

# Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics



Useful Ideas & Vocabulary  
for over 150 IELTS Essay  
Topics.

For Academic & GT IELTS Writing Task 2.

IELTS Liz

# Volume II

## Topics F - R

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This book contains useful ideas for essay topics which can be used for IELTS writing task 2. The ideas presented are not intended to influence any person's personal opinions and do not represent the opinions of the author.

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## FAMILY

## Parents or Teachers Should Discipline Children

Parents	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents know their children better than teachers.</li> <li>• Parents might be able to understand reasons behind bad behaviour.</li> <li>• Parents need to be responsible for their child's conduct at home.</li> <li>• Parents are ultimately responsible for the upbringing of their child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers must maintain discipline in their classroom.</li> <li>• Students should learn correct conduct at school.</li> <li>• Teachers are qualified in different discipline techniques.</li> <li>• If teachers do not discipline a naughty child, other children will suffer from the disruption.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find the odd-one-out in each of these groups of words and phrases. Use a good dictionary to help you if necessary.

1 bad behaviour / obedience / misbehaviour / unruliness

2 to lack discipline / to keep discipline / to impose discipline / to maintain discipline

3 to discipline sb / / to penalise sb / to punish sb / to reward sb

4 disobedient / disruptive / well-behaved / naughty / unruly

## Family Size: Families are Smaller than Before

Bigger Families Previously	Smaller Families Nowadays
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bigger family meant more children to help and earn money.</li> <li>• Agricultural families relied on children as farmhands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller families are more geographically mobile and can move city more easily to find work.</li> <li>• The cost of bringing up children has risen.</li> </ul>

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- Having more children was important because the infant mortality rate was higher.
- Many children provided security for parents in their old age in a time without social benefits.
- Having many children was sometimes considered to be prestigious.
- Mothers often work and do not have time to take care of large families.
- Modern life is geared towards small families.
- Women have access to birth control.
- Women have more awareness and choice these days.

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Match the words and phrases from the sentences with their definitions.

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1 mortality rate | a) a baby or very young child  |
| 2 infant         | b) contraception   |
| 3 geared towards | c) inspiring respect   |
| 4 bringing up    | d) organised in a way that is suitable for a particular situation or purpose             |
| 5 birth control  | e) raising   |
| 6 prestigious    | f) the number of people who die in a particular group during a particular period of time |

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## Women Having Children Later in Life

Reasons	Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working women prefer to focus on building their career and climbing the career ladder.</li> <li>• Some couples prefer having financial stability before having and raising a child.</li> <li>• The increase in divorce can affect when a woman decides to have children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child, as a young adult, may feel the burden of taking care of elderly parents.</li> <li>• The age gap is bigger between parent and child which can lead to difficulties relating to each other.</li> <li>• Older parents get tired more easily which can restrict their enjoyment and</li> </ul>

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- Advances in technology, such as IVF, help older women become pregnant.

participation in parenthood.

- There is an increased chance of health complications with the baby.

**Collocations Exercise:** Match the verbs 1 – 5 with the nouns a) – e) to make common collocations. Then read the sentences above to check your answers.

1 to build

a) financial stability

2 to climb

b) birth

3 to restrict

c) one's career

4 to give

d) participation

5 to have

e) the career ladder

## Childless Marriages

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Married couples can focus on their careers.</li> <li>Children change a marriage and add too many _____ (1).</li> <li>Without children, there is more freedom.</li> <li>Children are a financial _____ (2).</li> <li>Childless couples can spend more time _____ (3) to each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is hard to relate to other married couples whose lives _____ (4) around their children.</li> <li>A family unit cannot be considered a family without children.</li> <li>Some societies view childless couples as _____ (5).</li> <li>Some childless couples did not choose this and suffer without children.</li> <li>Without children there is a lack of support in old age.</li> <li>Children are the glue that holds the family together.</li> </ul>

abnormal    burden    devoted    responsibilities    revolve

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the words in the box to complete the arguments *for* and *against* childless marriages.

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## Divorce

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is better for parents to separate than to argue all the time.</li> <li>• An unhappy marriage can cause a child to suffer distress and witness unpleasant scenes.</li> <li>• Divorce is no longer stigmatised in society.</li> <li>• Children are unsure of who they might live with afterwards.</li> <li>• A happy parent is a good parent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process of divorce can be stressful for children.</li> <li>• Children feel insecure as their family falls apart.</li> <li>• Each parent can devote quality time to their children rather than quantity.</li> <li>• Children may miss the other parent after the divorce.</li> <li>• Some divorce settlements result in hostility between parents.</li> <li>• Children may feel caught between both parents</li> </ul>

**1 Spot the Mistake Exercise:** Identify the two arguments which are in the wrong category.

**2 Matching Exercise:** Match the items 1 – 5 with the items a) – e) based on the information given in the ideas above.

1 to witness

2 to be

3 to feel

4 to result in

5 to be caught between

a) two people

b) insecure

c) hostility

d) scenes

e) stigmatised

## Single Parent Families

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children do not need two parents to have a stable upbringing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The financial strain is sometimes placed on only one parent.</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children benefit from a loving environment provided by one parent.</li> <li>• Single parent families are preferable to a dysfunctional marriage.</li> <li>• Children from dysfunctional marriages can suffer emotional distress.</li> <li>• Children may have more responsibilities in the house, which helps their development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children might miss the influence of having parents of each gender around.</li> <li>• Children are not given a role model for a healthy adult relationship.</li> <li>• Children are not able to grow up understanding adult relationships.</li> <li>• Children are not able to witness how adults work through difficulties and disagreements.</li> <li>• Children have no other parent to turn to for comfort or support.</li> </ul>
--	--

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find words and phrases in the sentences above that mean:

- 1 a feeling of extreme unhappiness (two words)
- 2 a person who someone admires and whose behaviour, attitudes, etc they try to copy (two words)
- 3 not working properly or normally (one word)
- 4 the way your parents taught you to behave when you were growing up (one word)
- 5 worry and pressure caused by lack of money (two words)

## Children Spending More Time with Grandparents

**Matching and Categorising Exercise:** Match these sentence halves. Are the completed sentences *for* (+) or *against* (-) children spending more time with grandparents? See the Answer Key for six more ideas for this topic.

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 Both child and grandparents     | a) they are relied on for child care too often. |
| 2 Children might be confused if   | b) can enjoy a closer relationship.             |
| 3 Grandparents can offer children |   |

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4 Grandparents might feel exploited if

c) a different perspective on life.

d) grandparents say one thing and parents another.

## Both Parents Working

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some families need two incomes for financial stability.</li> <li>Children benefit from the extra family and income. (1)</li> <li>Children learn to appreciate the value of the money.</li> <li>Children might need to take more of responsibilities in the home. (2)</li> <li>Additional responsibilities help children mature more quickly.</li> <li>Some parents are happier if they have a working life as well as a family life.</li> <li>Children benefit from having a healthy, happy parents. (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children with both parents working lack parental guidance.</li> <li>Parents do not have the time available to care for their children sufficiently.</li> <li>Children might lack support with a homework and other personal issues. (4)</li> <li>Parents struggle to cope when a child is sick as they must both go to work.</li> <li>Parents might argue about whose job it is most important and who takes time off for domestic issues. (5)</li> <li>Children sometimes feel abandoned.</li> </ul>

**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** In arguments 1 – 5 above, there is *one extra word* which does not fit. Spot the incorrect extra word.

## Care of the Elderly: Families Should be Responsible

1 Elderly people have paid taxes which should be used for their care.

2 Elderly people thrive better when cared for by people who love them.

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- 3 Family should support one another whatever the situation.
- 4 Family understand the needs of the elderly best.
- 5 Grandparents have looked after their child in the past, now the children should look after them.
- 6 If both adults work, there may be no one at home to provide the necessary support.
- 7 Nursing homes and retirement homes are structured to provide the right support and care.
- 8 Retirement homes provide support but not the love that the elderly person needs.
- 9 Some families do not have the extra finances available.
- 10 Some elderly people require specialised care that the family cannot provide.
- 11 The elderly should be surrounded by familiar objects and people.
- 12 The family are not trained to take care of elderly people.

**Categorisation Exercise:** Mark the arguments above (+) if they are *for* the idea of the family being responsible for the care of the elderly or (-) if they are *against* it.

## Researching Family History

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding out about ancestors is a type of self-discovery.</li> <li>Knowing about their ancestors helps people feel part of a larger family.</li> <li>Family history can reveal hereditary medical conditions which might be prevalent among the current generation.</li> <li>Knowing if cancer, for example, is common in their family can help people take the necessary preventive measures.</li> <li>Researching family history can show cultural history.</li> <li>There might be common skills to discover within a family's history.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is better for people to focus on present family members rather than those in the past.</li> <li>Unpleasant information might be unearthed.</li> <li>A past member of the family might have been an embarrassment which is best forgotten.</li> <li>People might discover secrets that are damaging to family members today.</li> <li>The past is best left in the past.</li> <li>Hereditary diseases do not necessarily reoccur and may cause undue stress and worry.</li> </ul>

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**Vocabulary Exercise:** The words in *italics* all appear in the sentences *for* and *against* researching family history. Choose the best option (**a**, **b** or **c**) to complete the following statements.

1 Your *ancestors* are...

- a) your close friends
- b) relatives who lived a long time ago
- c) places where your parents and grandparents were born.

2 A *hereditary* disease...

- a) is passed to a child by its parents
- b) requires a surgical intervention
- c) affects the heart and the arteries.

3 A condition or belief that is *prevalent* is...

- a) rare
- b) new
- c) common.

4 *Preventive* measures or actions are intended to...

- a) cure a disease very quickly
- b) replace medical insurance
- c) stop something bad from happening.

5 If you *unearth* evidence or information about something bad, you...

- a) try to keep it secret
- b) discover it after careful searching
- c) share it with all the print and electronic media.

6 If you say that somebody is an *embarrassment* to you, you mean that they make you feel...

- a) nervous and uncomfortable
- b) sad and angry
- c) proud and happy.

7 If something is *damaging* to someone, it affects them...

- a) for a very long time
- b) in a bad way
- c) both physically and mentally.

## FOOD

## GM Foods

(GM = genetically modified, i.e. scientifically produced)

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheaper, more abundant crops will help alleviate the problem of hunger in the world.</li> <li>Through genetic modification, foods can be given more flavour and a better texture.</li> <li>Crops can be made more resistant to harmful insects and fungi.</li> <li>Genetically modified foods can be given a longer shelf life.</li> <li>The nutritional value of food can be increased.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GMOs pose a serious threat to the environment.</li> <li>Food production will become an industry dominated by a few powerful biotech companies.</li> <li>GM seeds will travel to neighbouring fields and threaten non-GM crops.</li> <li>GM foods will eventually affect our organism adversely.</li> <li>People prefer foods that have not been tampered with in laboratories.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find words and phrases in the sentences above that mean:

- 1 damaging
- 2 in a bad or unfavourable way
- 3 in the end
- 4 the taste of a food or drink
- 5 the way something feels in your mouth when you are eating it
- 6 to interfere with something, usually without permission
- 7 to make something bad or painful more bearable



## Factory Farming: Intensive Animal Farming

### For

- 1 Factory farming is an (a) **efficient** (b) **inefficient** and space-saving way of producing food.
- 2 Animals in factory farms are (a) **unsafe** / (b) **safe** and well looked after.
- 3 Intensive animal farming (a) **minimises** / (b) **maximises** output.
- 4 Production (a) **costs** / (b) **levels** are greatly reduced.
- 5 It is the best way to meet the (a) **dwindling** / (b) **growing** demand for cheap meat worldwide.

### Against

- 6 Animals live in cramped and (a) **hygienic** / (b) **unhygienic** conditions.
- 7 Forests are being (a) **razed** / (b) **planted** as more land is needed to grow plants to feed industrially reared animals.
- 8 The (a) **insufficient** / (b) **intensive** use of antibiotics in industrial farming poses a threat to human health.
- 9 Animals are (a) **often** / (b) **rarely** genetically manipulated to produce more eggs or milk or to grow bigger.
- 10 Even livestock animals are (a) **meant** / (b) **not meant** to live freely outdoors

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**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Choose the option (a) or (b) that makes sense to present arguments *for* and *against* intensive animal farming.

## Fast Foods should be Banned

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eating a lot of fast food can cause health problems such as obesity.</li> <li>The fast food industry has developed very healthy alternatives.</li> <li>Fast foods contain a large amount of additives, saturated fats and sugars.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fast food is more affordable than so-called health food.</li> <li>Informing is a more effective policy than prohibiting.</li> <li>People who work full-time cannot cook every day.</li> </ul>

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- Fast foods get so much publicity that people forget about traditional foods.
- Workers in the fast food industry are often ruthlessly exploited by their employers.

- Nobody wants the government to prescribe their diet.
- Fast food is only bad if you have too much of it.
- The nutritional value of fast food is quite low and it does not satisfy hunger.

**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** Identify the two arguments which are in the wrong category.

## Packaged Food

### Ready Meals & Prepared Foods

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ready meals are a real boon for working couples.</li> <li>• We can discover dishes from all over the world.</li> <li>• Prepared foods are always readily available and are economical.</li> <li>• Instead of wasting time cooking every day, we could devote more time to our children or our hobby.</li> <li>• Ready meals are prepared and packaged under the most hygienic conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packaged food contains a lot of additives and preservatives.</li> <li>• Home cooked meals are healthier than industrially produced foods.</li> <li>• Packaging waste poses a serious threat to the environment.</li> <li>• Most people have a need to take pride in food they have prepared themselves.</li> <li>• Convenience foods lose a lot of nutrients during processing.</li> </ul>

**Collocations Exercise:** Match the verbs 1 – 5 with the nouns a) – e) to make common collocations used in the sentences about packaged food.

1 to pose

2 to take

a) time (to something)

b) a threat

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3 to lose

4 to devote

5 to contain

c) additives

d) pride (in something)

e) nutrients

## Future World Food Shortage

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change is responsible for _____ (1) and other extreme weather conditions.</li> <li>Population increases faster than food production.</li> <li>Farmers in developing countries use outdated farming methods.</li> <li>The cost of some basic _____ (2) such as rice has risen so much that many people can no longer afford them.</li> <li>The global financial crisis has caused some countries to invest less in agriculture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governments should adopt strict _____ (3) to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.</li> <li>Rich countries should help poorer countries to use clean _____ (4).</li> <li>World governments and agencies need to work together to deal with climate change at a global level.</li> <li>Deforestation and _____ (5) need to be tightly controlled.</li> <li>Eating less meat would result in more land being available to grow crops for humans.</li> </ul>

commodities   drought   energy   measures   overgrazing

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the words in the box to complete the sentences about a possible future world food shortage.

## Vegetarian Diet

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is high time we stopped killing the animals unnecessarily. (1)</li> <li>• A well-planned vegetarian diet contains all the nutrients we need.</li> <li>• It is naturally high in fibre and low in saturated fats, which helps prevent cancer.</li> <li>• It reduces the risk of heart disease.</li> <li>• Growing vegetables and cereals for ourselves rather than for a cattle will greatly reduce the human impact on the environment. (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A varied and balanced diet it is the key to good health. (3)</li> <li>• We are by nature omnivorous rather than herbivorous.</li> <li>• Without meat, we cannot get the amount of protein we need to grow and remain strong and healthy.</li> <li>• Humans have been eaten meat since prehistoric times. (4)</li> <li>• Meat products have taste delicious, while vegetables and cereals are often bland. (5)</li> </ul>

**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** In arguments 1 – 5 above, there is *one extra word* which does not fit. Spot the incorrect extra word.

## Preservatives in Food

- 1 If no food could be preserved, millions would die from starvation.
- 2 In many countries, additives must \_ \_ \_ \_ (1) to a list of government directives.
- 3 In many countries, the government does not have the resources to properly \_ \_ \_ \_ (2) the substances added to foods.
- 4 Many additives \_ \_ \_ \_ (3) allergic reactions.
- 5 Nobody knows exactly what the effect of preservatives will be in the long term.
- 6 Public health agencies carefully \_ \_ \_ \_ (4) the preservatives that can be used in food processing.
- 7 Some preservatives are carcinogenic.
- 8 Studies about the dangers of preservatives have produced inconsistent results.

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9 Today, very few people have the chance to eat only what they can grow themselves.

10 Without preservatives, many foods would \_ \_ \_ \_ (5) before reaching the consumer.

monitor   adhere   trigger   decay   regulate
---

**1 Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the verbs in the box to complete the sentences above about preservatives in food.

**2 Mark the arguments above '+' if they are *for* the use of preservatives in food and '-' if they are *against*.**

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## HEALTH

## Funding Prevention or Cure?

Prevention	Cure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health is the greatest asset of a nation, so the state needs to look after it.</li> <li>Effective health and safety measures at work save lives and save employers money.</li> <li>Early cancer detection of tests should be free for everyone. (1)</li> <li>People can easily be encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle.</li> <li>If preventive care services are not funded, so a lot fewer people will have access to them. (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many people suffer from an injury or an illness that could not have been prevented and therefore it needs to be treated. (3)</li> <li>Conditions in state hospitals reflect the degree of civilisation in a society.</li> <li>A lot of hereditary diseases can be cured, but only for a few of them can be prevented. (4)</li> <li>Funding cuts to public hospitals endanger patients and a result in overburdened medical staff. (5)</li> <li>Public money is better spent on health care than on showcase projects such as high-speed rail networks.</li> </ul>

**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** In arguments 1 – 5 above, there is *one extra word* which does not fit. Spot the incorrect extra word.

## Growing Number of Overweight People

Causes	Solutions
Fast food outlets are ubiquitous nowadays.	⇒ Fast food restaurants could easily offer healthy alternatives.
Many people consume more calories than they burn through physical activity.	⇒ People should avoid overeating and take more exercise.

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Our lifestyle has become far too sedentary.

⇒ Taking up an outdoor sport or a physical activity like gardening or walking can compensate for a sedentary lifestyle.

Food advertising often encourages people to buy sugary drinks, high-fat snacks and other unhealthy foods.

⇒ Junk food advertising should be tightly controlled or banned altogether.

Processed foods are often tastier and less nutritious than whole foods and so promote overeating.

⇒ The public needs to be made aware of the health risks posed by engineered foods.

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find words and phrases in the sentences above that mean:

1 containing many of the substances we need to stay healthy; nourishing

2 found everywhere; omnipresent

3 having had its genetic structure changed

4 involving a lot of sitting and very little exercise

5 to balance or counteract the effects of something bad

6 to prohibit something legally or officially

7 to start doing a particular activity or job.

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## Responsibility for Public Health

### For Government Responsibility

- Citizens expect decent health care in return for the taxes they pay.
- Affordable health care is a basic human right.
- People are free to choose a healthy diet and to take regular exercise.
- Public health care is too serious a matter to be placed exclusively in the hands of profit-oriented organisations.

### For Individual's Responsibility

- In many countries, citizens contribute to the funding of public health through income tax.
- Our health is our biggest asset, so it is our personal responsibility to maintain it.
- Funding public health offers excellent return on investment.
- We often know instinctively which foods and activities are beneficial to our

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- The government can introduce taxes and regulations to guide people towards healthier choices.

health and which ones are detrimental.

- In the end, it is only up to us whether or not we heed the advice given by health agencies and doctors.

**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** Identify the two arguments which are in the wrong category.

## Fewer People Walk these Days

### Why Few People Walk

Most people live too far away from their workplace to walk.

Walking is seen as something you do out of necessity and not for fun.

Walking is not glamorous – after all, 'pedestrian' also means 'commonplace, unimaginative'.

People have \_\_\_\_\_ (1) slaves to their car.

Sprawling suburbs have made walking impractical and \_\_\_\_\_ (2) car dependency.

### Solution to Problem

⇒ With a better public transport system, commuters could at least walk or cycle to the nearest station.

⇒ Travel agencies could \_\_\_\_\_ (3) a wider range of walking holidays.

⇒ The positive impact of walking on the environment needs to be \_\_\_\_\_ (4) more.

⇒ The public needs to be better \_\_\_\_\_ (5) about the incredible health benefits of walking.

⇒ It is time to \_\_\_\_\_ (6) our cities and create more walkable neighbourhoods.

become   emphasise   increase   inform   offer   reshape

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the correct form of the verbs in the box to complete the sentences about the declining number of people who walk.



## INTERNET &amp; COMPUTERS

## Social Media Benefit Communication

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media make spoken and written communication between people possible anytime, anywhere.</li> <li>• Thanks to social media, everyone can find countless like-minded people worldwide and network with them.</li> <li>• As more and more people are online all the time, messages are often answered almost immediately.</li> <li>• People across the globe can connect with anyone to share their thoughts, photographs and life experiences.</li> <li>• Social media provide a platform for people to discuss local or international issues and influence political decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media encourage people to use a telegraphic style and resort to emoticons to express their feelings.</li> <li>• Being constantly online cuts people off from their immediate surroundings and disrupts face-to-face communication.</li> <li>• How many 'likes' our posts get has become more important than saying anything truly meaningful.</li> <li>• People react quickly to express their opinion but only rarely engage in a constructive dialogue online.</li> <li>• Anonymity and the absence of face-to-face interaction can promote an uncivil or even aggressive style of communication.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find words and phrases in the sentences above that mean:

1 a forum

2 impolite

3 innumerable

4 worldwide

5 to prevent something from continuing as usual or expected

6 to do or use something because it seems to be the only thing available.

## Computers will Replace Teachers

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computers cost less than teachers.</li> <li>Using affordable computers makes the education accessible to those in a reduced financial situation. (1)</li> <li>Computers are reliable. They are always on time, never be sick and do not make mistakes. (2)</li> <li>Teachers vary in skill. Not all teachers are good at their job.</li> <li>Computers can be programmed to be interactive and a fun way to learn.</li> <li>Computers have already become valuable teaching tools in the classroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computers are unable to give feedback to students or help them identify for their talents. (3)</li> <li>Lessons are set and cannot be adapted to student needs.</li> <li>Computers are not able to understand individual and differences in learning. (4)</li> <li>Teachers can offer various perspectives to problems depending on the student.</li> <li>Computers are only as good as the people who programme them.</li> <li>Teachers get to know students individually and take into an account their background. (5)</li> <li>Teachers can help students learn beyond the basic curriculum and develop qualities such as a sense of right and wrong.</li> <li>Computers are unable to inspire.</li> </ul>

**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** In arguments 1 – 5 above, there is *one extra word* which does not fit. Spot the incorrect extra word.



## The Internet Brings People Closer Together

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can make affordable or free voice and video calls to friends, relatives and colleagues all over the world.</li> <li>Social networking platforms enable you to _____ (1) a global community of people who share similar interests.</li> <li>With the internet, _____ (2) down long-lost friends is relatively simple.</li> <li>With your mobile device, you can _____ (3) everyone on what you are doing and where you are at this very moment.</li> <li>Social media help you discover friends you never thought you had.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We should remember that only about half of the world's population has internet access.</li> <li>The more time you spend online, the less you _____ (4) with the people in your immediate surroundings.</li> <li>Our everyday reality is gradually being _____ (5) by virtual worlds.</li> <li>The internet _____ (6) us further apart when we use it to communicate with our neighbours or our office colleagues.</li> <li>Social media platforms are too often used to _____ (7) malicious gossip or false information.</li> </ul>

drive interact join spread supplant track update

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the correct form of the verbs in the box to complete the sentences about the internet and people.

## Risks for Children Online

Problems	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children who are victims of cyberbullying can fall into severe depression.</li> <li>Teens can challenge each other to come into contact with strangers who</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents need to keep an eye on their children's online activities and talk to them about the dangers involved in using the internet.</li> <li>Online safety is a component of internet literacy and should be taught</li> </ul>

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turn out to be online predators.

- It is all too easy to access inappropriate websites and explicit images and videos.
- Computer games are addictive and cause children to neglect their homework.
- Children may inadvertently reveal personal information, which could result in identity theft.

in each and every school.

- Parents and children need to spend more time engaging in leisure activities together.
- Parents need to talk openly to their children about how to stay safe online.
- Children need to be taught how to recognise and report inappropriate online behaviour.

**Collocations Exercise:** Match items 1 – 6 with items a) – f) to make common collocations from the sentences above. Then read the sentences again to check your answers.

1 to access

a) leisure activities

2 to come into

b) personal information

3 to engage in

c) depression

4 to fall into

d) a website

5 to neglect

e) contact with somebody

6 to reveal

f) one's homework

## Security Online

Problems	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hackers can get access to computer systems to steal private data and personal information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All devices should be equipped with a firewall and reliable anti-virus software.</li> </ul>

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- Petty cybercriminals spread malware and computer viruses just for fun.
- Businesses often connect their computers into networks, which means malicious attacks can rapidly affect all users.
- Computer users fall prey to phishing and are deceived into revealing confidential information.
- People can be easily tricked into following a link or opening an e-mail attachment, in this way giving criminals access to their system.

- Passwords need to be strong and changed regularly.
- We should never follow a link or open an attachment from a suspicious or unwanted e-mail.
- We should make sure we use a secure internet connection.
- We should not share posts from social media indiscriminately.

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find the odd-one-out in each of these groups of words and phrases. Use a good dictionary to help you if necessary.

1 phishing / hacking / e-mail attachment / malicious attack / virus / malware

2 secure internet connection / firewall / strong password / anti-virus software / confidential information

3 to fall prey (to sb/sth) / to deceive sb / to steal (data, etc) / to trick sb / to spread (a virus, etc)

IELTS Liz

## Online Shopping

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of products available online is practically unlimited.</li> <li>• Virtually any product you can think of can be delivered straight to your doorstep.</li> <li>• Consumers can easily compare prices.</li> <li>• Consumers no longer have to spend the best part of the weekend queueing in crowded shopping centres.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no face-to-face interaction with knowledgeable and helpful sales staff, which is part of the pleasure of shopping.</li> <li>• Fraud and security breaches remain cause for concern for both consumers and retailers.</li> <li>• Online retailers are open 24/7.</li> </ul>

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- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shipping is sometimes as expensive as the item you order.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You cannot try on or finger the clothes you buy.</li> <li>Once a retailer has got your address, they keep bombarding you with unsolicited e-mails and special offers.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** Identify the two arguments which are in the wrong category.

## Meeting People Online

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What people share and post online gives you a very good insight into their mind and character.</li> <li>Online dating websites have already enabled thousands of people worldwide to find their soulmate.</li> <li>We have become too busy to spend time meeting new people and getting to know them properly.</li> <li>You can meet so many new people online that you can choose who you really like and who you would like to get in touch with.</li> <li>Chatting with people online removes the pressure of face-to-face interaction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online predators make friends with people online and then try to scam them.</li> <li>People with bad intentions can track you down once they know your name and the town you live in.</li> <li>There is no way to know who the person you meet online really is.</li> <li>Subscription fees to sites which check for fake user profiles and offer more security can be exorbitant.</li> <li>Meeting different people online can become so addictive that we may end up cutting ourselves off from the real world.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find words and phrases in the sentences above that mean:

1 made-up

3 stress

5 to deceive

2 partner

4 to contact

6 very expensive

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## LANGUAGE

## English as the Only Global Language

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will have a beneficial effect on communication between people from different countries.</li> <li>• Misunderstandings will be eradicated.</li> <li>• Cultural differences will be explained more easily.</li> <li>• Trade will increase between countries.</li> <li>• People will be brought closer together.</li> <li>• Conflict between countries can be more easily avoided.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Losing a language means losing a culture.</li> <li>• When countries share the same language, they will become more similar and less unique.</li> <li>• People will have no reason to travel abroad if countries are similar.</li> <li>• The tourist trade might suffer, which can affect some countries dependent on that income.</li> <li>• Language includes history which should never be forgotten.</li> <li>• A single language will not necessarily mean less conflict.</li> </ul>

Vocabulary - Easily confused words: *affect* vs *effect*

- **affect** is usually a verb; it means *to produce a change in sb or sth, to have an influence on sb or sth*.

Here are some expressions that are similar in meaning to *affect*: *to have an effect on* / *to have an influence on* / *to have an impact on* / *to have implications for*.

- **effect** is usually a noun; it means *a change caused by sth, the result of sth*.

Complete these sentences with **effect** or with the correct form of **affect**.

- 1 Business communication can be adversely \_\_\_\_\_ by cultural misunderstandings.
- 2 Speaking the same language as your business partner will have a positive \_\_\_\_\_ on the negotiations.
- 3 Bilingualism exerts a profound \_\_\_\_\_ on the brain.
- 4 The growth of English as a lingua franca has \_\_\_\_\_ education and business.

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## Free Online Translation Renders Learning Foreign Languages Obsolete

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computers provide instant translation for languages.</li> <li>Computers make fewer mistakes than humans in translation.</li> <li>Languages take years to learn but only minutes for computers to translate.</li> <li>Computers offer impartial translations.</li> <li>Voice-to-voice translator apps already enable communication between millions of people with no knowledge of foreign languages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computers will not be programmed for regional variations of language.</li> <li>If the internet crashes, people will need language skills to communicate.</li> <li>The internet is not accessible in some places in the world.</li> <li>Learning a language allows for closer contact with local people.</li> <li>Learning a language helps people understand a culture.</li> </ul>

**Collocations Exercise:** Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

accurate   machine   simultaneous   voice-to-voice   approximate

- \_\_\_\_\_ translation is the same as *speech-to-speech* translation; the software takes the spoken word in one language and then vocalises it in another language.
- An \_\_\_\_\_ translation is the same as a *correct* translation.
- An \_\_\_\_\_ translation is the same as a *rough* translation.
- Automatic* translation is the same as \_\_\_\_\_ translation – it is simply translation carried out by a computer.
- In \_\_\_\_\_ interpretation, the interpreter translates the speaker's words while the speaker is talking.

## Learning a Foreign Language at Primary School

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a young age, children absorb information more easily.</li> <li>• Older children are cognitively more mature and are therefore able to learn more with less input.</li> <li>• Children are already in the language acquisition stage, making learning a foreign language easier.</li> <li>• Children are naturally enthusiastic and can develop an interest in foreign languages through fun and games.</li> <li>• Children enjoy language classes because they are usually very different from classes in other subjects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should focus on their own language first.</li> <li>• Children may confuse languages if they try to learn their own language and a foreign one at the same time.</li> <li>• Not all countries have the facilities and teachers to offer a foreign language at primary school.</li> <li>• Many children lose interest in foreign languages as soon as they are tested like in other school subjects.</li> <li>• Learning becomes more difficult as a child ages.</li> </ul>

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**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** Identify the two arguments which are in the wrong category.

## LEISURE

## Shopping as a Leisure Activity

Reasons for Popularity	Other Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising on TV and in magazines tempts people to buy products and luxury items they do not need.</li> <li>• Peer pressure forces people to keep up with latest trends.</li> <li>• People buy on impulse due to the atmosphere and background music in shops.</li> <li>• Shopping malls offer all day facilities to encourage people to spend more time there.</li> <li>• Some people find shopping therapeutic because they can take their mind off their problems.</li> <li>• Credit cards have made it easier for people to go on a shopping spree.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport is a hobby that people can enjoy whilst improving their health.</li> <li>• People have a chance to be more social and can improve their self-esteem.</li> <li>• Some interests, such as photography or art, offer a creative outlet.</li> <li>• Recreation activities can make life more fulfilling.</li> <li>• People can discover new skills they were not aware of.</li> <li>• Some hobbies, such as chess, keep people mentally astute.</li> <li>• Doing volunteer work for charities can be rewarding for the individual and beneficial for society.</li> <li>• Some pastimes can open up a whole new life for people.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find words and phrases in the sentences above that mean:

- 1 an unrestrained activity
- 2 sharp or clever
- 3 a sudden strong urge
- 4 fashions
- 5 the ambience



## The Value of Free Time

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People need a chance to _ _ _ _ (1) from stress and recharge their batteries.</li> <li>• Constant work can result in _ _ _ _ (2) and affect our mental wellbeing.</li> <li>• A healthy _ _ _ _ (3) balance can improve a person's quality of life.</li> <li>• People are more productive at work if they enjoy their free time.</li> <li>• Families can benefit from spending more social time together.</li> <li>• Free time can help people develop useful skills through hobbies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People should focus on work to earn money for their future financial stability.</li> <li>• Free time does not help pay the bills.</li> <li>• Free time can be expensive. People do not earn money during their free time and some recreational activities can be expensive.</li> <li>• People with too much time on their _ _ _ _ (4) can become depressed.</li> <li>• People can become _ _ _ _ (5) if they have nothing to do.</li> <li>• Work provides structure to the day.</li> </ul>

lethargic   hands   unwind   burnout   work-life

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the words in the box to complete the sentences about the value of free time.

## MEDIA &amp; TV

## Violence in the Media Promotes Violence in Society

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children who are exposed to violence on TV tend to play much more aggressively.</li> <li>Violent films and video games may incite teenagers to commit criminal offences.</li> <li>A sizeable proportion of films offer free advertising for guns and propaganda for violence.</li> <li>Mass murderers make the headlines and become the heroes of disaffected youths.</li> <li>Some studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between watching violent films and physical aggression against another person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Millions of people watch graphically violent films every day, but few become killers.</li> <li>Extreme poverty and despair are more likely than violent films on TV to drive a person to commit acts of violence.</li> <li>In many countries, violent crime is decreasing although violence continues to be omnipresent in the media.</li> <li>Violent behaviour is a complex issue with a host of risk factors.</li> <li>Media violence has a greater impact on our thinking and emotions than on our behaviour.</li> </ul>

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Complete these definitions with a suitable word or phrase from the sentences above. Use the correct form of the word or phrase.

- 1 If something has a great \_\_\_\_\_ on a person or situation, it affects them deeply.
- 2 If there is a \_\_\_\_\_ between two variables, one decreases when the other increases and vice versa.
- 3 If you \_\_\_\_\_ someone to something or to do something, you encourage them to do something unpleasant, unlawful or violent.
- 4 Someone or something that \_\_\_\_\_ gets a lot of publicity from the media.
- 5 Something that is \_\_\_\_\_ is present everywhere or seems to be present everywhere.
- 6 We say that young people are \_\_\_\_\_ when they no longer support society's values.

## Famous People Have a Right to Privacy from the Press

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Privacy is one of the basic human rights.</li> <li>Paparazzi are a nuisance and only <b>pander</b> to a voyeuristic audience.</li> <li><b>Media intrusion</b> into the lives of celebrities is downright immoral.</li> <li>There is a huge difference between what is in the public interest and what the public are interested in.</li> <li>The law needs to give privacy greater protection in order to <b>counter</b> the media's frequent invasions of privacy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our parliamentary representatives should willingly be open to <b>scrutiny</b> at all times.</li> <li>Many pop and movie stars actually like their private lives to be put <b>on display</b> in order to gain more public attention and promote their work.</li> <li>From a legal perspective, the right to free expression is as important as the right to privacy.</li> <li>The public interest in the private lives of those in power is entirely <b>legitimate</b>.</li> <li>Ordinary people have a right to know whether or not public figures meet acceptable moral standards.</li> </ul>

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Study the words in **bold** in the sentences above. Then use those words to complete the following sentences.

- 1 Whenever journalists \_ \_ \_ \_ to politicians, they lose their credibility.
- 2 There is an urgent need to protect the public from unwarranted \_ \_ \_ \_ .
- 3 Some websites guarantee that your personal information will only be collected, used and disclosed with your knowledge and for \_ \_ \_ \_ purposes.
- 4 Some social networking sites' privacy practices have recently come under intense \_ \_ \_ \_ .
- 5 Journalists have a duty to expose and \_ \_ \_ \_ injustice wherever and whenever it happens.
- 6 His persistent refusal to put his private life \_ \_ \_ \_ only made him seem more interesting.

## No Future for Radio

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the age of visual media, radio is gradually becoming <u>obsolete</u>.</li> <li>People have become image- and screen-<u>obsessed</u>, so audio and print media will <u>disappear</u> unless they adapt.</li> <li>To <u>attract</u> more listeners, radio will have to <u>find</u> news ways of broadcasting content and become more visual.</li> <li>Many radio stations are <u>out of touch</u> <u>with</u> their audience and <u>fail to</u> improve on-air content.</li> <li>To discover new songs and artists, young people prefer to turn to sites like YouTube.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Radio can <u>catch</u> our imagination much more than visual media.</li> <li><u>Listening</u> to the radio in their car will remain the commuter's favourite activity for decades to come.</li> <li>Radio broadcasting technology keeps developing all the time.</li> <li>More and more people enjoy listening to the radio online <u>via</u> a computer or smartphone.</li> <li>With connected cars, listening to internet radio while driving is now more popular than ever.</li> </ul>

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addicted   captivate   cease to exist   devise   disconnected from  
do not   draw   outdated   through   tuning in

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Match these words and phrases from the sentences above with a synonymous word or phrase from the box.

obsolete	-----	out of touch with	-----
obsessed	-----	fail to	-----
disappear	-----	catch	-----
attract	-----	listening	-----
find	-----	via	-----

## Children Watching TV

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watching TV is a popular pastime for children whose parents cannot afford to let them take up a sport or join a hobby club.</li> <li>• When children watch TV with their parents, family bonds can be strengthened.</li> <li>• Children can access an extensive range of documentary and educational programmes in the comfort of their home.</li> <li>• Unlike surfing the Web or playing computer games, watching TV is often a whole-family activity.</li> <li>• Watching good entertainment programmes can be a source of relief to children who are ill or under stress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watching TV rapidly becomes an addiction which is then hard to overcome.</li> <li>• Children need to interact with other people in order to develop linguistically, socially and emotionally.</li> <li>• Children are unable to make sense of all the violence they see on TV.</li> <li>• The more children watch TV, the less they exercise and the more junk food they eat.</li> <li>• TV viewing takes away time from reading and from doing homework.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** In each of these groups, cross out the item which does not *normally* form a collocation with the verb given.

1 to access: one's voicemail / a programme / a power failure / a file / information / a folder / a URL

2 to overcome: an addiction / one's shyness / resistance / difficulties / satisfaction / a problem

3 to strengthen: one's problems / a bond / a relationship / one's position / ties

4 to take up: a job / acting / a sport / a hobby / painting / a post / a lecture

## TV Influences Culture

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many people worldwide have learnt English through watching subtitled TV shows.</li> <li>The huge number of violent films on TV has _____ (1) people to violence.</li> <li>Regular viewers end up thinking reality should be like what they see on TV, which _____ (2) their values and their behaviour.</li> <li>Lifestyle programmes from developed economies such as the UK are in high demand in emerging markets.</li> <li>Some TV shows _____ (3) controversial relationships as acceptable, which has the power to shape viewers' attitudes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Television merely _____ (4) changing social and cultural values.</li> <li>Culture is not monolithic and society is fragmented, so TV could not possibly influence all their constituent groups.</li> <li>Sitcoms and reality shows hold up a mirror to society, so in fact culture influences TV.</li> <li>TV's dependence on viewer ratings and advertising revenue means that it cannot _____ (5) to risk challenging the prevailing values.</li> <li>Culture is dynamic and keeps transforming itself, while many TV shows just _____ (6) to preserve conventionality and the status quo.</li> </ul>

affect   afford   aim   desensitise   portray   reflect

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the correct form of the verbs in the box to complete the sentences about TV and culture.



## MUSIC IDEAS

## Role of Music

For Individuals	For Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music can stimulate our imagination and be a source of inspiration.</li> <li>• It is often said that music reduces stress and anxiety.</li> <li>• Many people find relief from pain and worry in music.</li> <li>• Listening to music can inspire people to create music themselves.</li> <li>• Music fulfils a basic human need for rhythm, melody and aesthetic pleasure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music can affect the mood and the behaviour of a whole nation.</li> <li>• Music has a unique ability to unite people across age, gender and social divides.</li> <li>• In some countries, the music industry plays a significant role in the economy.</li> <li>• The music of a country is part of its culture and is imbued with its beliefs and ideologies.</li> <li>• Music can be used to create a cultural identity, a sense of belonging to a group.</li> </ul>

**Collocations Exercise:** Match items 1 – 4 with items a) – d) to make common collocations. Then read the sentences above again to check your answers.

1 to find

a) a need

2 to fulfil

b) relief (from pain, anxiety, etc)

3 to reduce

c) the imagination

4 to stimulate

d) stress

Now match the verbs 5 – 8 with items a) – d) above to make other collocations that are similar in meaning:

5 to fire

6 to get

7 to alleviate

8 to meet.

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## Traditional Music

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional music is a vital part of a country's cultural heritage and should be preserved.</li> <li>The language and the traditional music of a country are the best expression of its spirit.</li> <li>Traditional melodies are extremely <b>versatile</b> and can be played in different styles.</li> <li>It is sometimes used to strengthen national unity.</li> <li>It will always <b>transcend</b> fads and fashions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Because of its close ties to a specific culture, it can be difficult for traditional music to <b>appeal</b> to a diverse society.</li> <li>It is sometimes perceived as <b>uninventive</b> and too predictable.</li> <li>It is out of touch with the reality of contemporary society.</li> <li>It can <b>nurture</b> an unhealthy sense of <b>nostalgia</b>.</li> <li>Some people find it repetitive and limited in scope.</li> </ul>

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Study the words in **bold** in the sentences above, using a good dictionary to help you if necessary. Then use those words to complete the following sentences.

- 1 Certain music genres such as indie and heavy metal \_ \_ \_ \_ mostly to the younger generation.
- 2 \_ \_ \_ \_ is sometimes described as an overly sentimental longing for some past period that you would like to return to.
- 3 Good music can \_ \_ \_ \_ cultural differences and language barriers.
- 4 I quite like traditional songs, although I sometimes find the lyrics \_ \_ \_ \_.
- 5 It is important for parents to \_ \_ \_ \_ a love for music in their child.
- 6 The acoustic guitar is one of the most \_ \_ \_ \_ music instruments: it is played by the campfire as often as in the concert hall.

## International Music

- 1 Like global brands, international music makes the world seem uniform.
- 2 Its success is a testimony to the fact that there is much more that unite us than divide us.

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- 3 Its omnipresence and success can make people underestimate their own musical heritage.
- 4 It strengthens our feeling of belonging to a global community.
- 5 It stimulates our curiosity to discover other cultures.
- 6 It is often very commercial and dominated by some of the wealthiest economies.
- 7 It is a powerful global business that threatens traditional music.
- 8 It contributes to the spread of English as a global language.
- 9 It builds bridges between people across the globe.
- 10 In the process of trying to please everyone, it loses depth and character.

**Categorisation Exercise:** Mark the arguments above (+) if there are *in favour of* international music, or (-) if they are *against* it.

## Stopping Free Music Downloads

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music piracy threatens the livelihood of creative artists.</li> <li>• Downloading has become so normal that people fail to see its ethical and copyright implications.</li> <li>• It is strictly illegal to download copyrighted music without the express permission of the author.</li> <li>• From an ethical perspective, there is no difference between downloading music illegally and stealing a CD from a shop.</li> <li>• Stream-ripping sites rob artists of the royalties they deserve, and on the other hand make a lot of money from advertising.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music downloads should only be stopped if they are illegal.</li> <li>• CDs are outrageously expensive, so many music lovers cannot afford them.</li> <li>• If downloads were made illegal, listeners would soon find new ways to rip music from certain sites for offline listening.</li> <li>• Most people who pirate music would not buy CDs anyway, so free downloads do not hurt the music industry.</li> <li>• It is more urgent to stop record companies from exploiting creative artists than to ban free downloads.</li> </ul>

**Collocations Exercise:** In each group, identify the word which does not normally collocate with the keyword or keyphrase in **bold**. Use a good dictionary to help you if necessary.

1 **from an ethical** lookout / perspective / point of view / standpoint / viewpoint

2 extremely / incredibly / outrageously / ridiculously / strongly / **expensive**

3 affect / endanger / express / protect / secure / threaten **somebody's livelihood**

4 absolutely / quite / severely / strictly / totally **illegal**

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## NEWS

## News: Is All News True?

Is All News True?	Function of the News
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It seems that we have officially entered the age of fake news and alternative facts.</li> <li>• Very few news media seem to be free from political bias.</li> <li>• In many countries around the world, news media have become instruments of propaganda.</li> <li>• News outlets are often tightly controlled, either by the government or by business interests.</li> <li>• If what happened can usually be described objectively, explaining how and why it happened necessarily involves subjectivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prime function of the news is to help people keep abreast of world events and current affairs.</li> <li>• Media outlets fulfil the fundamental human need to learn and share news.</li> <li>• Through public relations firms, news media shape public opinion.</li> <li>• News corporations may influence what is considered newsworthy in order to advance a particular agenda.</li> <li>• One of the chief purposes of the news media is to publicise government proclamations.</li> </ul>

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Complete these definitions with a suitable word or phrase from the sentences about the news.

- 1 An event or a person that is \_\_\_\_\_ is considered interesting enough to be reported in the media.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ is prejudice against or in favour of a person or idea which may influence your judgement.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ is the influence of personal opinions and feelings, rather than facts.
- 4 If you \_\_\_\_\_ of a subject or situation, you make sure that you know the most recent facts about it.
- 5 If you \_\_\_\_\_ a fact or an event, you make it widely known to the public.

## News Often Focuses on Bad News

Why	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some research suggests that we are more attracted to negative words in headlines.</li> <li>Apparently, our brain has a negativity bias, which means we give more weight to negative events and thoughts than to positive ones.</li> <li>News about conflicts and disasters tell us whether we are safe or need to react quickly to avoid danger.</li> <li>In view of the powerful impact the news has on people, information and media literacy should be taught at school.</li> <li>Earthquakes and plane crashes happen quickly, whereas good events often develop over a period of time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whenever possible, editors should strive for a balance between negative and neutral or positive news.</li> <li>People who have the final say on what goes into the news prefer negative coverage.</li> <li>News media should focus more on the day-to-day concerns and achievements of local communities.</li> <li>Grassroots movements and social media together could redefine the concept of news and newsworthiness.</li> <li>People should be made aware of their hunger for sensational news and taught how to alleviate it.</li> </ul>

**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** Identify the two arguments which are in the wrong category.

## Newspapers Will One Day Disappear

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competition from online media is squeezing out traditional print publishers.</li> <li>Many newspapers have been forced to file for bankruptcy.</li> <li>Increasingly, people are getting their news for free on the Internet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In some countries, free commuters' newspapers are proving hugely popular.</li> <li>It may take time, but newspapers are bound to adapt to new technologies and create a new business model.</li> </ul>

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- Newspapers are losing revenue from advertising and classified ads.
- Even newspapers which have a digital edition are struggling for survival.

- In emerging economies, newspaper circulation is on the increase.
- Newspapers will evolve and focus on background stories and analysis of global events instead of breaking news.
- Sunday papers that focus on the news of the week are already highly popular in some parts of the world.

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find the words and phrases in the sentences above that could be replaced with these:

1 developing markets

2 gratis

3 inform the authorities that they do not have enough money to pay their debts

4 information about something that has just happened

5 making less money

6 trying extremely hard to continue to exist

7 will certainly

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## Online News is Reliable

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional journalists see it as their duty to help the public differentiate between trustworthy and dubious news sources.</li> <li>• The multiplicity of news sites makes it possible to cross-reference what we read.</li> <li>• Even journalists now get some of their information from online sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are countless fake news and satire sites that the public mistake for genuine news sources.</li> <li>• Anonymous bloggers pass themselves off as journalists and spread news whose authenticity is hard to verify.</li> <li>• We should not blindly trust even reputable newspapers, let alone electronic news media.</li> </ul>

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- Readers can react immediately to an online news item either to confirm or to contest its veracity.
- Internet literacy is increasing, so people can easily tell whether an online news site is credible or not.

- Internet hoaxes spread like wildfire, and millions of readers fall for them.
- The more any news item is repeated, the more people tend to believe its content is truthful.

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find the odd-one-out in each of these groups of words and phrases. Use a good dictionary to help you if necessary.

1 credible / implausible / reliable / trustworthy / truthful

2 dubious / fake / false / genuine / unreliable / untrue

3 authenticity / inaccuracy / truthfulness / veracity

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## READING &amp; BOOKS

## Which are Best, e-Books or Paper Books?

e-Books	Paper Books
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They enable you to have immediate access to all the books in your personal library wherever you are.</li> <li>• You can access digital books on a wide variety of devices.</li> <li>• If you have eyesight problems, you can read them on a large PC monitor and adjust font size, colour and contrast.</li> <li>• People living in areas with no bookshops or postal services are no longer deprived of books.</li> <li>• Many e-book readers have a built-in dictionary, so you can look up any unfamiliar word.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A physical book is less likely to get stolen than an e-reader.</li> <li>• The feel of a paper book, its weight and its smell are part of the enjoyment of reading.</li> <li>• A beautifully designed cover and quality paper make a book an object of desire.</li> <li>• Bookshop browsing provides more enjoyment and intellectual stimulation than scrolling through an online catalogue.</li> <li>• The print books on our shelves are permanent reminders of our intellectual journeys.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Complete the explanations with appropriate words and phrases from the sentences.

- 1 A \_\_\_\_\_ is something that makes you remember or think about something.
- 2 An \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ is something you really want to have or buy.
- 3 An e-book is the same as a \_\_\_\_\_ book.
- 4 If you \_\_\_\_\_ a text on a computer screen, you move the text up or down to find the information you need.
- 5 If you are \_\_\_\_\_ of something you need, you no longer have it or you are prevented from having it.
- 6 Paper books, \_\_\_\_\_ books and \_\_\_\_\_ books are the same things.

## Public Libraries

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public libraries make knowledge and information sources accessible to all.</li> <li>They are welcoming places open to anyone irrespective of age, gender or social class.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They lend resources and provide information but, unlike the Internet, they do not enable people to share.</li> <li>They are sometimes patronized by shady characters who do not respect the rules of conduct.</li> </ul>

**Matching and Categorising Exercise:** Match these sentence halves. Are the completed sentences *for* (+) or *against* (-) public libraries?

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 A public library is often         | a) cultural events and community activities. |
| 2 People can now access information | b) damaged or stained.                       |
| 3 The books are often               | c) for people who share similar interests.   |
| 4 There are more books available    | d) online in the comfort of their own homes. |
| 5 They are a meeting place          | e) online than at the local library.         |
| 6 They often host                   | f) the heart and soul of a community.        |

## Reading Storybooks is a Waste of Time

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fiction disconnects the reader from reality and encourages them to live in a fantasy world of their own.</li> <li>It is better for a child to interact with real people than to spend time with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Storybooks for young children stimulate cognitive development.</li> <li>Shared reading with children is a unique opportunity for parents to <b>bond with</b> them.</li> </ul>

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story characters.

- Some stories have a negative emotional **impact** on children.
- Storybooks are often so beautifully illustrated that readers may **pay scant attention to** the written word.
- Storybooks cannot compete with the appeal of videos.

- Reading aloud to children **fosters** the acquisition of literacy skills.
- Good stories are both enjoyable and educational and **instil** a love of reading in children.
- When we read a story, we can learn empathy as we **identify with** some of the characters and see the world through their eyes.

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Study the words in **bold** in the sentences above. Then use those words to complete the following sentences.

- 1 A good teacher tries to \_ \_ \_ \_ confidence into his or her students.
- 2 Literature \_ \_ \_ \_ the emotional and cognitive development of children.
- 3 Reading a good story together is a great way to \_ \_ \_ \_ your child.
- 4 Stories can have an immediate \_ \_ \_ \_ on children's social behaviour.
- 5 Unfortunately, some patrons \_ \_ \_ \_ the library rules of conduct.
- 6 When we read a story, we sometimes \_ \_ \_ \_ the hero, sometimes with the villain.

## Libraries should Spend more Money on Technology, not Books

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is obviously a limit to how many _ _ _ _ (1) books a library can store.</li> <li>• Libraries which offer free Internet access attract many more users.</li> <li>• Producing printed books puts a great strain on the environment and on _ _ _ _ (2) resources.</li> <li>• Digital resources are less _ _ _ _ (3) to natural disasters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library patrons expect print versions of books and periodicals since they could access their _ _ _ _ (4) edition at home.</li> <li>• Many art and scientific books are not _ _ _ _ (5) in digital format.</li> <li>• Print books make people less screen _ _ _ _ (6).</li> <li>• Citizens do not want their local library to turn into yet another Internet café.</li> </ul>

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- It has become impossible to do any serious research without access to digital resources.

- Public libraries are seriously underfunded and should not waste money on state-of-the-art technology.

available   dependent   digital   natural   physical   vulnerable

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the words in the box to complete the arguments *for* and *against* the idea that libraries should spend more money on technology rather than books.

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## ANSWERS: FAMILY

**Parents or Teachers Should Discipline Children**

Page | i

- 1 obedience
- 2 to lack discipline
- 3 to reward sb
- 4 well-behaved

**The Family is Smaller than Before**

- 1 f    2 a    3 d    4 e    5 b    6 c

**Women Having Children Later in Life**

- 1 c    2 e    3 d    4 b    5 a

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**Childless Marriages**

- 1 responsibilities
- 2 burden
- 3 devoted
- 4 revolve
- 5 abnormal

**Divorce**

①

*Children are unsure of who they might live with afterwards.* This is an argument *against* divorce.

*Each parent can devote quality time to their children rather than quantity.* This is an argument *for* divorce.

②

- 1 d    2 e    3 b    4 c    5 a

## Answer Key: Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

**Single Parent Families**

- 1 emotional distress
- 2 (a) role model
- 3 dysfunctional
- 4 upbringing
- 5 financial strain

Page | ii

**Children Spending More Time with Grandparents**

1 b    2 d    3 c    4 a

1 For    2 Against    3 For    4 Against

More Ideas for this topic:

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children can gain a sense of security from knowing an extended family.</li> <li>Children can learn about past skills and lifestyles.</li> <li>Children can learn to appreciate family values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A grandparent's values might differ from that of the parents.</li> <li>Children might not value their grandparents if they see them too often.</li> <li>Grandparents might not have the energy to make the time with their grandchildren enjoyable.</li> </ul>

**Both Parents Working**

- 1 and
- 2 of
- 3 a
- 4 a
- 5 it

## Answer Key: Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

**Care of the Elderly: Families should be Responsible**

1 (-) 2 (+) 3 (+) 4 (+) 5 (+) 6 (-) 7 (-) 8 (+) 9 (-) 10 (-) 11 (+) 12 (-)

**Researching Family History**

1 b 2 a 3 c 4 c 5 b 6 a 7 b

Page | iii

**ANSWERS: FOOD****GM Foods (GM = genetically modified, i.e. scientifically produced)****Vocabulary Exercise:** Find words and phrases in the sentences above that mean:

- 1 harmful
- 2 adversely
- 3 eventually
- 4 the flavour
- 5 the texture
- 6 to tamper (with something)
- 7 to alleviate

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**Factory Farming: Intensive Animal Farming**

1 a 2 b 3 b 4 a 5 b 6 b 7 a 8 b 9 a 10 a

**Fast Foods should be Banned**

*The fast food industry has developed very healthy alternatives.* This is an argument against banning fast foods.

*The nutritional value of fast food is quite low.* This is an argument in favour of banning fast foods.

## Answer Key: Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

**Packaged Food: Ready Meals & Prepared Foods**

1 b    2 d    3 e    4 a    5 c

**Future World Food Shortage**

Page | iv

- 1 drought
- 2 commodities
- 3 measures
- 4 energy
- 5 overgrazing

**Vegetarian Diet**

- 1 the
- 2 a
- 3 it
- 4 been
- 5 have

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**Preservatives in Food**

①

- 1 adhere
- 2 monitor
- 3 trigger
- 4 regulate
- 5 decay

②

- 1 +    2 +    3 -    4 -    5 -    6 +    7 -    8 -    9 +    10 +

## ANSWERS: HEALTH

**Funding on Prevention or Cure?**

Page | v

- 1 of
- 2 so
- 3 it
- 4 for
- 5 a

**Growing Number of Overweight People**

- 1 nutritious
- 2 ubiquitous
- 3 engineered
- 4 sedentary
- 5 to compensate for
- 6 to ban
- 7 to take up

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**Responsibility for Public Health**

*People are free to choose a healthy diet and to take regular exercise.* This argument supports the idea that it is individuals who are responsible for their health.

*Funding public health offers excellent return on investment.* This argument supports the idea that it is the government that is responsible for public health.

**Fewer People are Walking these Days**

- 1 become
- 2 increased
- 3 offer
- 4 emphasised
- 5 informed

6 reshape

## ANSWERS: INTERNET & COMPUTERS

### Social Media Benefit Communication

Page | vi

1 a platform

2 uncivil

3 countless

4 across the globe

5 to disrupt

6 to resort to something

### Computers will Replace Teachers

1 the

2 be

3 for

4 and

5 an

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### The Internet Brings People Closer Together

1 join

2 tracking

3 update

4 interact

5 supplanted

6 drives

7 spread

### Risks for Children Online

1 d    2 e    3 a    4 c    5 f    6 b



## Security Online

- 1 e-mail attachment
- 2 confidential information
- 3 to fall prey (to sb/sth)

## Online Shopping

*Shipping is sometimes as expensive as the item you order.* This is an argument *against* online shopping.

*Online retailers are open 24/7.* This is an argument *for* online shopping.

## Meeting People Online

- 1 fake
- 2 soulmate
- 3 pressure
- 4 to get in touch (with sb)
- 5 to scam
- 6 exorbitant

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## ANSWERS: LANGUAGE

### English as the Only Global Language

- 1 affected
- 2 effect
- 3 effect
- 4 affected

### Free Online Translation Renders Learning Foreign Languages Obsolete

- 1 Voice-to-voice

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- 2 accurate
- 3 approximate
- 4 machine
- 5 simultaneous

### Learning a Foreign Language at Primary School

*Older children are cognitively more mature and are therefore able to learn more with less input.* This is an argument *against* learning a foreign language at primary school.

*Learning becomes more difficult as a child ages.* This is an argument *for* learning a foreign language at primary school.

## ANSWERS: LEISURE

### Shopping as a Leisure Activity

- 1 a spree
- 2 astute
- 3 an impulse
- 4 trends
- 5 the atmosphere

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### The Value of Free Time

- 1 unwind
- 2 burnout
- 3 work-life
- 4 hands
- 5 lethargic

## ANSWERS: MEDIA & TV

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## Answer Key: Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

**Violence in the Media Promotes Violence in Society**

- 1 impact
- 2 positive correlation
- 3 incite
- 4 makes the headlines
- 5 omnipresent
- 6 disaffected

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**Famous People Have a Right to Privacy from the Press**

- 1 pander
- 2 media intrusion
- 3 legitimate
- 4 scrutiny
- 5 counter
- 6 on display

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**No Future for Radio**

obsolete	outdated	out of touch with	disconnected from
obsessed	addicted	fail to	do not
disappear	cease to exist	catch	captivate
attract	draw	listening	tuning in
find	devise	via	through

**Children Watching TV**

- 1 to access: one's voicemail / a programme / ~~a power failure~~ / a file / information / a folder / a URL
- 2 to overcome: an addiction / one's shyness / resistance / difficulties / ~~satisfaction~~ / a problem
- 3 to strengthen: ~~one's problems~~ / a bond / a relationship / one's position / ties
- 4 to take up: a job / acting / a sport / a hobby / painting / a post / ~~a lecture~~

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**TV Influences Culture**

- 1 desensitised
- 2 affects
- 3 portray
- 4 reflects
- 5 afford
- 6 aim

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**ANSWERS: MUSIC****Role of Music**

- 1 b    2 a    3 d    4 c    5 c    6 b    7 d    8 a

**Traditional Music**

- 1 appeal
- 2 Nostalgia
- 3 transcend
- 4 uninventive
- 5 nurture
- 6 versatile

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**International Music**

- 1 (-)    2 (+)    3 (-)    4 (+)    5 (+)    6 (-)    7 (-)    8 (+)    9 (+)    10 (-)

NB: As regards statement No. 8, some people might argue that this is a negative phenomenon, but it seems that most see it as a positive one.

**Free Music Downloads should be Stopped**

- 1 lookout
- 2 strongly

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x

- 3 express
- 4 severely

## ANSWERS: NEWS

### News: Is All News True

- 1 newsworthy
- 2 Bias
- 3 Subjectivity
- 4 keep abreast
- 5 publicise

### News Often Focuses on Bad News

*In view of the powerful impact the news has on people, information and media literacy should be taught at school.* This offers a possible *solution* to help people understand why the news is the way it is.

*People who have the final say on what goes into the news prefer negative coverage.* This explains *why* the news often focuses on bad news.

### Newspapers Will One Day Disappear

- 1 emerging economies
- 2 for free
- 3 file for bankruptcy
- 4 breaking news
- 5 losing revenue
- 6 struggling for survival
- 7 are bound to

### Reliability of Online News

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- 1 implausible
- 2 genuine
- 3 inaccuracy

## ANSWERS: READING & BOOKS

### Which are Best, e-Books or Paper Books?

- 1 reminder
- 2 object (of) desire
- 3 digital
- 4 scroll through
- 5 deprived
- 6 print / physical

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### Public Libraries

- 1 f (+)
- 2 d (-)
- 3 b (-)
- 4 e (-)
- 5 c (+)
- 6 a (+)

### Reading Storybooks is a Waste of Time

- 1 instil
- 2 fosters
- 3 bond with
- 4 impact
- 5 pay scant attention to
- 6 identify with

### Libraries should Spend more Money on Technology, not Books

- 1 physical

## Answer Key: Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

- 2 natural
- 3 vulnerable
- 4 digital
- 5 available
- 6 dependent

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