

How to Write a Task 2 Essay

Non-Opinion essay example

It is extremely helpful to read model answers for IELTS essays because there are different essay types, and these will require different ways to answer them.

However, as you will see from the following instructions, *they can all follow the same basic structure*.

Here are some of the types of IELTS essays:

- Agree or disagree
- Discuss two opinions
- Advantages and disadvantages
- Causes / Reasons and solutions
- Causes / Reasons and effects
- Problems and solutions
- Negative or positive development

Now let's look at a sample non-opinion question:

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write about the following topic:

The percentage of overweight children in western society has increased by almost 20% in the last ten years.

Discuss the causes and effects of this disturbing trend.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own experience or knowledge. You should write at least 250 words.

It is essential to always **read the question very carefully** to see exactly what you are being asked to do. In other words, the very first things to do are:

1. Identify the topic.

2. Identify the task.

This is best done by underlining key words in the question.

The percentage of overweight children in western society has increased by almost 20% in the last ten years.

(underlining = key topic words)

Discuss the causes and effects of this disturbing trend.

(underlining = key task words)

There are three key elements in the essay structure:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Body Paragraphs**
3. **Conclusion**

We will look at each of these in turn, using the essay question above as an example.

1) Introduction

You should keep your introduction for the IELTS essay fairly short. Remember, you only have 40 minutes to write the essay, and some of this time (**5 - 10 minutes**) needs to be spent **planning**.

You should do just two things:

1.1 Introduce the topic. The first sentence states the topic of the essay by paraphrasing (rewriting the sentence but maintaining the same meaning) the introduction given in the question.

1.2 State the type of essay you are going to write. You need to assume the examiner doesn't know your question. **For non-opinion questions, mention the type of essay you're going to write**, as given in the task. For example, *discuss the advantages and disadvantages, problems and solutions, causes and effects*.

Here is an example introduction for the above essay question:

Over the last decade, there has been nearly a 20% rise in the number of children in western countries who are deemed overweight. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss some of the causes why this has occurred and consider the effects of this negative trend.

As you can see, the first sentence refers to the topic by paraphrasing the question. Note: You must not copy the introduction word for word from the question!

The second part then clearly says the essay will discuss the causes and effects regarding the topic of the essay.

2) Body Paragraphs

For an IELTS essay, you should have 2 or 3 body paragraphs - no more and no less.

For your body paragraph, each paragraph should **contain one controlling idea** and have sentences (reasons and examples) to support it.

Here is the first main body paragraph:

The main reasons for this problem are a poor diet and a lack of physical exercise. Over the last 10 years, there has been a significant rise in the number of fast-food restaurants. For example, on most high streets, there are McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Pizza Hut. The food in these popular outlets is known to be unhealthy if consumed too often. However, fast food is not the only cause, but also the manner in which youngsters choose to seek entertainment in their free time. Physical activities, which were popular in the past, have largely given way to modern computer games or other mobile applications. The result is that children lead far more sedentary lifestyles.

The **controlling idea** in this first paragraph is the **causes** for the increase in overweight children, and there are two supporting reasons backed up with examples.

Here is the second main body paragraph:

The combined impacts of these factors will continue to cause obesity, with unfortunate results. Firstly, there has been a large increase in overweight-related diseases, in particular diabetes. Children suffering from this illness need to be injected with insulin every day for the rest of their lives, including adulthood. Furthermore, obese children can also develop psychological issues. One of the reasons is that they are often subjected to unkindness from other children. This can affect their self-confidence and, in some cases, lead to excessive shyness and restrict their social development.

Again, there is one **controlling idea** in this second paragraph, this time being the **effects** of the increase in overweight children. There are two supporting reasons backed up with examples.

3) Conclusion

The conclusion only needs to be one to three sentences, and you can do the following:

Summarize at a high level what the essay is about.

State an opinion if appropriate. Or, for opinion essays, re-state your opinion.

Give some thoughts about the future.

Here is an example:

In conclusion, there are clearly numerous reasons for the increase in overweight children, which impacts their wellbeing. Going forward, society in general will need to find positive ways to encourage children to have a better balance in their diets and exercise in order to reverse this trend.

The full IELTS essay:

Over the last decade, there has been nearly a 20% rise in the number of children in western countries who are deemed overweight. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss some of the causes why this has occurred and consider the effects of this negative trend.

The main reasons for this problem are a poor diet and a lack of physical exercise. Over the last 10 years, there has been a significant rise in the number of fast-food restaurants. For example, on most high streets, there are McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Pizza Hut. The food in these popular outlets is known to be unhealthy if consumed too often. However, fast food is not the only cause, but also the manner in which youngsters choose to seek entertainment in their free time. Physical activities, which were popular in the past, have largely given way to modern computer games or other mobile applications. The result is that children lead far more sedentary lifestyles.

The combined impacts of these factors will continue to cause obesity, with unfortunate results. Firstly, there has been a large increase in overweight-related diseases, in particular diabetes. Children suffering from this illness need to be injected with insulin every day for the rest of their lives, including adulthood. Furthermore, obese children can also develop psychological issues. One of the reasons is that they are often subjected to unkindness from other children. This can affect their self-confidence and, in some cases, lead to excessive shyness and restrict their social development.

In conclusion, there are clearly numerous reasons for the increase in overweight children, which impacts their wellbeing. Going forward, society in general will need to find positive ways to encourage children to have a better balance in their diets and exercise in order to reverse this trend.

(286 Words)