

IELTS General Training Writing Task 2 – teacher’s notes

Description

Activities to familiarise students with two examples of Task 2, which help students understand what they have to write about for each one; the stages of brainstorming ideas, planning a structure and writing an answer for discursive writing, the ideas being adaptable for use with other examples of task 2.

Time required: 70 minutes + homework

Additional materials required:

- strips of blank paper

Aims:

- to introduce two Task 2 tasks (discussing views/giving opinions and agreeing/disagreeing)
- to give students practice in brainstorming and planning for discursive writing
- to help students understand how discursive writing is structured
- to give students practice in writing an answer

Procedure

1. Show students a copy of this General Training Writing Task 2 topic:
The care of old people is a growing problem. Some say the government should care for old people. Others say that it is the family’s responsibility. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.
2. Ask students to work in groups to analyse the question and identify exactly what they need to write about (how to care for old people and who is responsible for this, discussing the views provided and providing their own opinions).
3. Ask students to work individually. They should note down one idea for each side of the argument as well as one example from the real world to support each idea. Ask them to note each idea, together with its example, on separate strips of paper.
4. Put students into groups of three or four to share their ideas. Students add any ideas and examples from the other members of the group that they have not thought of. Make sure that they continue to write each idea plus supporting examples on separate strips of paper.
5. Using all the ideas that they think are relevant, students arrange their strips in the most logical sequence for writing.
6. Hand out worksheet 1. Go through the information box as a class and then ask students to work through the rest individually.
7. Whole-class check and discussion. Remind students of the assessment criteria (task response; coherence and cohesion; lexical resource; and grammatical range and accuracy).

Elicit from students whether they think this is a weak or strong answer and why (strong as it meets all the assessment criteria to a high level).

8. Show students a copy of another General Training Writing Task 2 topic:
Some people believe that children's leisure activities must be educational, otherwise they are a complete waste of time. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.
9. Repeat steps 2–5 for this topic. This time they need to write about whether children's leisure activities should always be educational, and consider arguments which both agree and disagree with the statement.
10. Ask students to consider how they would organise their ideas in their answer. Would they structure it in the same way as the previous topic? Would they use another structure and what would this be? Students write down their proposed structure.
11. Put students into pairs to compare structures.
12. Hand out worksheet 2. Students work with their partner to compare their structures with the suggested ones on the worksheet.
13. Students choose a structure and write their answer in full for homework. Remind students of the assessment criteria and ask them to keep them in mind when writing their answers.

Additional information

There are various kinds of discursive writing – e.g. discussing advantages and disadvantages, proposing solutions, justifying opinions, discussing solutions. Students will need practice in distinguishing between these different focuses, and analysing what they require them to do. Repeat the ideas contained in this activity using a wide range of tasks.

Students will also need to work on other aspects of their writing – e.g. developing a range of vocabulary and varying their grammatical structures.

IELTS General Training Writing Task 2 – answer keys

Key to worksheet 1

1A

The care of old people is an issue all over the world as it is no longer clear who has the responsibility for looking after old people. There are two main choices: the government or the family.

2A

If the government pays for the care of old people this usually means that the old people go into old people's homes. In these all people are given equal and high quality care. Countries such as Sweden operate this system very efficiently.

2B

The problem is that this solution is very expensive. The money comes from tax and many countries simply can't afford it. It also often means that old people go into homes where they know no-one and have nothing to do.

2C

The alternative is for families to support their elderly relatives. In theory this provides loving care and means the old person can be an active member of the family.

2D

In practice, it often does not work out, as families don't have enough money, and so, much bitterness is created, and the old people are neglected. I can see this happening all around me in my country where there is no government support for old people.

3

It is clear that neither of these solutions is good. Therefore, it seems to me that a mixture of the two is the best solution. The government should provide money to families to look after their elderly relatives. But I also think that old people should save up money during their working lives to look after themselves in old age.

IELTS General Training Writing Task 2 – Student's Worksheet 1

Information Box

Topic: *The care of old people is a growing problem. Some say the government should care for old people. Others say that it is the family's responsibility. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.*

A composition where you discuss a topic (discursive writing) may involve discussing the advantages and disadvantages of different solutions. The structure needs to be very clear. Here is one way of organising your answer:

1. Introduction

General statement about the topic

2. Body

- A Arguments for solution 1 (+ supporting evidence)
- B Arguments against solution 1 (+ supporting evidence)
- C Arguments for solution 2 (+ supporting evidence)
- D Arguments against solution 2 (+ supporting evidence)

Continue in the same way with any other solutions you would like to include

3. Conclusion giving writer's final opinion based on above arguments

N.B. This topic shows just one kind of discursive writing. Others include proposing solutions and justifying opinions. These require different structures.

Read the writing below and mark on it the following different parts in its structure. Write the appropriate letter beside each part – e.g. 1, 2B.

The care of old people is an issue all over the world as it is no longer clear who has the responsibility for looking after old people. There are two main choices: the government or the family.

If the government pays for the care of old people this usually means that the old people go into old people's homes. In these all people are given equal and high quality care. Countries such as Sweden operate this system very efficiently.

The problem is that this solution is very expensive. The money comes from tax and many countries simply can't afford it. It also often means that old people go into homes where they know no one and have nothing to do.

The alternative is for families to support their elderly relatives. In theory this provides loving care and means the old person can be an active member of the family. In practice, it often does not work out, as families don't have enough money, and so, much bitterness is created, and the old people are neglected. I can see this happening all around me in my country where there is no government support for old people.

It is clear that neither of these solutions is good. Therefore, it seems to me that a mixture of the two is the best solution. The government should provide money to families to look after their elderly relatives. But I also think that old people should save up money during their working lives to look after themselves in old age.

IELTS General Training Writing Task 2 – Student’s Worksheet 2

Some people believe that children’s leisure activities must be educational, otherwise they are a complete waste of time.

Do you agree or disagree?

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

Here are two possible structures for this essay:

1. Introduction

General statement about the topic

2. Body

- A First argument agreeing with topic (+ supporting evidence)
- B First argument disagreeing with 2A (+ supporting evidence)
- C Second argument agreeing with topic (+ supporting evidence)
- D Second argument disagreeing 2C (+ supporting evidence)
- E Continue in the same way with further arguments as relevant

3. Conclusion giving writer’s final opinion based on above arguments

N.B. There may be different numbers of agreeing and disagreeing arguments. This does not matter.

1. Introduction

General statement about the topic

2. Body

- A First argument agreeing with topic (+ supporting evidence)
- B Second argument agreeing with topic (+ supporting evidence)
- C Third argument agreeing with topic (+ supporting evidence)
- D etc. for further arguments in agreement
- E First argument disagreeing with topic (+ supporting evidence)
- F Second argument disagreeing with topic (+ supporting evidence)
- G etc. with further arguments in disagreement

3. Conclusion giving writer’s final opinion based on above arguments