Recent IELTS Writing Task 2 Topics with Model Answers

16 questions · 4 body-paragraph essays · 260–290 words each

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1. Self-Treatment Instead of Seeing a Doctor

Positive or Negative Development

> **Question:** More people are choosing to treat health problems themselves instead of seeking professional medical advice. Do you think this is a positive or negative development?

These days it is common to see people buy medicine at a pharmacy or search their symptoms online instead of booking an appointment with a doctor. In my view this trend does more harm than good, although it has a few small benefits.

It is true that handling a mild problem at home can be sensible. A person with a cold or a headache does not need to wait three days for a clinic slot, and doctors then have more time for patients who are seriously ill. Over-the-counter remedies are also cheap, so families on a tight budget can save money.

The trouble starts when people misjudge how serious a symptom is. Someone who keeps taking painkillers for months because of stomach pain may be hiding an ulcer or something worse, and by the time they finally see a specialist the illness has advanced. Online advice makes this worse, because a website can make a small rash sound like a rare disease, or the reverse, and many readers cannot tell which sources are trustworthy. Medicines themselves can be risky when taken wrongly. Antibiotics are a good example. If people use them without a prescription or stop halfway, bacteria become resistant and the drugs stop working for everyone. For example, a pharmacist can usually tell whether a cough needs a doctor, and a short chat costs nothing.

Overall, treating small problems at home is acceptable, but I believe the development is negative when it replaces proper medical advice. A sensible compromise would be for people to ask a pharmacist or call a doctor whenever symptoms last longer than a few days.

(270 words)

2. Why Study Ancient Civilisations?

Agree or Disagree

> **Question:** Some people believe that learning about ancient civilisations is no longer useful in modern education. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Some people argue that ancient civilisations have no place in modern classrooms, since students should concentrate on subjects that prepare them for work. I disagree with this view, because history teaches skills and lessons that no other subject can offer.

To begin with, the world we live in was shaped by earlier societies. Our legal systems, our calendars and even the way many cities are planned can be traced back to Rome, Greece or Mesopotamia. A student who knows how these ideas began will understand why institutions work as they do, and will be better placed to improve them. Ancient history also shows what happens when societies fail. The collapse of several early civilisations, partly through drought and over-farming, looks uncomfortably familiar to anyone worried about climate change today. A pupil who has read about how the Egyptians managed the Nile floods, for instance, learns something real about planning and cooperation.

Furthermore, the study of the past builds habits of mind that employers value. Pupils must compare conflicting sources, decide which are reliable and argue a case from evidence, which is exactly the sort of critical thinking needed in almost any career. Meeting very different cultures also makes young people more open-minded, which is useful in a world where many of us work with colleagues from other countries. Of course, science and technology deserve a large share of the timetable, and no one is suggesting that history should push them out. But a school week has room for both.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that ancient cultures remain worth studying. They explain where we come from, warn us about mistakes, and train students to think carefully.

(276 words)

3. Drivers Who Break Traffic Laws

Causes and Solutions

> **Question:** Despite strict traffic regulations, many drivers continue to break road safety rules. What causes this behaviour, and what measures could reduce it?

Even in countries with heavy fines and plenty of road signs, many motorists still jump red lights, speed or use their phones while driving. This essay will look at the main reasons for this and suggest some practical ways to deal with it.

One major cause is that many drivers simply do not expect to be caught. If a road has few police officers and no cameras, breaking the rules feels risky only in theory. Time pressure is another factor. A commuter stuck in heavy traffic who is already late for work may overtake on the wrong side or cross a signal just as it changes, telling himself that it is only this once. Some young drivers also treat speed as a way of showing off to friends, and they underestimate how quickly an accident can happen.

There are several steps that could help. The most direct is stricter enforcement, for example automatic cameras that send a fine to the owner of the vehicle within days. When people know the penalty is certain, they behave more carefully. Education matters too. Schools can teach road safety from an early age, and licence tests could be made harder, with a longer period of supervised driving for new drivers. Better road design can also remove temptation. Speed bumps, clear lane markings and well-timed traffic lights make it easier to obey the rules than to break them.

To sum up, rule-breaking on the roads comes from a low risk of punishment, time pressure and carelessness, and it can be reduced by firm enforcement, early education and smarter road planning.

(265 words)

4. Should Governments Fund Artists?

Discuss Both Views

> **Question:** Some people think governments should provide financial support to artists, while others believe public money should be reserved for essential services such as healthcare and education. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Whether governments should pay for the arts or put every available coin into essential services is a question on which opinions differ. I will discuss both sides before explaining why I favour a balance.

Those who support funding for artists say that culture is part of what makes a country worth living in. Without public money, traditional crafts, local theatre and small museums might disappear, because they rarely make a profit. Art can also bring in income indirectly. A city known for its festivals or galleries attracts tourists, and these visitors spend money in hotels, restaurants and shops.

On the other hand, critics argue that a hospital bed or a classroom is more urgent than a painting. Budgets are limited, and when waiting lists for surgery are long or schools lack textbooks, spending taxes on a sculpture can look like poor judgement. Healthcare and education benefit everyone, whereas art is enjoyed mainly by people who choose to take part in it. There is also the question of who decides which artists deserve support, and the choice can seem unfair or political.

In my opinion, essential services should come first, since people cannot enjoy culture if they are sick or uneducated. However, I do not think the arts should be cut entirely. A small, carefully managed fund, perhaps focused on heritage and on young artists who cannot yet earn a living, would cost little compared with a hospital budget and would protect something valuable. Governments could also encourage businesses to sponsor cultural projects through tax benefits, which would reduce the pressure on public money.

(263 words)

5. Giving Children Everything They Want

Effects

> **Question:** Some parents allow their children to do whatever they want and regularly give them everything they ask for. What consequences could this have for children as they grow older?

Some parents let their children do as they like and buy whatever they ask for. In my opinion, children raised this way may face several difficulties when they become adults.

The first problem is that such children rarely learn to accept limits. A child who has never heard the word no at home may find it very hard to follow rules at school and later at work. When a manager gives an instruction they dislike, or a colleague disagrees with them, they may react with anger or simply give up, because they have had little practice at dealing with disappointment. This can damage friendships and careers alike. Many of them also find it hard to say sorry or to compromise.

A second effect concerns money and responsibility. Children who receive every toy and gadget do not understand that things cost effort to earn. As young adults they may expect a high standard of living at once, and they may borrow heavily or spend a salary within days of receiving it. Because they were never asked to help with chores or look after a pet, they may also struggle with basic duties such as cooking, keeping a budget or arriving on time. Some stay dependent on their parents well into their thirties, which puts a strain on the whole family.

Of course, children need love and encouragement, and no one is suggesting that parents should be harsh. But giving a child everything and allowing total freedom does not prepare him or her for real life. Sensible boundaries and small responsibilities help a young person grow into a capable and considerate adult.

(270 words)

6. Studying Alone or With Others

Discuss Both Views

> **Question:** Some people believe studying with other students is more effective, while others prefer studying independently. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Some students feel they learn best when they work alongside classmates, whereas others prefer to study on their own. Both approaches have clear strengths, and I think the better choice depends on the task.

Studying in a group has several advantages. When one student cannot follow a topic, another can often explain it in simpler words, and the person who explains gains as well, because teaching something is a good way to check that you really understand it. Groups can also share notes and divide a big project, such as a science experiment or a presentation, so that the work is finished faster. Many learners find it motivating to meet friends at a fixed time, which stops them from putting things off. A student preparing for an exam, for example, may enjoy swapping practice questions with a friend.

On the other hand, studying alone offers freedom and focus. A student can choose the time, the place and the speed, and can spend an extra hour on a difficult chapter without holding anyone back. In a group, conversation often drifts to other subjects, and one or two members may do most of the work while the rest simply listen. For tasks that need deep concentration, such as memorising vocabulary or solving maths problems, quiet time alone is usually more productive.

In my view, the best plan is to combine the two. I would use solitary study to learn new material and practise, and then meet a small group to compare answers, ask questions and discuss anything that remains unclear. Each method makes up for what the other lacks.

(267 words)

7. Why Do People Work Such Long Hours?

Causes and Effects

> **Question:** In many countries, employees work excessively long hours. What are the main reasons for this situation, and how does it affect workers and society?

In many parts of the world, people spend far more than eight hours a day at work. This essay will examine why this happens and how it affects both employees and the wider community.

The main reason is financial. When rent, food and school fees are expensive and wages are low, a single job often does not cover the bills, so people take overtime or a second job. Competition at the workplace also plays a part. In some companies, staff who leave on time are seen as less committed, so workers stay late to impress their bosses and protect their jobs. Modern technology adds to the problem, since phones and email allow employers to contact people at any hour, even on holidays.

The consequences are serious. Workers who are tired for long periods suffer from stress, back pain, poor sleep and in some cases heart problems. They also make more mistakes, so the extra hours are not always productive. Family life suffers too, because parents who come home at ten at night cannot help with homework or have dinner with their children, and marriages may come under pressure. For society as a whole, this means higher healthcare costs and possibly falling birth rates, as young couples feel they have no time or energy to raise a family. Over time, even a well-paid employee can lose the energy to enjoy the money that the extra hours bring.

In short, high living costs, workplace pressure and constant connectivity push people to overwork, and the result is poor health and weaker families. Stricter limits on overtime and fairer wages would help to solve this.

(271 words)

8. Tougher Punishment or Social Reform?

Discuss Both Views

> **Question:** Some people believe harsher punishments are the most effective way to reduce crime, while others think improving social and economic conditions is more important. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

People disagree about the best way to cut crime. Some say that severe penalties work best, while others believe the answer lies in better schools, jobs and housing. I will look at both views and then give my own.

Supporters of harsh punishment believe that fear keeps people in line. If a robber knows he will spend ten years in prison, he may think twice before carrying out the crime. Long sentences also keep dangerous offenders away from the public, which gives communities a sense of safety. For violent crimes in particular, many people feel that strong penalties are only fair to the victims.

However, there is plenty of evidence that punishment alone does not solve the problem. Many offenders come from poor areas where young people leave school early and cannot find work. A teenager with no income and no hope may drift into theft or drug dealing whatever the penalty, since he does not expect much from the future anyway. Prisons can even make matters worse, as inmates meet hardened criminals and leave with fewer job prospects than before. Programmes that offer education, job training and counselling attack the roots of the problem and are often cheaper than building more cells. Rehabilitation courses in prison have helped some former inmates find steady work, and those people are far less likely to offend again.

I think the most effective approach uses both ideas. Serious crimes should lead to firm sentences, but governments should also spend on schools, youth clubs and employment schemes so that fewer people turn to crime in the first place. Prevention costs less than punishment, and it leaves fewer victims.

(274 words)

9. Artificial Intelligence and Jobs

Advantages and Disadvantages

> **Question:** Artificial intelligence is increasingly being used to perform tasks previously completed by human employees. Do the advantages of this development outweigh the disadvantages?

More and more tasks that used to be done by employees are now handled by artificial intelligence, from answering customer questions to checking medical scans. Despite the risks, I believe the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

The main benefit is efficiency. AI can process large amounts of information in seconds, never gets tired and rarely makes careless errors. In hospitals, for instance, software can scan thousands of X-rays and flag unusual cases for a doctor, which speeds up diagnosis and may save lives. Businesses also save money, and lower costs can mean cheaper products for consumers. Moreover, machines can take over dull or dangerous jobs, such as sorting packages or inspecting gas pipes, so people are protected from boredom and injury. A bank can now approve a simple loan in minutes, a task that once took several days of paperwork.

The obvious drawback is job loss. Clerks, drivers and call-centre staff may find their positions disappearing, and older workers in particular may struggle to learn new skills. This can cause hardship and widen the gap between those who work with technology and those who do not. There are also concerns about mistakes and bias, because a system trained on poor data can treat people unfairly, and it is not always clear who is responsible when something goes wrong.

Nevertheless, history suggests that new technology creates new kinds of work as well as removing old ones, as happened when computers arrived. If governments fund retraining and companies use AI to support staff rather than simply replace them, the gains can be shared fairly. For this reason, I believe the advantages are greater.

(270 words)

10. Do Students Still Need Teachers?

Agree or Disagree

> **Question:** Some people believe that students no longer need traditional teachers because educational information is widely available online. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

With free videos, articles and courses available online, some people think teachers are no longer necessary. I disagree, because teachers provide much more than information.

It is true that the internet has made knowledge easy to reach. A student who does not understand a maths topic can watch a tutorial at midnight, and a person in a remote village can follow a lecture from a famous university. For motivated learners, this is a wonderful resource, and it has certainly changed how people study. Of course, a few disciplined students do very well teaching themselves with books and videos.

However, information is not the same as education. A teacher decides what a student should learn first, explains difficult ideas in different ways and notices when someone is falling behind. Beginners who study alone online often jump between videos without a clear plan, and they cannot tell whether what they are reading is accurate. Young children in particular need guidance and encouragement, since many lose interest quickly without someone to keep them on track. Teachers also give feedback on essays and projects, which a video cannot do. Schools teach social skills as well, such as working in a team, speaking in front of others and respecting different opinions, and these are hard to learn from a screen. A good teacher can also spot the exact misunderstanding behind a wrong answer, and that saves hours of confusion.

In conclusion, online material is a useful addition to the classroom, but it cannot replace teachers. The best results come when students use the internet to practise and explore, while teachers guide, correct and inspire them.

(270 words)

11. Restricting Private Cars in City Centres

Advantages and Disadvantages

> **Question:** Some cities are considering restricting private vehicles in busy urban areas to reduce traffic congestion and pollution. Do you think the benefits of this policy outweigh the disadvantages?

Several cities are thinking about banning or limiting private vehicles in crowded central areas in order to reduce traffic and pollution. I believe the benefits of such a policy are greater than its drawbacks.

The main advantage is cleaner and quieter streets. Cars and motorbikes produce exhaust fumes that cause asthma and other lung problems, particularly among children and the elderly. When Paris and several other European cities closed some central roads, air quality improved and people reported far less noise. Fewer vehicles also mean less congestion, so buses and emergency services can move faster, and the space once used for parking can become parks, cycle lanes or cafes. Accidents tend to fall as well. Cycling and walking also become safer and more attractive, which helps people stay fit.

There are some disadvantages. Shop owners often fear losing customers who arrive by car, and people with disabilities or heavy shopping may find it difficult to reach the centre. Commuters who live far away and depend on their own transport may face higher costs and longer journeys. If the public transport system is poor, a ban could simply cause frustration. Delivery drivers could also face delays if the rules are too strict.

These problems can be reduced with careful planning. Authorities should improve buses, trams and metro services before restricting cars, and offer exceptions for disabled drivers and delivery vehicles. Park-and-ride car parks on the edge of the city would also help. If these measures are in place, I am convinced that the policy would make cities healthier and more pleasant places to live. A trial period of a few months would show whether the system works before it is made permanent.

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12. Who Is Responsible for Public Health?

Discuss Both Views

> **Question:** Some people believe governments should take greater responsibility for improving public health, while others think individuals should make their own lifestyle choices. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Some argue that governments should take the lead in keeping the population healthy, while others say people must decide for themselves how to live. I will consider both views and then give my opinion.

Those who want government action point out that individual choices are shaped by the environment. If fast food is cheap and heavily advertised while healthy food is expensive, most people will eat badly whatever their intentions. Governments can change this through taxes on sugary drinks, clear food labelling, limits on cigarette advertising and free vaccination. Because poor public health fills hospitals and costs the state billions, it makes sense for authorities to act early. Seat belt laws and the ban on smoking in restaurants are well-known examples where rules clearly saved lives.

On the other hand, many people believe that lifestyle is a personal matter. Adults have the right to decide what to eat, whether to smoke and how much to exercise, and too many rules can feel like interference in private life. Individuals also know their own bodies and circumstances better than any official. There is little point in a government campaign if the person concerned is not willing to change. Some people also resent being told what to eat by politicians who may not follow their own advice.

I think responsibility should be shared. Governments need to create conditions that make healthy choices easy, for example by building parks and providing nutrition lessons in schools, but in the end it is up to each person to use those opportunities. A mixture of public support and personal effort is more likely to succeed than either one alone.

(272 words)

13. The Move Towards a Cashless Society

Positive or Negative Development

> **Question:** Many countries are moving towards a cashless society, with people increasingly using digital payments instead of physical money. Is this a positive or negative development?

A growing number of countries are replacing banknotes and coins with card, phone and online payments. In my opinion this is largely a positive development, although it brings some risks that need attention.

The first benefit is convenience. Paying with a phone takes a few seconds, there is no need to search for change, and travellers do not have to exchange currency. Shops also gain, because handling cash is slow and sometimes unsafe, and digital records make it easier to keep accounts in order. Cashless payment can reduce crime as well. Criminals find it hard to hide illegal income when every transaction is recorded, and a thief gains little from stealing a phone that is protected by a password. Small traders such as street vendors can also accept payment by scanning a code, which lets them reach more customers.

On the other hand, there are real concerns. Elderly people and those in remote areas may not own a smartphone or may not feel confident using one, so they could be excluded from daily life. Technical failures are another worry. During a power cut or a network fault, nobody can buy food or fuel. Privacy also suffers, since banks and companies can see where and when we spend. In addition, some people find it easier to overspend when they never see the money leave their hands.

Even so, these problems can be managed if governments keep cash available for those who need it, protect personal data strictly and make sure systems have back-ups. With these safeguards, I believe the shift to digital payment will make life simpler and safer for most people.

(271 words)

14. The Four-Day Working Week

Positive or Negative Development

> **Question:** Some companies are introducing a four-day working week while allowing employees to receive the same salary as before. Is this a positive or negative development?

Some companies now allow employees to work four days a week without a pay cut. I think this is a positive development for most workers and also for employers.

The clearest advantage is a better balance between work and private life. An extra day off lets people spend time with their families, see a doctor, do the housework or simply rest, so they return on Monday feeling refreshed rather than exhausted. Trials in several countries suggest that workers on shorter weeks take fewer sick days and are less likely to burn out. Companies benefit too, since staff who are happy and rested tend to work harder and stay longer, which saves the cost of hiring and training replacements. Some firms report that meetings become shorter and more focused when everyone knows time is limited. A parent, for instance, could attend school events without asking for special leave.

Of course, the idea has limits. Hospitals, shops and factories must stay open, and in these places a shorter week may require extra staff, which would raise costs. In some jobs the same amount of work has to be squeezed into four days, and this can lead to long, tiring shifts and more pressure. Customers may also find it inconvenient if a business is closed for a longer weekend.

Nevertheless, these difficulties can be solved by planning rotas carefully and by judging people on results rather than hours. On balance, I believe a shorter working week with the same salary is a beneficial change, because it improves health and morale without necessarily reducing productivity. Managers who are worried at first often change their minds after a short trial.

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15. Young People Choosing to Become Influencers

Positive or Negative Development

> **Question:** An increasing number of young people are choosing careers as social media influencers rather than pursuing traditional professions. Is this a positive or negative development?

Instead of studying to become doctors, engineers or accountants, an increasing number of young people want to earn a living as social media influencers. I think this trend is more negative than positive.

I accept that there are some benefits. Influencers learn useful skills such as filming, editing, marketing and communicating with an audience, and a successful creator can earn a good income without a degree. The internet has also opened a path for talented people who might never have been noticed in traditional industries, and some use their popularity to raise awareness of causes such as mental health or the environment.

However, the risks are considerable. Only a very small number of influencers make serious money, and most earn little or nothing despite years of effort. A teenager who leaves school to chase fame may have no qualifications to fall back on if the plan fails. Income is also unstable, because it depends on algorithms and on public taste, which can change overnight. In addition, the constant pressure to look perfect and gain more followers can harm mental health, and it may give young viewers an unrealistic picture of success, suggesting that fame and wealth are easy to achieve. Behind the glamour, there is often long unpaid work, such as planning content and replying to comments late at night.

Overall, being an influencer can be a satisfying side activity, but it is an unreliable main career. Young people would be wiser to gain a qualification or a solid skill first and build an online presence alongside it. Parents should talk openly with teenagers about these risks.

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16. Chatbots Replacing Customer Service Staff

Positive or Negative Development

> **Question:** Many businesses are replacing human customer service representatives with automated chatbots and artificial intelligence systems. Is this a positive or negative development?

Many companies now use automated chatbots instead of people to deal with customer questions. In my view this is a mixed development, but it is more negative than positive when it leaves customers with no human option.

There are good reasons for businesses to do this. A chatbot works day and night, answers in seconds and can handle thousands of enquiries at once. For simple matters, such as checking a delivery or resetting a password, this is much quicker than waiting on the phone for a free agent. Companies save money on salaries, and in theory those savings can lead to lower prices. They can also translate into many languages, which helps international firms.

The problem appears when a question is more complicated. A bot may not understand an unusual complaint, and customers can end up repeating themselves in circles, getting more annoyed with each reply. People who are upset about a lost payment or a faulty product want to be listened to by someone who can show understanding and make a decision. Older customers are often uncomfortable with automated systems, and many call-centre jobs are lost as well, which hurts families who depend on that income. There is also a risk that private information shared with a chatbot is stored or misused. A short phone call with a person often solves a problem that ten bot messages cannot.

In conclusion, chatbots are useful for routine tasks, but they should not be the only option. If companies keep a clear way to reach a real person when needed, customers and businesses can both gain from the technology. Keeping some trained staff available shows customers that the company values them.

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