

Table: Essay Structure

The table below shows the estimated literacy rates by region and gender for 2000 to 2004.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features and make comparisons where relevant.

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Write at least 150 words.

	Total	Male	Female
World	82.2%	87.2%	77.3%
Africa	62.5%	71.6%	53.9%
Americas	93.6%	94.1%	93.2%
Asia	79.3%	85.9%	72.5%
Europe	98.8%	99.2%	98.5%
Ocenia	93.4%	94.2%	92.7%

NB: Ocenia = Oceania.

The table questions tend to require more thought and effort in terms of interpreting the data than the more visual graphs and diagrams.

It's vital when describing a table to carefully select only the main features in order to simplify the essay so that the description of the table can be easily followed and is not confusing to the reader.

Essay Structure and Approach

Introduction
Main Body I
Main Body II
Main Body III (possibly)
Conclusion (possibly)

1. Introduction

The introduction is made up of two elements only:

- a. The first sentence(s) simply restates (paraphrases) the table's introduction from the test question.
- b. Write a high-level overview, but don't mention any data at this stage. An overview is required for a band 6 or higher, which is why we write it in the introduction, so that it can not be missed at the end due to time running out.

2. Main Body Paragraphs

- a. Describe only a few (4 - 6) main features. To do this, look for the highest and lowest values, any differences, and the most notable comparisons or trends.
- b. Make planning notes on the above and decide the order and arrangement of how to describe them.
- c. Use vocabulary that fits with the illustration. Be careful to distinguish between static and dynamic data. For example, a table with no time frame, such as the one above, is a static illustration, so avoid using language of change. Instead, use vocabulary such as percentages, proportions, comparatives, and superlatives when describing the illustration.
- d. Separate the main features into two (possibly three) paragraphs, group them, or keep the sentences separate, depending on how many words you are able to write per feature. This will also determine whether it's a two or three paragraph essay.

3. Conclusion

- a. A conclusion (or summary) is not required unless it's stated. However, it's often advisable to write one to tie the essay together or to increase the word count if needed.
- b. A good conclusion describes at a high level what changed or is predicted to change, although it must not repeat the overview sentence word for word.