

How to Write a Task 2 Essay

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.***

These 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 ***opinion essay*** question:

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

In today's society advertising has become a part of everyday life. However, some of the methods used are considered to be unfair and unacceptable.

To what extent do you agree with this view?

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 important 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.

In today's society advertising has become a part of everyday life. However, some of the methods used are considered to be unfair and unacceptable.

(underlining = key topic words)

To what extent do you agree with this view?

(underlining = key task words)

3. Decide on the type of essay you are going to write.

If the task states, to **what extent (how much) do you agree?** Then it's asking, what do you think? Is the statement right or wrong? Or, in other words, what is your **opinion?** Your options are: 100% agree, 100% disagree, or partly agree.

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**. Therefore, you need to be able to write your introduction fairly quickly so you can start writing your body paragraphs.

You should do just two things:

- **Write an introduction** by stating the topic of the essay (paraphrasing or using information given in the question).
- **State your opinion.** You need to assume the examiner doesn't know your question. So for essays **asking for your opinion**, such as, is this a positive or negative development? Discuss both views and give your opinion; **clearly state what your opinion is.**

Here is an example introduction for the above essay question:

The world that we live in today is dominated by advertising, and the strategies employed are endless; some would argue they are also unethical. **From my point of view, I totally agree** that many of the methods used to sell are unjust, and in the following essay, I will give reasons and examples to support this view.

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 confirms the writer's opinion** (100% agree thesis) and says the essay will give reasons and examples of unfair advertising methods.

2) Body Paragraphs

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

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

Here is the first body paragraph:

To begin with, the fact that we cannot escape from advertising is a significant cause for complaint. Constant images and signs wherever we look can be very intrusive and irritating. Take, for example, advertising within elevators. With the latest technology, companies are now able to play loud advertising videos inside lifts without people's consent.

The **controlling idea** in this first paragraph is the '**unfairness within advertising**', and there are two supporting reasons supported by one example.

The second body paragraph gives further reasons and examples **supporting the writer's opinion**:

A further aspect of advertising I believe to be unacceptable is the way it encourages people to buy products they may not need, cannot afford, or are unhealthy. For instance, young children and teenagers in particular are targeted by advertisements showing the latest toys, branded clothing, or fast food. In addition, the advertising sector often imposes the concept of a superior person; that is, if you buy certain products or services, then you are somehow superior to your peers. Given that we are all individuals, these concepts are, of course, total nonsense, but they can put pressure on those with low self-confidence to conform. Such pressure can lead to stress, and the detrimental effects of stress on a person's health are indisputable.

Again, there is one **controlling idea** in this second paragraph that happens to be the same as the first, being the '**unfairness within advertising**', because this is a **thesis-led essay agreeing 100%** with the view in the question. In this paragraph, four reasons are given, supported by four examples.

3) Conclusion

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

- Summarise by rephrasing at a high level what the essay is about (using the reasons in the main body paragraphs).
- Re-state your opinion.
- Give some thoughts about the future.

Here is an example:

In conclusion, it is true to say that advertising is an everyday feature of our lives. Therefore, people are constantly pressed to purchase products or services that are bad for their health, are not necessary, or are beyond their budget. In my opinion, many aspects of advertising do appear to be morally wrong and should be deemed unacceptable in today's society.

The full IELTS essay:

The world that we live in today is dominated by advertising, and the strategies employed are endless; some would argue they are also unethical. From my point of view, I totally agree that many of the methods used to sell are unjust, and in the following essay, I will give reasons and examples to support this view.

To begin with, the fact that we cannot escape from advertising is a significant cause for complaint. Constant images and signs wherever we look can be very intrusive and irritating. Take, for example, advertising within elevators. With the latest technology, companies are now able to play loud advertising videos inside lifts without people's consent.

A further aspect of advertising I believe to be unacceptable is the way it encourages people to buy products they may not need, cannot afford, or are unhealthy. For instance, young children and teenagers in particular are targeted by advertisements showing the latest toys, branded clothing, or fast food. In addition, the advertising sector often imposes the concept of a superior person; that is, if you buy certain products or services, then you are somehow superior to your peers. Given that we are all individuals, these concepts are, of course, total nonsense, but they can put pressure on those with low self-confidence to conform. Such pressure can lead to stress, and the detrimental effects of stress on a person's health are indisputable.

In conclusion, it is true to say that advertising is an everyday feature of our lives. Therefore, people are constantly pressed to purchase products or services that are bad for their health, are not necessary, or are beyond their budget. In my opinion, many aspects of advertising do appear to be morally wrong and should be deemed unacceptable in today's society.

(297 words)