BODY

- Present a balanced argument
  - One aspect per paragraph
    - 2-3 paragraphs
    - Balance the argument by presenting opposing views on various aspects
  - One viewpoint per paragraph
    - 2 paragraphs
    - Present the reasons or points supporting each side of the argument in a separate paragraphs
- Optional: Present and support your point of view
  - A separate body paragraph

# DEBATE ESSAY

## CONCLUSION

- Present your point of view (if you have not done so earlier)
  - Optional: compare the two ideas
  - Avoid giving reasons
  - Give your opinion
    - Accepting an extreme
    - Giving a mixed view
- Optional: Advice
- Optional: Future statement

# DEBATE ESSAY

## IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONS

- ⊙ Presenting a debate
  - Remaining impartial
- ⊙ Idea development
  - Shorter idea development
- ⊙ Possibly longer body paragraphs
- ⊙ Giving examples
  - In-line examples
  - Case examples

# DEBATE ESSAY

## COMMON TASK RESPONSE PROBLEMS

### ⊙ Debates

- Introduction of a personal idea
- Loss of objectivity
- Unbalanced cover
- Loss of focus

### ⊙ Idea development

- False premise
- Over-generalisation

### ⊙ Giving examples

- Too many personal examples

### ⊙ Giving a personal opinion

- Open-endedness

# DEBATE ESSAY

## COMMON COHERENCE AND COHESION PROBLEMS

### ⦿ Coherence

- Long introductions
- Organisation
- Paragraphing
  - Odd body paragraph organisations
  - Conclusion with reasons
  - Missing conclusion paragraph

### ⦿ Cohesion

- Linker misuse/abuse
- Zigzagging

CAUSE/EFFECT/  
SOLUTION  
ESSAY



# CAUSE/EFFECT/SOLUTION ESSAY

## INTRODUCTION

- Explain the issue or problem
- Introduce the focus of the essay
- Avoid a long introduction

# CAUSE/EFFECT/SOLUTION ESSAY

## BODY

### ⦿ Causes

- Discuss at least 2-3 causes
- Explain the mechanism

# CAUSE/EFFECT/SOLUTION ESSAY

## BODY

- ⦿ Consequences
  - Discuss at least 2-3 effects
  - Explain the mechanism

# CAUSE/EFFECT/SOLUTION ESSAY

## BODY

### ◎ Solutions

- Explain the mechanism
- Identify any advantages
- Identify any possible disadvantages
- Avoid absolute statements: Even the most certain of solutions simply *might* work.

# CAUSE/EFFECT/SOLUTION ESSAY

## ◎ Conclusion

- Summarise the points discussed
- Write a conclusion statement
- Identify the most important point [in each category]
- Optional: Advice
- Optional: Future statement

# CAUSE/EFFECT/SOLUTION ESSAY IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONS

- ⦿ Explaining an issue
- ⦿ Idea development
  - Explaining stages
  - Maintaining coherence
- ⦿ Possibly longer body paragraphs
- ⦿ Giving examples

# CAUSE/EFFECT/SOLUTION ESSAY

## COMMON TASK RESPONSE PROBLEMS

### ⊙ Issues

- False premise
- Misinterpretation
- Loss of focus

### ⊙ Idea development

- False premise
- Over-generalisation
- Absolute statements
- Unbalanced cover

### ⊙ Giving examples

- Too many personal examples

# CAUSE/EFFECT/SOLUTION ESSAY

## COMMON COHERENCE AND COHESION PROBLEMS

### ⦿ Coherence

- long introductions
- Organisation
- Paragraphing
  - Odd body paragraph organisations
  - Conclusion: advice with reasons
  - Missing conclusion paragraph

### ⦿ Cohesion

- Linker misuse/abuse
- Zigzagging



ADVANTAGES &  
DISADVANTAGES  
ESSAY

# MIXED ESSAY