

**Please note:** the following essays would all achieve IELTS band 9.

### 1. Discussion Essay

***Some people believe that there should be fixed punishments for each type of crime. Others, however, argue that the circumstances of an individual crime, and the motivation for committing it, should always be taken into account when deciding on the punishment.***

***Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.***

People have different views about whether or not punishments for crimes should be fixed. Although there are some advantages of fixed punishments, I would argue that it is better to judge each crime individually.

There are some good arguments for having one punishment for each crime. This system ensures that each member of society knows and understands the consequences of committing any crime. It is a fair system, and it leaves people with no doubt that breaking the law is not tolerated. At the same time, it is much easier for judges and lawyers when there is a clear rule dictating how each offender should be sentenced. For example, if someone is found guilty of stealing, the judge will simply follow the rules and apply the appropriate punishment.

Despite the above arguments, I believe that the context of any criminal act should be taken into account when sentencing an offender. This means that the judge should consider the details of each particular case before deciding on the appropriate punishment. For example, a person who steals something from a shop for the first time should not be treated in the same way as a repeat offender who has been caught shoplifting many times before. It would be sensible to give the first-time offender a small punishment, such as a fine, while the repeat offender may be sent to prison.

In conclusion, it seems to me that a mature and humane legal system would be flexible rather than fixed in terms of how decisions about punishments are made.

(257 words)

## 2. Opinion Essay

***Some people think that school children need to learn practical skills such as car maintenance or bank account management along with the academic subjects at school.***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

It is true that children do not learn many practical skills at school. However, I completely disagree with the idea that schools should teach skills like bank account management and car maintenance.

At present, most schools focus on important academic subjects such as mathematics, science and language. These subjects help young people to gain knowledge and to develop thinking skills that will be vital for their future careers. We live in a knowledge-based economy where independent thinking and problem solving are the most important skills. With timetables already full, schools do not have time to teach children anything else.

Furthermore, I do not believe that most practical skills are beneficial enough to be included in lessons. I would argue that bank account management, for example, is a life skill that anyone can learn by simply opening and using a bank account. Most adults have no problem managing their finances without being taught accounting lessons at school. In fact, I have never met anyone who found it difficult to use a bank account. Other practical skills like car maintenance or plumbing are not really necessary because most people prefer to pay a qualified mechanic or plumber. It would be a waste of children's time if these subjects were introduced as part of the school curriculum.

In conclusion, schools have always taught the traditional academic subjects that help students to prepare for university or professional life. If they start to teach practical skills, the study of important academic subjects will suffer.

(250 words)

### 3. Problem / Solution Essay

***Despite huge improvements in healthcare, the overall standard of physical health in many developed countries is now falling. What could be the reason for this trend, and what can be done to reverse it?***

Health problems such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease are becoming more widespread in parts of the developed world. There are several reasons for this problem, and various measures could be taken by governments and individuals to improve the situation.

Lifestyle and diet are the major causes of poor health in developed countries. Most people travel by car rather than walking, they tend to work in offices where little physical activity is required, and they are also less active at home; adults relax by watching television, while children play video games rather than doing outdoor sports. At the same time, many people nowadays eat fast food or pre-prepared meals, which are cheap to buy and easy to make. These foods often contain too much fat, salt and sugar, and consequently, populations in developed countries are increasingly overweight.

Regular exercise and a healthy diet are the keys to raising the overall standard of health in any country. Doctors advise exercising at least three times a week for twenty minutes, and adults need to take responsibility for making sure that they and their children follow these guidelines. Governments can also help the situation by ensuring that there is enough time for sport on school timetables. With regard to the need for a healthy diet, governments can play their part by banning junk food from school menus, but it is even more important that individuals make better choices about the foods they eat.

In conclusion, the standard of physical health in developed countries will only improve if people become more physically active and start to eat more healthily.

(266 words)