

# Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics



Useful Ideas & Vocabulary  
for over 150 IELTS Essay  
Topics.

For Academic & GT IELTS Writing Task 2.

IELTS Liz

# Volume III

## Topics S - W

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**Answer Key**

## SOCIETY

## Littering

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People do not have enough respect and do not feel personally responsible for the environment.</li> <li>• Some people are not aware of the effects littering can have.</li> <li>• Some people develop bad habits of dropping litter rather than disposing of it properly.</li> <li>• There are not enough easily available litter bins in cities and towns.</li> <li>• People feel there will be no consequences and they can get away with it.</li> <li>• Once litter starts to pile up, people feel less inclined to dispose of their own litter responsibly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be harsher punishment for people who litter and more street cameras to catch them in the act.</li> <li>• The government should provide more litter bins for public use.</li> <li>• Recycling should be encouraged and made more accessible.</li> <li>• The government should run a campaign against littering.</li> <li>• Children should be educated in schools about the effects of littering.</li> </ul>

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

- 1 severe
- 2 to be likely to behave in a particular way
- 3 to not suffer any bad consequences after doing something wrong
- 4 to see somebody while they are doing something wrong
- 5 to throw away something that you no longer need or want.

## Homelessness

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abusive home environments force some children to run away.</li> <li>• Some people cannot afford their own accommodation as house prices have soared beyond their means.</li> <li>• Some people are drug or alcohol addicts who struggle to function in normal society.</li> <li>• A lack of affordable housing can result in some people becoming homeless.</li> <li>• Domestic violence or mental health problems can drive people onto the streets.</li> <li>• Unemployment and poverty are common factors that push people into living on the streets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government should provide permanent supportive housing for children and adults escaping abuse.</li> <li>• More free or affordable housing should be provided for people on low income and the unemployed.</li> <li>• People with drug problems should be given proper treatment.</li> <li>• Housing benefit should be provided for people without homes in order to reduce social exclusion.</li> <li>• Programs should be designed to help low-income people increase their income.</li> </ul>

**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 social

2 drug

3 permanent supportive

4 mental

5 housing

6 domestic

a) health

b) benefit

c) violence

d) exclusion

e) addict

f) housing

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## The Importance of Traditional Lifestyles

Reasons for Preserving Traditional Lifestyles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional lifestyles often contain valuable knowledge of the natural world that must not be lost.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unique _____ (1) of the world around us and our place in it are part of many traditional lifestyles.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional values such as patience, _____ (2), respect for elders, loyalty and humility are still important in today's world.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional lifestyles are a direct link to our past and our cultural _____ (3).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many countries rely on attracting tourists by offering traditional cultural experiences.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We can gain useful insight into natural _____ (4) that can help us deal with illness today by studying some traditional ways of life.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should the modern world crash, we will need to _____ (5) the traditional ways of life.</li> </ul>

remedies    perspectives    fall back on    selflessness    heritage

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the words in the box to complete the sentences about the importance of traditional lifestyles.

## Traditional Lifestyles are Being Lost

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As people leave the countryside for cities to work, traditions are lost.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The government should provide of financial support to keep local, rural</li> </ul>

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- Globalisation has resulted in the loss of local traditions.
- The elderly are no longer a source of wisdom and for young people today who do not value their traditions. (1)
- The younger generation have more interest in modern lifestyles.
- The world is changing too fast to protect their traditional lifestyles. (2)

- communities alive. (3)
- Schools and parents should encourage children to learn more from their grandparents.
  - Schools should teach children about local traditions and ways of living on as part of the curriculum. (4)
  - People should be made aware of the importance of keeping for traditional lifestyles. (5)
  - TV programmes and soap operas should make a point of putting a positive spin on traditional lifestyles.

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

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### People Moving from Rural to Urban Areas

Causes	Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of people relocate to find employment.</li> <li>• Rural areas offer limited opportunities for young people to better themselves.</li> <li>• Educational and medical facilities are of a better standard in urban areas.</li> <li>• Children will have brighter future prospects in a city.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cities will struggle with overpopulation.</li> <li>• There will be a lack of housing for people coming from rural areas into cities.</li> <li>• Unemployment in cities will increase.</li> <li>• Poverty will rise in urban areas as a result of unemployment.</li> <li>• Crime rates will increase in urban areas.</li> <li>• Underpopulation in rural areas will affect agricultural production and local communities.</li> </ul>

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**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 to increase / to go up / to plummet / to rise / to grow / to climb
- 2 to fall / to decrease / to go down / to rocket / to decline / to drop
- 3 a lack of / too little / too few / not enough / insufficient / a glut of / a shortage of
- 4 a dearth of / a surfeit of / too many / a surplus of / too much

## Society Needs Rules to Function

With rules	Without rules
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People need to know what behaviour is acceptable and what behaviour is not.</li> <li>• Individuals and society can function better when given guidelines.</li> <li>• Rules and punishment deter people from committing crime.</li> <li>• Rules protect vulnerable people and keep everyone safe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People would be able to hurt others with impunity.</li> <li>• There would be no safety in communities.</li> <li>• Children would grow up not knowing right from wrong.</li> <li>• Society would be thrown into complete disarray.</li> <li>• A society without rules is no longer a society.</li> </ul>

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

- 1 chaotic
- 2 defenceless
- 3 put (somebody) off (doing something)
- 4 without consequences



## Cultural Diversity

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety is important in life.</li> <li>• People will learn to be more tolerant of other people's beliefs.</li> <li>• Children will learn that all people and beliefs are equal.</li> <li>• The world will become more peaceful and homogeneous.</li> <li>• Diversity means that society is rich and interesting.</li> <li>• Innovation can _____ (1) new perspectives and different cultural outlooks.</li> <li>• Society will become more integrated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society might start to _____ (2) its cultural identity.</li> <li>• Cultures might start _____ (3) each other for predominance.</li> <li>• Cultural clashes might _____ (4) violence.</li> <li>• Some cultural groups may feel that others are _____ (5) preferential treatment.</li> <li>• There may be a clash in religious beliefs.</li> </ul>

compete against   give   lose   result in   stem from

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the correct form of the verbs in the box to complete the sentences about cultural diversity.

## Happiness

### Definitions vary

- Happiness is different for each person depending on their perspective and personal circumstances in life.
- Some people think happiness is a feeling rather than a state of a person's life.
- People living in poverty often define happiness as connected to money, while people who are sick define it as relating to health.

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- People from different social and cultural backgrounds have different values and needs.

**Factors influencing happiness**

**Matching Exercise:** Match these sentence halves to find five factors influencing happiness.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Having basic human needs met and having human rights upheld</p> <p>2 Money can affect happiness, but how much money</p> <p>3 Strong family ties are considered essential to happiness as human beings are</p> <p>4 Some people think happiness</p> <p>5 To lose health</p> | <p>a) is just a state of mind.</p> <p>b) social creatures and not meant to live in isolation.</p> <p>c) can be a source of misery and unhappiness.</p> <p>d) is needed depends on each individual.</p> <p>e) must be a prerequisite to happiness.</p> |
|---|---|

**Utopia**

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Definition	Creating utopia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utopia is a perfect world where people feel happy and safe.</li> <li>• Crime rates are low or <b>non-existent</b>.</li> <li>• People feel a sense of community and trust one another.</li> <li>• Fear is not known in a utopian society.</li> <li>• People are able to <b>live life to the full</b> and enjoy perfect health.</li> <li>• A place without corruption, <b>greed</b> or selfishness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide people with education which helps them develop their own unique skills.</li> <li>• Provide free health care for all citizens regardless of income or age.</li> <li>• Teach children to obey laws to form a stable society and strong future generations.</li> <li>• Have police on the streets to deter crime and create a sense of security.</li> <li>• Promote family values and strong <b>bonds</b> between neighbours.</li> <li>• Create <b>close-knit</b> communities that support each other.</li> </ul>

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

- 1 As long as people are motivated by \_\_\_\_\_, there will be conflict and inequality.
- 2 Better health care and higher standards of living mean that in many countries elderly people can now \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 In an ideal world hatred, violence and poverty would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 In times of crisis, it helps to live in a \_\_\_\_\_ community.
- 5 Trying to forge \_\_\_\_\_ between the different communities should be the top priority of those in power.

## The Generation Gap

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are no longer brought up in the same way as their parents were.</li> <li>• Young people are more at ease with modern technology and can keep pace with its development.</li> <li>• Technology has altered the way people communicate and interact with each other.</li> <li>• Free time activities have changed since the previous generation.</li> <li>• The wisdom of the elderly is no longer relevant in today's society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents need to actively engage their children in family social life.</li> <li>• Parents need to find a common ground on which to build a bond with their children.</li> <li>• Parents should encourage their children to spend time with their grandparents.</li> <li>• Schools can organise social projects to develop interaction between children and the older generation.</li> <li>• An interchange of knowledge between children and the elderly can bring modern technology and history together.</li> </ul>

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Complete these definitions with a suitable word from the sentences about the generation gap.

- 1 A \_\_\_\_\_ is a close connection between two or more people.
- 2 If you \_\_\_\_\_ with someone who moves or something that changes, you move or develop as fast as them.
- 3 If you \_\_\_\_\_ something, you change it slightly.

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4 If you are \_\_\_\_\_ with somebody or something, you are relaxed and comfortable.

## Tighter Gun Control

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with mental health issues can pose a serious threat to society if they own a gun.</li> <li>• Banning guns or having stricter gun laws will not stop crime.</li> <li>• The freedom of gun ownership is outdated from a time when the common person was more at risk.</li> <li>• Gun ownership increases the possibility of violent crime.</li> <li>• A peaceful society will never be achieved as long as it is easy for people to buy deadly weapons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People should be allowed to have weapons to protect themselves with.</li> <li>• Many people own guns for sports or hunting which are harmless activities.</li> <li>• Most guns are not used as a form of self-defence.</li> <li>• There are more motor vehicle-related deaths than deaths from firearms.</li> </ul>

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

## SPACE EXPLORATION

## Spending Money on Space Exploration

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space exploration might lead to solutions to some of our planet's problems.</li> <li>• Man has always had a desire for adventure and exploration, and to surpass anything that previous generations had achieved.</li> <li>• Many people believe that the long-term survival of the human race depends on people being able to move off planet Earth.</li> <li>• Some technologies that we commonly use today were originally developed for space exploration.</li> <li>• The digital imaging processing developed by NASA to study pictures of the moon contributed to the development of the MRI scan.</li> <li>• Space exploration creates countless jobs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The taxpayers' money would be better spent on health and education.</li> <li>• Governments fund outer space research mainly with a view to achieving military dominance.</li> <li>• Space missions put astronauts' lives in danger and expose them to various health hazards.</li> <li>• It can be a source of conflict if countries use satellites to spy on each other.</li> <li>• Many social problems could be solved with only a fraction of the money squandered on space exploration.</li> </ul>

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

1 innumerable

2 something that may cause accidents or be dangerous

3 the fact of being more powerful or of having more influence than somebody else

4 to be better or greater than somebody or something else

5 to use (resources, money, opportunities, etc) in a wasteful or foolish way

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## Sending Communications into Space

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing communication with aliens from space could give us access to unimagined knowledge and resources.</li> <li>Trying to improve communication between cultures and countries would be more useful for mankind.</li> <li>Scientists suggest that there could be other civilisations in our galaxy that we might be able to communicate with.</li> <li>As we now have the potential to wipe ourselves off the face of the earth, we need to find other habitable planets.</li> <li>If we received a response to a signal sent from Earth, our view of the universe would be utterly transformed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even if there were living organisms in outer space, it is unlikely that we would know how to communicate with them.</li> <li>An interstellar probe sent from Earth would probably contaminate any alien planet, or contaminate us on its return.</li> <li>Earth-like planets are so far away that it would take hundreds or thousands of years for any message to reach them.</li> <li>We have not even learnt how to communicate with all the species on Earth.</li> <li>Sending signals into space is probably the best way to find out if there is life elsewhere in our galaxy.</li> </ul>

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

Note:

communication (uncountable) = the process of sending and receiving information

communication (countable) = the ways of sending and receiving information

## Space Tourism

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space is the final frontier for mankind to explore.</li> <li>The nascent space tourism industry is already creating countless employment opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space tourism revenue can be used to finance the space industry's military ambitions.</li> <li>Space tourism is an elite industry designed to indulge the whims of the super rich.</li> </ul>

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- Advances in space tourism technology might lead to the creation of space settlements.
- A large number of people have already signed up for future space trips.
- The negative impact of global mass tourism renders the search for new destinations inevitable.

- There are still so many untrodden paths and hidden gems on our planet that escaping to the cosmos is unnecessary.
- Rocket emissions will further damage the ozone layer and aggravate global warming.
- The risks involved are currently so high that every space tourist is in fact dicing with death.

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

1 A *nascent* industry, democracy, science, etc is

- a) just coming into existence
- b) highly developed
- c) experiencing difficulties

2 If something is *inevitable*, it is

- a) unsuccessful
- b) certain to happen
- c) likely to fail

3 If you *indulge somebody's whims*, you

- a) let them have whatever they fancy
- b) try to make them feel important
- c) criticise them for being moody

4 If someone or something *aggravates* a bad situation, they make it

- a) widely known
- b) last longer
- c) worse

5 You say that someone is *dicing with death* if they are

- a) taking a lot of safety precautions
- b) not prepared to take risks
- c) putting themselves in a dangerous situation

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## SPORT &amp; EXERCISE

## International Sports Events

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly publicised events often inspire people to take part in sport regularly.</li> <li>• They spread good cheer and optimism, which can give the economy a boost.</li> <li>• The host country is in the limelight and can enhance its image.</li> <li>• Mega sports events attract a large number of foreign visitors, which promotes retail trade and stimulates the economy.</li> <li>• Increased tourism and infrastructure development benefit the host nation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The money spent on state-of-the-art stadiums and arenas would be better spent on education and health services.</li> <li>• Hosting events like the World Cup may result in the country incurring huge debts.</li> <li>• After being the focus of the world for a few weeks, places where the events were held soon slip back into anonymity.</li> <li>• Events which draw huge crowds are often potential targets for a terrorist attack.</li> <li>• If the event is not well organised, the image of the host nation abroad will be tarnished.</li> </ul>

**Collocations Exercise:** In each group, identify the verb which does not normally collocate with the noun in **bold**.

1 take part in (a) / do / achieve (a) / engage in (a) / play (a) / **sport**

2 clean up / enhance / improve / rise / **one's image**

3 improve / decrease / revive / kick-start / stimulate / strengthen / **the economy**

4 perform / hold / host / stage / organise / **an event**

5 amass / have / incur / borrow / run up / **debts**

6 attract / draw / pull in / evolve / **crowds**

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## Dangerous Sports should be Banned

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme sports get far too much publicity compared with safe sports that can help us maintain and improve our health.</li> <li>• The true spirit of sport is to motivate all people to participate, not just a tiny minority of daredevils.</li> <li>• Sustaining a lifelong injury is too high a price to pay for a brief adrenaline rush.</li> <li>• Our health is our greatest asset, so sports that put it at risk should not be allowed.</li> <li>• It is selfish to risk one's life for pleasure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sports are potentially dangerous, including some of the most popular ones.</li> <li>• Better coaching, stricter rules and enhanced sports equipment will greatly reduce the risk of injury.</li> <li>• Many more deaths are caused by road accidents than by playing sports, yet nobody would consider banning driving.</li> <li>• Extreme sports give people the opportunity to challenge themselves physically and psychologically.</li> <li>• Most people who take up a sport are aware of the risks associated with it.</li> </ul>

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

1 to sustain

2 to put sb / sth

3 to risk

4 to reduce

5 to take up

a) a sport

b) the risk (of) / a risk

c) at risk

d) an injury

e) one's life

## Children should Learn Team Sports, not Individual Sports

### (Cooperation vs Competition)

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning team spirit makes us more adequate members of society.</li> <li>• Team sports _____ (1) a sense of belonging and a sense of respect for both team mates and opponents.</li> <li>• Team mates learn to support each other to _____ (2) a common goal.</li> <li>• Playing in a team gives children the opportunity to _____ (3) with others and to get over their shyness.</li> <li>• Children generally have more fun when they engage in an activity with their peers rather than on their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual sports are better at teaching children to _____ (4) on their own skills and be independent-spirited.</li> <li>• In team sports it is easy to hide behind someone on a poor day.</li> <li>• Team sports often have fixed training schedules, which can create difficulties for both parents and children.</li> <li>• When children play a team sport, they have less time to _____ (5) in sporting activities with their parents.</li> <li>• Children with a disability or a medical condition might _____ (6) emotionally if they are forced to fit into a team.</li> </ul>

achieve engage foster interact rely suffer

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the verbs in the box to complete the sentences about team sports vs individual sports.

## Governments should Build Sports Facilities for Top Athletes vs the Public

For Top Athletes	For the Public
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top athletes are like ambassadors for their country and as such deserve top-notch training facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The health of the nation is worth a lot more than the gold medals won by a handful of star athletes.</li> </ul>

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- If they are to compete successfully on the global stage, top athletes need a proper sports infrastructure.
- The success of star athletes motivates the masses to engage in sport.
- The countries with the largest number of top athletes are often those with the best sports facilities.
- Schools should be the main beneficiaries of public investment in sport.
- The success of top athletes brings prestige and worldwide attention to their country.
- Amateurs too need suitable venues and facilities.
- Some of the children of today will be the top athletes of tomorrow, so they need to be provided with facilities to get involved in sport.
- The declining number of people engaging in sport is in great part to be blamed on the lack of sports facilities.

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

## Watching Sport on TV is a Waste of Time

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing sport improves our health, while <b>slouching</b> in front of the TV has the opposite effect.</li> <li>• Watching sport on TV easily becomes an addiction that makes our body stiff and rusty.</li> <li>• Watching sport indiscriminately <b>disrupts</b> family life and relationships.</li> <li>• TV viewing is a passive activity often accompanied by <b>compulsive</b> consumption of junk food.</li> <li>• If you love a sport, you could be outside actually playing it instead of being <b>slumped</b> in front of the TV.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all sports fans have the chance to attend sports events</li> <li>• Watching our favourite teams or athletes on TV can inspire us to get actively involved in sport ourselves.</li> <li>• Television is a convenient and <b>affordable</b> way for armchair sports enthusiasts to keep their passion alive.</li> <li>• Many people who play a sport can improve their skills by watching others again and again.</li> <li>• Being <b>passionate</b> about something makes us happier human beings, and for many people following sport on TV is a real passion.</li> </ul>

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**Vocabulary Exercise:** Complete these explanations with the correct form of the words in **bold** in the sentences above.

- 1 If someone or something \_\_\_\_\_ an event or process, they cause difficulties that prevent it from continuing as usual.
- 2 If you \_\_\_\_\_ somewhere, you sit down or fall there heavily.
- 3 If you \_\_\_\_\_, you sit or stand with your head bent over and your shoulders hanging forward, so that you look bored, lazy or tired.
- 4 If you are \_\_\_\_\_ about something, you have very strong feelings about it.
- 5 If you say that something is \_\_\_\_\_, you mean that you have enough money to buy it.
- 6 The word '\_\_\_\_\_' describes people or their behaviour when they cannot stop doing something wrong or harmful.

## Who is Responsible for Children to Exercise?

Schools	Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All schools should encourage students to take part in a sport.</li> <li>• As the aim of school is to develop human potential, sport and physical education should have <b>pride of place</b> on the curriculum.</li> <li>• For centuries, 'A healthy mind in a healthy body' has been the <b>motto</b> of many educational institutions.</li> <li>• For many children, school is the only place where they can get involved in sport.</li> <li>• Compulsory education should not favour academic subjects <b>at the expense of</b> sport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should <b>set an example</b> for their children by engaging in a sporting activity.</li> <li>• Parents should <b>instil</b> a love of physical activity into their children to promote healthy development.</li> <li>• Family life can greatly benefit from parents and children being active together.</li> <li>• Considering the growing number of overweight and obese children, parents have a duty to ensure that their kids get plenty of exercise.</li> <li>• Parents <b>play in key role</b> in helping their kids find a sport that they enjoy.</li> </ul>

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

- 1 Posters of my daughter's favourite athletes have \_\_\_\_\_ in her bedroom.

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- 2 Sport and exercise \_\_\_\_\_ in the overall development of children.
- 3 Team sports \_\_\_\_\_ both a spirit of competition and a sense of cooperation in children.
- 4 'Be a sport, not a bully' was the school's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 The headmaster \_\_\_\_\_ for his staff and for the students by taking part in the charity marathon.
- 6 The junior team have a lot of discipline, but \_\_\_\_\_ enthusiasm.

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## TECHNOLOGY

## Banning Mobile Phones in Public Areas

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most public areas have free phones that can be used in case of emergency.</li> <li>• Mobile phones can be used to take photos and videos and so violate other people's privacy.</li> <li>• They are intrusive and have an adverse effect on the environment of other people.</li> <li>• In hospitals and airplanes, they can interfere with sensitive equipment.</li> <li>• They are a permanent distraction when they are allowed in the classroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As public phone booths seem to be on the verge of extinction, it would be irresponsible to ban mobile phone use.</li> <li>• Mobile phones save lives as emergency services can easily locate you when you call.</li> <li>• Instead of imposing a ban, it would be more practical to have designated areas for cell phone users.</li> <li>• Many people think that a ban would curtail their personal freedom.</li> <li>• Cell phones are a relatively recent invention and people just need a little more time to learn how to use them properly in public.</li> </ul>

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

- 1 affecting someone's private life in an annoying way
- 2 negative; harmful
- 3 places set aside for a particular purpose
- 4 to act against something that should be treated with respect
- 5 to be at the point where something is about to happen
- 6 to reduce; to limit.

## Technology has Helped People Become more Social

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone can easily belong to multiple online communities.</li> <li>• Communication technologies _____ (1) distances and enable everyone to connect around the globe.</li> <li>• Through social media, anyone can _____ (2) a network of like-minded people.</li> <li>• Certain apps enable families and friends in different corners of the world to chat for free 24/7.</li> <li>• Many people have been able to _____ (3) with long-lost friends through a social networking site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone calls and messages constantly _ _ _ _ (4) face-to-face conversations and friendly get-togethers.</li> <li>• Many people end up spending more time onscreen than in face-to-face interaction.</li> <li>• When in company, people cut themselves off from their surroundings and _ _ _ _ _ (5) phone calls and messages.</li> <li>• It is easy to _ _ _ _ _ (6) false information online in order to ruin someone's reputation.</li> <li>• Under the veil of anonymity, many people in chat rooms and on discussion boards easily become offensive.</li> </ul>

abolish   build up   disrupt   disseminate   prioritise   reconnect

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the verbs in the box to complete the sentences about whether or not technology has helped people become more social.

## The Gap between Old and Young has Widened due to Technology

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Choose the correct option (a) or (b) in *italics* to present arguments *for* and *against* the idea that the gap between old and young people has widened because of technology.

**For**

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- 1 It is much easier for younger people to master new technology because they were (a) *born* / (b) *not born* in an environment where it was omnipresent.
- 2 Most schools now teach computer skills, whereas (a) *younger* / (b) *older* people have to start learning from scratch.
- 3 The relevance of new technology (a) *is* / (b) *is not* quite obvious if you have lived happily without a PC or mobile phone for forty years.
- 4 (a) *Many* / (b) *Few* adults have difficulty keeping abreast of technological change.
- 5 As parents and children spend (a) *less* / (b) *more* time onscreen and (a) *less* / (b) *more* with each other, the generation gap widens.

### **Against**

- 6 Family bonds are (a) *weakened* / (b) *strengthened* when children teach their parents and grandparents how to use new technology.
- 7 Mobile phones and social media make it (a) *easier* / (b) *more difficult* for grandparents to keep in touch with their children and grandchildren.
- 8 Many elderly people (a) *wish* / (b) *do not wish* to keep on learning.
- 9 Technological skills and knowledge have (a) *never* / (b) *always* been passed down from one generation to the next.
- 10 Parents and children can play video games together, which (a) *fosters* / (b) *impedes* family bonding.

## **Mankind is Now Dependent on Modern Technology**

- 1 'What's your wi-fi password?' is one of the first questions people ask when they visit you.
- 2 Digital detox holidays are growing in popularity.
- 3 For the majority of people, the issue is not dependency on modern technology but access to it.
- 4 Internet addiction is now recognised as a mental disorder.
- 5 Wishing to live with the times is not the same as dependency.
- 6 Less than half of the world's population use the Internet.
- 7 Many people have found ways to increase face-to-face time with family and friends.
- 8 People look at you strangely if you ask for directions in town or for a wake-up call at a hotel.
- 9 We drive everywhere, so walking and cycling have become hobbies or sports.
- 10 We tend to rely on technology more than before, but this does not mean that we cannot live without it.

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**Categorisation Exercise:** Mark the sentences above (+) if they *support* the argument that mankind is now dependent on technology, or (-) if they *do not*.

## Technology Increases the Gap between Rich and Poor

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most sophisticated hospitals are private and cater mainly for wealthy patients.</li> <li>• Increasing the automation in manufacturing means many workers lose their jobs while factory owners increase profits. (1)</li> <li>• The use of cutting-edge technology in elite private schools gives children of wealthy parents a big advantage over poorer children.</li> <li>• Poorer people get into a debt to buy state-of-the-art digital devices. (2)</li> <li>• Highly profitable hi-tech companies relocate to developing countries where labour costs are lower.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks to technology, countries that were still underdeveloped half a century ago are now among the world's superpowers.</li> <li>• Increasingly, public places they offer free Internet access. (3)</li> <li>• Advances in aviation technology have made travelling by air very much more affordable. (4)</li> <li>• In countries without landline communications, mobile phones provide any access to jobs, education and healthcare. (5)</li> <li>• Advances in agricultural technology have improved the health and standard of living of people in developing countries.</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 is Mankind's Most Important Invention

Agree	Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is an inexhaustible source of knowledge and information.</li> <li>• It enables people around the globe to communicate in writing and speaking in real time.</li> <li>• Information can be disseminated faster than ever before.</li> <li>• Thanks to the Internet, universal access to education will soon be a reality.</li> <li>• The invention of the telephone, the light-bulb and the computer made the Internet possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was invented only three decades ago, so we can only speculate about its future impact.</li> <li>• Without the wheel, it is unlikely that mankind would ever have reached an advanced stage of technological development.</li> <li>• Only about half of the world's population has access to the Internet.</li> <li>• It is the first invention that turned our planet into a global village.</li> <li>• It is hard to imagine how our civilization would have evolved without the engine.</li> </ul>

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



## TOURISM

## Tourism

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tourist trade is a valuable source of income for many countries.</li> <li>• For some countries, tourism makes up a large proportion of the national income.</li> <li>• Increased demand from tourists can <b>boost</b> local economies and local businesses.</li> <li>• Job opportunities increase as more tourists visit local areas.</li> <li>• Tourism can also bring investment opportunities from wealthy foreign investors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists can <b>influence</b> and even <b>alter</b> local culture.</li> <li>• Historical buildings can be damaged by large numbers of tourists.</li> <li>• Having a large tourist trade can <b>adversely</b> affect the environment by causing pollution.</li> <li>• Money from the tourist trade does not always benefit local communities.</li> <li>• Very often, it is only individual business owners who benefit from the tourist trade.</li> <li>• People who <b>rely</b> on the tourist trade will be affected by a world economic <b>downturn</b>.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Study the words in **bold** in the sentences above. Then match each one to the word (a - j) that has a similar meaning in the context of the sentence. You will only need six of the ten words given.

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| a) affect     | f) radically |
| b) change     | g) recession |
| c) depend     | h) recovery  |
| d) effect     | i) stimulate |
| e) negatively | j) weaken    |

## Tourism Causes Damage to Historical Buildings

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many buildings were not built to accommodate such vast hordes of people.</li> <li>• The large numbers of people flooding into historical buildings will <u>inevitably</u> cause erosion.</li> <li>• Some people who visit historical buildings are not respectful and purposely cause damage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the entry fees means that more money will be available for restoration and conservation.</li> <li>• The number of people entering any historical building should be <u>restricted</u>.</li> <li>• More guards should be posted around historical buildings to prevent <u>intentional</u> damage.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find the odd-one-out in each of these groups of words.

Use a good dictionary to help you if necessary.

1 inevitably / perforce / unavoidably / necessarily / regrettably

2 restricted / limited / curbed / recorded / reduced

3 irreparable / intentional / wilful / deliberate

## People Need to Learn the Language in order to Travel

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing the local language enables tourists to have a richer cultural experience by talking to local people about their country and history.</li> <li>• People will be able to communicate their needs, which is important while travelling, and organising transportation and accommodation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Package holidaymakers will have representatives of their country to welcome them and help them, which _ _ _ _ _ (4) learning a language unnecessary.</li> <li>• Not all people travelling abroad _ _ _ _ _ (5) cultural experiences or wish to interact with the local population.</li> </ul>

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- Lack of effective communication may mean that misunderstandings with locals are not quickly \_\_\_\_\_ (1).
- It might be risky to \_\_\_\_\_ (2) into some countries without being able to ask for help or to understand written notices and simple etiquette.
- In some countries, menus are only available in the local language, so people with allergies would definitely need to be able to \_\_\_\_\_ (3) about the ingredients of the dishes and meals on offer.

- Many people manage to communicate via translation apps.
- Guidebooks usually contain enough information for people to get around and \_\_\_\_\_ (6) without foreign language skills.
- Not everyone has the time or means to learn a language before they travel abroad.
- In some situations, body language, such as hand gestures and miming, can work just as well as verbal communication.

cope enquire render resolve seek venture

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the correct form of the verbs in the box to complete the sentences above.

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## People should Adapt to the Culture of the Country they are Visiting

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a sign of respect to follow the traditions and customs of a country.</li> <li>• By not adapting to the culture, it is possible to <u>deeply</u> offend or insult a local person, which could lead to an <u>unpleasant</u> situation.</li> <li>• Part of going abroad is to experience <u>firsthand</u> how other people live.</li> <li>• By adapting to a culture, people can be more easily accepted by locals, which</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not always easy to find access to all information about a country's <u>cultural practices</u>.</li> <li>• People's culture forms part of their identity, so they should not have to change it.</li> <li>• People should not have to adapt to any customs that might <u>conflict</u> with their religion.</li> </ul>

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Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

can enhance a person's travel experience.

- In some countries, cultural rules are fixed, and non-compliance is punishable by law.

- Some countries depend on the tourist trade for their economy and should therefore accept tourists as they are, including the differences in culture.
- It is unrealistic to expect that all foreigners entering a country will discard their own culture in favour of new and unfamiliar customs.

awkward chargeable clash directly enrich  
established forgo gravely rely

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

deeply	-----	punishable by law	-----
unpleasant	-----	conflict	-----
firsthand	-----	depend	-----
enhance	-----	discard	-----
fixed	-----		



People Do Not Need to Travel if They Have TV

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Armchair travellers are spared all the hassle of planning a holiday.</li> <li>Documentaries and specialised TV channels enable everyone to discover the world from the comfort of their own homes.</li> <li>Many people actually watch programmes about places they have already been to, or which they intend to visit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even the best HD images cannot replace the excitement of meeting new people and discovering their culture.</li> <li>A good travel TV show can awaken our almost instinctive urge to discover new places.</li> <li>Travelling is much more than a simple audio-visual experience.</li> <li>You can see more of a country and learn more about it in a 30-minute documentary than you would during a</li> </ul>

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- Travelling vicariously saves you money and reduces your carbon footprint.

Travel TV channels offer a wealth of fascinating programmes that can captivate viewers more than direct experience.

month's holiday there.

TV is no substitute for being under new skies and experiencing a new place with all your senses.

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

## Travelling in a Group or Alone

Group	Individually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group travel creates bonds between the people involved in the experience.</li> <li>• Group travel greatly reduces safety concerns.</li> <li>• Travelling with people from your country removes the stress of having to struggle in a foreign language all day long.</li> <li>• It is rare for all members of a group to share exactly the same interests, so there will always be someone who is dissatisfied.</li> <li>• Travelling always involves making a lot of decisions, which can be quite time consuming in a group.</li> <li>• When you are in a group, you are less open to people outside the group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The solo traveller does not depend on anyone and takes all decisions on their own.</li> <li>• Travelling on one's own is a great opportunity to develop one's self-confidence and develop as a person.</li> <li>• Solo travellers are more inclined to meet new people and make new friends.</li> <li>• Travelling solo can be more expensive as you cannot benefit from group discounts on transport, food or accommodation.</li> <li>• If you feel ill or lonely, there is nobody to cheer you up or support you.</li> <li>• A solo traveller can be an easy target for someone with bad intentions.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Find the odd-one-out in each of these groups of words.

Use a good dictionary to help you if necessary.

1 alone / by oneself / on one's own / solo / in company

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2 to cheer sb up / to comfort sb / to dishearten sb / to raise sb's spirits

3 concerns / measures / worries / risks / hazards

## Ecotourism

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecotourism is an easy way of getting actively and involved in caring for our environment. (1)</li> <li>• It enables tourists to learn about the flora and fauna of a specific location.</li> <li>• It protects the environment and boosts local economies.</li> <li>• It helps preserve local traditions and creates jobs for local people.</li> <li>• It can provide incentives for an environmental protection. (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When indigenous cultures are regularly exposed to masses of tourists, their traditional cultural practices change or disappear.</li> <li>• Local people sometimes they revive ancient traditions only to provide photo opportunities. (3)</li> <li>• Local communities are sometimes displaced to make way for new hotels and by tourist attractions. (4)</li> <li>• 'Ecotourism' can become an empty slogan used by unscrupulous profit-making organisations to attract environmentally conscious tourists.</li> <li>• Local communities that depend excessively on ecotourism risk being shattered if there is another global economic in crisis. (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.



## TRANSPORT

**Congestion in Cities****Causes**

- 1 There has been an increase in the number of people owning a vehicle.
- 2 Fewer people are choosing to travel using public transport in favour of private transport.
- 3 The infrastructure of many major cities is inadequate to deal with the high volume of traffic.
- 4 Frequent roadworks result in roads being closed and congestion building in other areas of the city.
- 5 The same opening and closing times of business, services and shops cause mass rush-hour traffic.
- 6 There are few or no incentives for people to cycle.

**Solutions**

- a) Build overpasses and underpasses to deal with roads that were never built to handle a large volume of traffic.
- b) Encourage people to use bicycles by offering cheap bike rentals throughout the city centre.
- c) Improve the efficiency, reliability and comfort of public transport.
- d) Raise the tax on privately owned vehicles to limit ownership.
- e) Schedule roadworks for night time only when traffic flow is at a minimum.
- f) Stagger opening and closing times to control traffic flow at peak times.

**Matching Exercise:** Match each cause (1 – 6) with its solution (a – f).

**Is increasing Tax on Flights the Best Way to Reduce Air Travel?**

Increasing Tax: Pros & Cons	Other possible solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As cheap tickets and budget holidays abroad are the main reason people fly, increasing tax will increase airfares, which will deter people from choosing to travel by plane.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make other forms of transport, such as overnight trains or sleeper buses, more efficient and comfortable for passengers.</li> </ul>

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- By raising the price of flights, the price of goods will also increase, which will be detrimental to the consumer.
- As many countries rely on the money brought in by tourists who fly in from abroad, increasing the price of tickets will result in fewer visitors and possible economic problems.
- Higher airfares will only affect lower-income families.
- Higher taxes will discourage airlines from investing in cabin amenities.

- Lower the price of using other forms of transport.
- Encourage people to holiday within their own country rather than abroad.
- Reduce business travel by promoting video and web conferencing.
- Increase investment in the rail infrastructure.

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Put in the missing letters in these verbs which all collocate with the noun *tax*. In each group, the verbs are full or partial synonyms.

1 to increase / r\_\_s\_ / p\_t -p / a tax

2 to decrease / c\_t / l\_w\_r / r\_d\_c\_ / s\_sh / taxes

3 to put / \_ntr\_d\_c\_ / l\_y / \_mp\_s\_ / a tax

4 to evade / d\_g\_ / taxes

## Retaking the Driving Test Every Five Years

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People develop bad driving habits and forget vital skills that a regular test would help to avoid.</li> <li>• Regular testing will ensure that people continue to be attentive and careful when driving.</li> <li>• Some people have developed health problems affecting their driving that would be <u>flagged up</u> more quickly with regular testing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would be a financial <u>strain</u> on many people to retake their test so often.</li> <li>• For people who cannot afford to retake their test but rely on their car for work, their whole livelihood could be <u>at stake</u>.</li> <li>• There would be a strain on the government to provide more driving test facilities and more staff.</li> <li>• It is unlikely that a person's driving ability would be <u>compromised</u> over just</li> </ul>

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- It helps people keep up to date with the development of technologies, speeds and facilities in cars.
- People will be retested on essential road rules which are easily forgotten after years of driving.
- As road systems develop and modernise, people will be able to learn the correct way to approach them.

five years.

- A better alternative might be to get people to undergo a full medical examination to assess their fitness to drive.

**Vocabulary Exercise:** The words in *italics* all appear in the sentences *for* and *against* retaking the driving test every five years. Choose the best option (**a**, **b** or **c**) to complete the following statements.

1 If you *flag something up*

- a) you give it to someone in order to get rid of it
- b) you try to make it better
- c) you mention it so that other people know about it.

2 A *strain* on something is

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- a) a force that causes a situation to improve
- b) money put aside to buy something later
- c) pressure caused by a difficult situation.

3 If something valuable is *at stake*,

- a) other people would like to have it
- b) it risks being lost or damaged
- c) it is exchanged for something more valuable.

4 If you *compromise* something important,

- a) you risk losing it or harming it
- b) you give it away for something less important
- c) you begin to understand how it works.

## Public Transport

Benefits	Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people cannot afford their own private transport, which makes public transport <b>essential</b>.</li> <li>• Without public transport, many people would have problems travelling long distances to work.</li> <li>• Public transport allows many people to travel in just one vehicle, which helps reduce traffic congestion in city centres.</li> <li>• There are environmental benefits of many people using one vehicle in the form of a reduction in the consumption of fossil fuels.</li> <li>• Some public transport, such as inner-city trams, are highly energy efficient or use <b>sustainable</b> energy.</li> <li>• People can use their commuting time on public transport to make friends and socialise.</li> <li>• There are significantly fewer traffic accidents involving public transport compared to private transport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport does not offer <b>flexible</b> routes, which means many destinations are not catered for.</li> <li>• Buses must take a long route to a destination to pick up passengers, which can make the journey too time-consuming for many people.</li> <li>• Overcrowding on public transport can make using it unpleasant for many or almost impossible for disabled people.</li> <li>• The punctuality of buses and trains is frequently <b>unreliable</b>.</li> <li>• Petty crime such as pickpocketing can be <b>rife</b> on some forms of public transport.</li> </ul>

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

- 1 As citizens come to rely more on public transport, the reliability of the bus and tram services becomes \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Commuters are beginning to desert the public transport system because they find it expensive, overcrowded and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Public transport has to be more financially \_\_\_\_\_ if it is to realise its potential social and environmental benefits.

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- 4 Some cities have both fixed-route bus services during peak hours and \_\_\_\_\_-route services during low demand periods.
- 5 Unfortunately, verbal aggression and even theft are \_\_\_\_\_ on our trains and buses.

## Increased Car Ownership

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It allows people more freedom to travel as they can choose the route themselves and take detours when they want.</li> <li>• Private transport is quicker as there is no need for numerous stops to pick up passengers in out-of-the-way locations.</li> <li>• There is a positive correlation between increasing car ownership and economic growth: greater demand for cars can result in more car manufacturing, more jobs and more tax revenue.</li> <li>• Cars have built-in air conditioning, cushioned seats and other luxuries that make it a more comfortable way to travel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of cars on the road has a direct impact on air quality because exhaust fumes are a major contributor to air pollution.</li> <li>• As the number of cars rises, the demand for more fossil fuels increases, which causes more pollution as well as a depletion of the world's resources.</li> <li>• As car ownership increases, so too does the gap between rich and poor.</li> <li>• Some people buy cars they cannot afford on credit schemes to keep up with the Joneses, which can lead to more personal debt.</li> <li>• Cars also mean that people will incur extra expenses such as fuel costs, insurance and repairs.</li> </ul>

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

- 1 a reduction in something (e.g. supplies, forests, ozone layer, etc)
- 2 money that the government receives from people
- 3 things like coal, gas, oil, etc formed underground from plant and animal remains
- 4 to go by a route which is not the shortest way, for example because you want to avoid a traffic jam
- 5 to lose, owe or have to pay money as a result of an action you have taken

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6 to want to buy the same expensive things as your neighbours or friends because you are worried about appearing socially inferior to them.

See the Answer Key for more ideas for this topic.

## The Government should Spend More on Railways

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trains are much more environmentally friendly than cars and buses.</li> <li>• High-speed railways can link major cities and greatly reduce commuting time.</li> <li>• Efficient train services will encourage people to leave their cars at home, which will reduce road congestion and carbon emissions.</li> <li>• Increased investment in the rail infrastructure is necessary to put an end to train delays and increase passenger comfort.</li> <li>• The train is probably the safest and most stress-free mode of transport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas, particularly in the countryside, are not served by public transport and can only be reached by car.</li> <li>• What is needed is a better road infrastructure in order to reduce traffic congestion and increase driving safety.</li> <li>• People want to stay in control of their lives and cannot be expected to depend on public transport whenever they need to go from one place to another.</li> <li>• Even in some economically advanced countries, trains are unreliable and overcrowded.</li> <li>• In most countries, motorists pay a road tax and therefore expect the road network to be maintained and extended.</li> </ul>

**Collocations Exercise:** In each group, identify the item which does not *normally* collocate with the word in **bold**.

1 **railway** / train / station / timetable / travel / network / infrastructure / motorist

2 CO2 emissions / high-speed / state / electric / private / regional / **railway**

3 **rail** / infrastructure / service / depletion / network / transport / travel / passenger

4 **train** / delays / journey / travellers / timetable / fare / crossroads / line

5 **road** / congestion / network / highway / infrastructure / closure / access / development

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## WATER

## Oceans

Importance	Ways to protect our oceans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oceans cover more than two-thirds of our planet.</li> <li>Oceans generate most of the oxygen we breathe and absorb carbon from the atmosphere.</li> <li>Oceanic currents play a crucial role in regulating the earth's climate.</li> <li>Seas and oceans are not only a source of fish, but also of algae and seaweed that have a high nutritional value.</li> <li>Without international shipping, the world economy would collapse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New ways must be found to dispose of plastic waste so that it does not end up in the oceans.</li> <li>Climate change must be tackled urgently to stop the destruction of coral reefs and other ecosystems.</li> <li>Overfishing must be stopped in order to allow fish stocks to recover.</li> <li>Everyone of us can support an organisation working to protect the oceans.</li> <li>We can make a difference by using reusable plastic bags and refusing single-use plastics.</li> </ul>

**Collocations Exercise:** Match items 1 – 7 with items a) – g) to make common collocations that are used in the sentences above. Then read the sentences again to check your answers.

1 climate

2 coral

3 fish

4 international

5 nutritional

6 oceanic

7 reusable

a) change

b) currents

c) plastic bags

d) reefs

e) shipping

f) stocks

g) value

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## Water Pollution

Causes	Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In many countries, agricultural pollution is one of the main causes of water contamination.</li> <li>• Oil spillages make water unsafe to drink and also destroy ocean wildlife and the ecosystems that sustain them.</li> <li>• A lot of radioactive waste is not properly disposed of.</li> <li>• People dump a huge amount of waste into rivers, river banks and coastal waters.</li> <li>• Pesticides, fertilizers and animal waste seep into the soil and then into groundwater, rendering it unsafe for human consumption.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contaminated water makes people ill, and those living close to polluting industries are most at risk.</li> <li>• Cholera, typhoid and other diseases are spread by contaminated drinking water.</li> <li>• When heavy metals and nitrate fertilizers get into our drinking water supplies, they can cause cancer and disrupt our hormones.</li> <li>• Big fish like tuna accumulate high quantities of toxins from contaminated water.</li> <li>• As ocean water becomes more acidic, it is getting more difficult for coral and shellfish to survive.</li> </ul>

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

1 dispose of / get rid of / pollute / dump / clean up / store / process / recycle **waste**

2 poisonous / radioactive / toxic / harmful / hazardous / wildlife / industrial **waste**

3 contaminate / reduce / minimise / tackle / combat / prevent / avoid / limit **pollution**

4 atmospheric / marine / water / river / industrial / consumption / chemical / nitrate **pollution**



## Marine Life

Importance	Ways to protect it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marine life is a major source of our animal protein and of products that are very useful in medicine.</li> <li>• The beauty of marine life _____ (1) the tourist and leisure industry in many parts of the world.</li> <li>• Millions of jobs in fishing, aquaculture and tourism _____ (2) marine life.</li> <li>• Ocean vegetation _____ (3) a lot of carbon dioxide, so without it global climate change would be much worse.</li> <li>• Seaweed and algae could _____ (4) hunger and malnutrition in the world.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can use reusable bags when shopping instead of plastic ones.</li> <li>• We can _____ (5) our carbon footprint by driving less and using less electricity and water.</li> <li>• We can _____ (6) beach and river bank clean-ups or help organise one.</li> <li>• We can use eco-friendly washing-up liquid, washing powder and personal care items.</li> <li>• There are many simple ways of conserving water like turning off the tap when brushing one's teeth.</li> </ul>

absorb    depend on    put an end to    reduce    support    take part in

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the correct form of the verbs in the box to complete the sentences about marine life.

## Water Use should be Controlled by the Government

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many citizens still think fresh water is an unlimited resource.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership with the private sector is often necessary to ensure efficient management of water resources.</li> </ul>

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- Together, governments can develop agricultural policies that promote efficient water use on a global scale.
- Governments could set maximum limits for water consumption.
- It is the government's responsibility to prepare for droughts and other emergency situations.
- Water agencies can educate citizens through programmes promoting water conservation and efficient water use.

- Rather than punish everyone with water restrictions, it would be better to reward people who manage to conserve water at home.
- Ultimately, using water wisely is the responsibility of individuals.
- It is mainly by raising taxes and cutting investment that public water utilities manage to keep prices relatively low.
- In some countries, bureaucracy, mismanagement and corruption jeopardise public water systems.

encouraging    endanger    formulate    impose  
increasing    penalise    save    slashing

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

IELTS Liz

- |           |       |            |       |
|-----------|-------|------------|-------|
| develop   | ----- | conserve   | ----- |
| set       | ----- | raising    | ----- |
| promoting | ----- | cutting    | ----- |
| punish    | ----- | jeopardise | ----- |

**Drinking Water should be Free, not Sold (No Bottled Water)**

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involving profit-making agencies in water management and distribution would exclude the poorest from essential services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some of the most populous countries in the world, tap water is not safe for drinking unless it has been boiled.</li> <li>• Ordinary plastic bottles may take centuries to decompose, but there are</li> </ul>

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- Water is a human right and should be affordable to all, like food and like the medicines we need when we are ill.
- Unlike the air that we breathe, water needs a costly infrastructure that has to be maintained permanently.
- Most brands of bottled water contain tiny plastic particles which we ingest when drinking.
- Every human being needs an adequate amount of safe fresh water in order not to die from dehydration.

now plastic-free biodegradable water bottles.

- To make tap water free, agencies might save money by reducing quality control costs.
- As the old saying goes, you get what you pay for.
- Disposable plastic water bottles have a disastrous effect on the environment.

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

IELTS Liz

**WORK**

## The Best Way to Get a Good Job

Education	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can get certain jobs without a formal degree but you will find it <u>a struggle</u> to advance professionally.</li> <li>University graduates can be trusted with more responsible roles.</li> <li>Obtaining an academic qualification is already <u>proof</u> that you are able to <u>rise through the ranks</u>.</li> <li>In certain fields, having a degree will enable you to earn a higher salary <u>right from the outset</u>.</li> <li>Some academic programmes require that students do an internship or a work placement in order to graduate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers often <u>value</u> experience over education especially in vocational fields.</li> <li>One or two years of <u>hands-on</u> industry experience is usually an asset when applying for a job.</li> <li><u>Landing</u> your first job is a struggle if you do not have prior real-world experience.</li> <li>There is so much competition among graduates that having some work experience will give you <u>a head start</u> over others.</li> <li>Recruiters are more likely to <u>hire</u> an applicant with relevant work experience rather than one with an academic <u>degree</u>.</li> </ul>

rate    qualification    practical    getting    from the start  
evidence    employ    difficult    an advantage    advance professionally

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Match each of these words and phrases from the sentences above with the word or phrase from the box which could replace it in context.

a struggle	-----	hands-on	-----
proof	-----	landing	-----
rise through the ranks	-----	a head start	-----
from the outset	-----	hire	-----
value	-----	degree	-----

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## Job Satisfaction

A realistic expectation	Unrealistic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people work eight hours a day for over 40 years and rightly expect to derive a feeling of fulfilment from their job.</li> <li>• A job is more than a paycheque – it needs to be a source of pride and self-respect.</li> <li>• We can bring meaning and purpose to any job if we fully engage in our work and adopt a positive attitude towards colleagues and superiors.</li> <li>• It is legitimate to expect to feel respected in the workplace and appreciated for the quality of our work.</li> <li>• At work like in life in general, satisfaction also depends on intrinsic factors, not only extrinsic ones.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people are unable to find contentment in anything they do.</li> <li>• With rising unemployment and fierce competition for jobs, the greatest satisfaction for many is simply to have a job.</li> <li>• Many people have to accept jobs that are completely unrelated to their studies.</li> <li>• Employees sometimes feel unfairly compensated for their work and are therefore demotivated.</li> <li>• Inhumane working conditions in certain industries more often lead to despair than to satisfaction.</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 satisfaction / fulfilment / competition / contentment / pleasure / happiness

2 pride / self-respect / motivation / appreciation / despair

3 compensation / pay / remuneration / salary / unemployment / wage

## Problems with Work-Life Balance

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some companies expect their workers to stay connected at home and to <b>be on call</b> at all hours of the day.</li> <li>Working from home can <b>blur the boundaries</b> between our private and professional lives.</li> <li>Many people are expected to take work home with them.</li> <li>All the stress accumulated during the working day often makes it difficult to <b>wind down</b> at home.</li> <li>The time spent commuting also <b>takes its toll</b> on our private life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawing up a list of priorities can improve our time management.</li> <li>Taking enough exercise is essential to keep fit and have a fresh mind.</li> <li>We need to set ourselves realistic short- and long-term goals and a time frame within which to attain them.</li> <li>When we are at home, we should <b>make a point</b> of prioritising our family.</li> <li>We should make an effort to maintain friendly relationships with colleagues and ask for help when we need it.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Study the phrases in **bold** in the sentences above. Then use the correct form of those phrases to complete the following explanations.

- If something \_\_\_\_\_ between two subjects, ideas, etc it makes the difference between them less clear.
- If something \_\_\_\_\_, it has a bad effect on something or someone, or it causes suffering or damage.
- If you \_\_\_\_\_ of doing something, you do it deliberately, you take particular care to do it.
- If you \_\_\_\_\_, you are available to work at any time when needed.
- If you \_\_\_\_\_, you relax after doing something that made you feel tired.



## Who should Have High Salaries

Doctors and Teachers	Sports and Showbiz Stars
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public sector doctors and teachers provide indispensable services.</li> <li>Health and education should be the top priorities of any government.</li> <li>Doctors and teachers have spent a great deal of money on their studies and then often attend expensive professional training seminars.</li> <li>Health care professionals deal with matters of the life and death on a regular basis. (1)</li> <li>Teachers shape the future for millions of children and all over the world. (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showbiz and sports celebrities are a source of national pride.</li> <li>Celebrities' salaries are not shouldered by the taxpayer.</li> <li>Stars often have to pay exorbitant for agent fees. (3)</li> <li>A professional athlete's career usually it ends when they are in their mid-thirties. (4)</li> <li>Their generous salaries partly compensate for what they sacrifice and can all the training they have to undergo. (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.

## Children and Part-Time Work

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In certain environments, children spontaneously want to work alongside their parents.</li> <li>In poorer countries, children often have to work part-time to help their parents make ends meet.</li> <li>Starting to work at a young age prepares you more adequately for adult life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work robs children of what makes childhood unique and beautiful.</li> <li>Children could not possibly juggle a job with school duties and extracurricular activities.</li> <li>Children are vulnerable and can easily be taken advantage of by employers.</li> </ul>

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- It teaches children how to react and behave in situations they would not encounter at home or at school.
- It makes children appreciate the value of hard work and money.

- Childhood is a time for learning, playing and for children to enjoy.
- Having to work and go to school would greatly reduce the amount of time children can spend with their parents.
- In some developing countries, children do manual labour under conditions which can be dangerous to their health or welfare.

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

1 easily harmed or hurt

2 in a way that has not been planned but is just the result of an impulse

3 to have only just enough money to buy the things you need

4 to treat someone unfairly for one's own benefit

5 to try to fit two or more activities, jobs, etc into your life, especially if it is with difficulty.

## IELTS Liz

### Children and Work Exploitation (Child Labour)

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destitute families in underdeveloped countries often have no other choice but to make their children work for survival.</li> <li>• In some countries, access to compulsory free education is limited or nonexistent.</li> <li>• Adding another wage to a family's income can lighten the financial burden people carry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest payments on development loans to developing countries should be reduced.</li> <li>• Countries where workers' rights are fully respected should not trade with countries where those rights are repressed.</li> <li>• We should give the United Nations more power to enable it to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger worldwide.</li> <li>• Buying fairtrade products brings a better standard of living for poor</li> </ul>

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- Child labour laws are often either not enforced or shamelessly violated.
- As countries compete for jobs and investment, governments resist international standards in order to keep labour costs low.

- people in developing countries.
- Richer nations should provide financial support and encourage poorer ones to make education free and compulsory until age 15.

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

1 to enforce

2 to compete

3 to repress

4 to eradicate

5 to carry

a) hunger and poverty

b) a burden

c) for jobs

d) a law

e) someone's rights, liberties, etc

## Teachers Do Not Want to Work in Rural Areas

Reasons	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In developing countries, the standard of living in rural areas is even lower than in cities.</li> <li>• Rural areas often lack an adequate health care and public transport infrastructure.</li> <li>• Schools in rural areas are often in poor repair and may lack even basic equipment and facilities.</li> <li>• Teachers in country schools sometimes earn much less than their counterparts in the city.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate teachers from rural areas should be supported in obtaining and retaining jobs in rural schools.</li> <li>• Teachers taking up a post in a remote location should be offered incentives such as a travel and relocation allowance.</li> <li>• Fringe benefits like free medical insurance and housing allowance would make jobs in remote areas more attractive.</li> <li>• Teacher training colleges could arrange for some of the teaching practice to</li> </ul>

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## Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

- Many teachers feel daunted by the prospect of having to live in isolation.

take place in rural schools.

- Rural schools should be better funded.

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

- 1 in bad condition
- 2 someone who has the same job as someone else, but in a different place
- 3 something that makes you want to work hard or do something new
- 4 something that you get for working, on top of your pay
- 5 to feel afraid, worried or less confident
- 6 to keep

## Working Online from Home

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

See the Answer Key for more ideas for this topic.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 A feeling of isolation and loneliness | a) co-workers and bosses is irreplaceable. |
| 2 Conference calls are now possible     | b) environment in any way you like.        |
| 3 Employees no longer waste             | c) even with a basic home computer.        |
| 4 Face-to-face interaction with         | d) often sets in after a while.            |
| 5 You can design your home office       | e) the collective energy of the office.    |
| 6 You miss out on                       | f) time and energy commuting.              |

## All Employees should have the Same Salary in a Company

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Choose the correct option (a) or (b) in *italics* to present arguments for and against the idea that all employees in a company should have the same salary.

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**For**

- 1 It is (a) *immoral* / (b) *legitimate* that some people earn in a month what it takes other people in the same company a whole year to earn.
- 2 Income inequality is a (a) *rare* / (b) *frequent* cause of industrial action.
- 3 Too many companies have a rigid hierarchy with (a) *a dearth of* (b) *a surplus of* highly paid middle managers.
- 4 The concept of equal pay for equal work can (a) *put an end to* / (b) *widen* the gender pay gap.
- 5 Many companies have adopted a (a) *hierarchic* / (b) *flat* structure where all employees are involved in decision making and work towards a common goal.

**Against**

- 6 An employee's salary should be (a) *independent of* / (b) *commensurate with* their experience and qualifications.
- 7 It is naive to think that senior staff would (a) *accept* / (b) *refuse* to have the same salary as those in junior roles.
- 8 Those who risk their lives at work every day (a) *deserve* / (b) *do not deserve* a higher salary than an assistant who does menial office tasks.
- 9 Employees would (a) *gain* / (b) *lose* the motivation to work hard and give the best of themselves.
- 10 Opportunities for career advancement are (a) *necessary for* / (b) *irrelevant to* employee satisfaction and retention at a company.

**Factors Influencing Career Choice**

Salary	Other factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People hope to be offered pay <b>commensurate with</b> their qualifications and experience.</li> <li>• A good salary enables you to support your parents.</li> <li>• Young people need to earn enough when they want to get married and start a home of their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends in the job market affect the choices available to us.</li> <li>• Many people look for a job that can give them the opportunity to <b>rise through the ranks</b>.</li> <li>• People want to engage in tasks that they enjoy and that they feel good at doing.</li> </ul>

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Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

- Many graduates leave university **in debt** and have to **pay off** their student loans.
- Your income should enable you to cover all your basic needs, pay your bills and live in modest comfort.

- Many children want to follow their parents' profession.
- Your personality often has **a decisive influence** on the career path you choose.

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

- 1 Many 18-year-olds face a difficult choice: they can look for a job or study and risk getting heavily \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Students from low-income families find it particularly difficult to \_\_\_\_\_ their student loans.
- 3 The success of an internship can exert \_\_\_\_\_ on a student's future career choice.
- 4 Within a few years, Nadia managed to \_\_\_\_\_ from junior assistant to section manager.
- 5 Your pay rise will be \_\_\_\_\_ with your additional workload and wider responsibilities.

Changing Jobs vs A Job for Life

Changing jobs	One job for life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many university graduates have to take on jobs that are not related to their studies to start off with.</li> <li>• You become more flexible when you have the chance to _____ (1) different company cultures.</li> <li>• When you _____ (2) jobs, you keep learning new skills and become more versatile.</li> <li>• Very few companies can _____ (3) their workers lifelong employment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loyalty to a company often leads to promotion opportunities.</li> <li>• Companies have long-term goals that require continued commitment and dedication to _____ (4).</li> <li>• It takes time to establish the kind of meaningful professional relationships we need to find real job satisfaction.</li> <li>• When you stay in the same job for a long time, you _____ (5) performing your job mechanically.</li> </ul>

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- If you make frequent career moves without good reason, employers might worry you are just a job hopper.

- Many employees \_\_\_\_\_ (6) in their jobs for fear of insecurity or because the company has no career development policy.

achieve   end up   experience   guarantee   stagnate   switch

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the words in the box to complete the sentences about changing jobs and staying in a job for life.

## Women in the Armed Forces

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender equality must be achieved in all areas of human activity.</li> <li>• Women played a crucial role in the armed forces during World War II.</li> <li>• Many essential noncombatant roles can be taken over by women in order to free men for combat.</li> <li>• On the modern battlefield, leadership skills and technical expertise are more valuable than brute strength.</li> <li>• In order to enjoy the same opportunities as men, women have to be exposed to the same risks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some jobs in the armed forces require a level of physical ability and fitness that women could not reach.</li> <li>• If taken prisoner by the enemy, women soldiers are more likely to suffer abuse.</li> <li>• As the military remains a typically macho subculture, women recruits run the risk of being resented or harassed.</li> <li>• Mixed-gender military units would inevitably lack cohesion.</li> <li>• Women are much more likely to get injured than men.</li> </ul>

**Collocations Exercise:** In each group, identify the item which does not *normally* collocate with the word in **bold**.

1 play / adopt / spend / take on / fulfil / take over / **a role**

2 **to suffer** / a lot of pain / abuse / discrimination / harassment / expertise

3 take / achieve / face / run / pose / involve / **a risk**

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## The Retirement Age should be Extended

- 1 The taxpayer's money would be better spent on pension funds than on weapons and prestige projects.
- 2 The skills and experience of senior employees are necessary for the economy to prosper.
- 3 Setting the retirement age at 65 was decided many decades ago when life expectancy was much lower.
- 4 Many senior employees would welcome the opportunity to work beyond the legally mandated retirement age.
- 5 Making it easier to retire early might alleviate the problem of youth unemployment.
- 6 Longer life expectancy means pension funds now have to pay out much more money than is paid into them.
- 7 Forcing healthy people in their mid-sixties to stop working is unfair.
- 8 Delaying retirement eligibility risks aggravating the problem of youth employment.
- 9 Delayed retirement would penalise lower-income workers in physically demanding jobs.
- 10 Conditions should be improved for workers who wish to take early retirement.

### IELTS Liz

**Categorisation Exercise:** Mark the sentences above (+) if they *support* the idea that the retirement age should be extended, or (-) if they *do not*.

## Robots and Work

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robots can work more efficiently and with more precision than humans.</li> <li>• Robots are already being used successfully to perform some surgical procedures.</li> <li>• Robots in the workplace means more people are laid off work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robots can break down or malfunction, rendering them either useless or unreliable.</li> <li>• The cost of fixing a broken machine or robot can be high and require specialist services.</li> </ul>

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## Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

- Robots used in mass production can reduce the price of the items made.
- Robots and machines reduce a company's labour costs because they require only a single purchase cost but no salary.

- Robots are only as good as the humans who programme them.
- Robots can be easily replaced and reprogrammed for other duties.
- Robots could not handle the many unexpected situations people are faced with in the course of a single day's work.

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

IELTS Liz

## WORLD ISSUES

**World Overpopulation: Causes / Problems / Solutions****Causes**

- 1 There is a decline in the (a) *death* / (b) *birth* rate with people enjoying increased longevity.
- 2 People enjoy a better standard of living, which also means a longer lifespan.
- 3 People are more health conscious and able to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- 4 Better medical facilities help people recover from illnesses which otherwise might have been (a) *contagious* / (b) *fatal*.
- 5 New medical treatments can help elderly people extend their lives.
- 6 Fertility treatments have allowed women to overcome pregnancy problems.
- 7 Infant mortality rates have (a) *soared* / (b) *dropped* due to better education for women and better medical facilities.

**Problems**

- 8 A growing population means growing poverty, which leads to an increase in crime.
- 9 A larger population with a greater demand for food will cause food (a) *shortages* / (b) *surpluses*.
- 10 The gap between rich and poor will result in greater inequality and lead to unrest.
- 11 There will be more unemployment due to (a) *more* / (b) *less* competition for jobs.
- 12 The use of the world's resources is unsustainable and will result in depletion.
- 13 The (a) *conservation* / (b) *degradation* of the environment will be inevitable owing to the demand for more energy and more industry.

**Solutions**

- 14 The government should (a) *abandon* / (b) *enforce* a one-child policy.
- 15 Women should be educated about family planning.
- 16 Birth control should be more readily available for free.
- 17 Sex education (a) *should be* / (b) *should not be* taught in schools.
- 18 Incentives should be offered by the government for families with (a) *more* / (b) *fewer* children.

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**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Choose the option (a) or (b) that makes sense in nine of the above sentences about world overpopulation.

## Aging World Population

Problems	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of old people will exceed the number of young people.</li> <li>• The economy will suffer.</li> <li>• Young people will not be able to financially support the entire elderly population.</li> <li>• Elderly care facilities will be strained.</li> <li>• The government will need to divert more funding into elderly care, which will produce a lack of funding in other areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The retirement age should be increased.</li> <li>• If more elderly people work, they will be able to support themselves.</li> <li>• Elderly people should continue to contribute to the workforce.</li> <li>• Elderly people will be able to continue to pay taxes.</li> <li>• People should be encouraged to save more for their pensions.</li> <li>• A growing younger population is needed.</li> <li>• People should be encouraged to have more children.</li> </ul>

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

- 1 to be greater than a number or amount
- 2 to give or do something in order to achieve something together with other people
- 3 to use something for a different purpose
- 4 under a lot of pressure.

## Global Warming

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate changes have resulted in temperature rises.</li> <li>• Trapped carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere causes increased temperatures.</li> <li>• The use of fossil fuels for industry results in more carbon dioxide being produced.</li> <li>• Transportation also contributes to rises in carbon dioxide.</li> <li>• Carbon dioxide is not being sufficiently absorbed by trees and plants.</li> <li>• Deforestation has resulted in less trees to combat CO2 emissions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New sources of energy need to be found that are sustainable and environmentally friendly.</li> <li>• Transportation that is solar powered or run on green energy needs to be used.</li> <li>• People can recycle plastic and reuse containers.</li> <li>• People need to be aware of the amount of energy they use in their homes.</li> <li>• Governments should have stricter rules against deforestation.</li> <li>• Governments can arrange for more trees to be planted.</li> </ul>

**Vocabulary Exercise:** Match items **1 – 10** with items **a) – j)** to form noun compounds often used when discussing global warming.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1</b> carbon</p> <p><b>2</b> climate</p> <p><b>3</b> fossil</p> <p><b>4</b> glacier</p> <p><b>5</b> greenhouse</p> <p><b>6</b> global</p> <p><b>7</b> sea level</p> <p><b>8</b> carbon</p> <p><b>9</b> ozone</p> <p><b>10</b> green</p> | <p><b>a)</b> depletion</p> <p><b>b)</b> rise</p> <p><b>c)</b> footprint</p> <p><b>d)</b> energy</p> <p><b>e)</b> retreat</p> <p><b>f)</b> dioxide</p> <p><b>g)</b> warming</p> <p><b>h)</b> effect</p> <p><b>i)</b> fuels</p> <p><b>j)</b> change</p> |
|---|---|



## International Aid from Rich Countries to Poor Countries

- 1 Aid could be given by funding the development of hospitals and medical training, and giving free medicine to ensure good health care.
- 2 Aid could be given in the form of teacher training and educational facilities rather than just financial aid.
- 3 Governments are answerable to their citizens for how they spend the tax payers' money.
- 4 Helping poor countries reduces the animosity between wealthy countries and poorer ones, which will help promote international peace.
- 5 If a poor country has continual political unrest, aid will not have a long-term impact and may not be effective.
- 6 In some poor countries, conditions have created a humanitarian crisis which cannot be ignored by rich countries.
- 7 Poor countries may develop a dependency on aid rather than solve their own national problems.
- 8 Poor countries need to be trained how to tackle their own domestic problems rather than be given aid.
- 9 Refusing to give aid to poor countries could result in hundreds of thousands of unnecessary deaths.
- 10 Rich countries have a responsibility to their own people before helping others.
- 11 Rich countries have the extra money to help others as well as themselves.
- 12 Supporting the economic growth of a poorer country can open up new markets for richer countries.
- 13 The money from rich countries comes from tax payers and should be used to benefit tax payers in terms of support social services, health care and education.
- 14 There are not enough rich countries in the world to give enough aid to all the poor countries to achieve the desired results.
- 15 There is no guarantee that financial aid will be effective if corruption exists within the poor country.
- 16 There should be a moral obligation for people with money to help those without.

**Categorisation Exercise:** Mark the arguments above '+' if they are *for* international aid and '-' if they are *against*.

## Growing Gap between Rich and Poor

Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corruption in some countries affects the distribution of _____ (1).</li> <li>• The poverty circle in some countries cannot be broken due to lack of free education and limited job _____ (2).</li> <li>• While developed and developing countries have growing markets, underdeveloped countries are still tackling basic human necessities such as clean water, shelter, political stability and food production.</li> <li>• Effective collection of taxes in rich countries means they have money for the development of the country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer free education, which will allow people the chance to escape the poverty _____ (3).</li> <li>• Ensure that all countries have a minimum _____ (4) that is sufficient for a good _____ (5) of living.</li> <li>• Increase taxes for people with higher salaries and make sure they are paying them, then use the money to fund free education and free health care for all people.</li> <li>• Put a ceiling on the higher salaries to ensure a more equal distribution of wealth in society.</li> <li>• Narrow the _____ (6) between the salaries of blue-collar and white-collar workers.</li> </ul>

cycle gap opportunities standard wage wealth

**Sentence Completion Exercise:** Use the nouns in the box to complete the sentences about the growing gap between rich and poor.

## The Brain Drain: Migration of Skilled Workers Out of a Country

### Causes

- Poor living standard in the person's native country.
- Lack of good media and education facilities in the country they come from.

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## Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

- Political instability, the unrest and violence can lead people to look outside their country of origin. (1)
- Developed countries can offer worker's children a future with brighter prospects.
- Developed countries offer workers better working conditions and more for up-to-date facilities. (2)
- Professionals will be able to work at the forefront of their profession in developed countries.

**Problems**

- Countries will lose their top professionals and the potential to train future generations.
- Countries will see a shortage of their skilled workers, which they could critically affect education, medicine and other fields. (3)
- People will be affected by those who have already left their country, leading it to more migration. (4)
- A country will lose financially from educating workers from childhood to then lose them in adulthood.
- A country will lose some of their brightest and most dynamic people.

**Solutions**

- Invest in and improve facilities in schools and hospitals.
- Increase wages to encourage professionals to stay away. (5)
- Offer a clear career path for professionals with opportunities for development.
- Make sure promotion is based on skills and experience rather than on bias or personal contacts.
- Invite professionals from developed countries to train and professionals in their country of origin. (6)

**Spot the Mistake Exercise:** In sentences 1 – 6 above, there is *one extra word* which does not fit. Spot the incorrect extra word.

## ANSWERS: SOCIETY

**Littering**

- 1 harsh
- 2 to be inclined (to do something)
- 3 to get away with (something)
- 4 to catch (somebody) in the act
- 5 to dispose of (something)

**Homelessness**

- 1 d   2 e   3 f   4 a   5 b   6 c

**The Importance of Traditional Lifestyles**

- 1 perspectives
- 2 selflessness
- 3 heritage
- 4 remedies
- 5 fall back on

IELTS Liz

**Traditional Lifestyles are Being Lost**

- 1 and
- 2 their
- 3 of
- 4 on
- 5 for

**People Moving from Rural to Urban Areas**

- 1 to plummet
- 2 to rocket
- 3 a glut of

4 a dearth of

### Society Needs Rules to Function

1 in disarray

2 vulnerable

3 deter (somebody) from (doing something)

4 with impunity

Page | ii

### Cultural Diversity

1 stem from

2 lose

3 competing against

4 result in

5 given

IELTS Liz

### Happiness

1 e    2 d    3 b    4 a    5 c

### Utopia

1 greed

2 live life to the full

3 non-existent

4 close-knit

5 bonds

### The Generation Gap

1 bond

2 keep pace (with)

3 alter

4 at ease (with)

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**Tighter Gun Control**

*Banning guns or having stricter gun laws will not stop crime.* This is an argument *against* tighter gun control.

*Most guns are not used as a form of self-defence.* This is an argument *for* tighter gun control.

**ANSWERS: SPACE EXPLORATION****Spending Money on Space Exploration**

- 1 countless
- 2 a hazard
- 3 dominance
- 4 to surpass
- 5 to squander

**Sending Communications into Space**

*Trying to improve communication between cultures and countries would be more useful for mankind.* This is an argument *does not support* the idea of sending communications into space.

*Sending signals into space is probably the best way to find out if there is life elsewhere in our galaxy.* This is an argument *in favour of* sending communications into space.

**Space Tourism**

- 1 a    2 b    3 a    4 c    5 c

**ANSWERS: SPORT & EXERCISE****International Sports Events**

- 1 achieve (a)
- 2 rise

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- 3 decrease
- 4 perform
- 5 borrow
- 6 evolve

### Dangerous Sports should be Banned

- 1 d    2 c    3 e    4 b    5 a

NB: 3 d is also correct; *to risk an injury* is a frequent collocation, but it does not appear in this particular section.

### Children should Learn Team Sports, not Individual Sports (Cooperation vs Competition)

- 1 foster
- 2 achieve
- 3 interact
- 4 rely
- 5 engage
- 6 suffer

IELTS Liz

### Governments should Build Sports Facilities for Top Athletes vs the Public

*Schools should be the main beneficiaries of public investment in sport.* This supports the argument that governments should build sports facilities for the public.

*The success of top athletes brings prestige and worldwide attention to their country.* This supports the argument that governments should build sports facilities for top athletes.

### Watching Sport on TV is a Waste of Time

- 1 disrupts
- 2 slump
- 3 slouch
- 4 passionate

5 affordable

6 compulsive

### Who is Responsible for Children to Exercise?

Page | v

1 pride of place

2 play a key role

3 instil

4 motto

5 set an example

6 at the expense of

## ANSWERS: TECHNOLOGY

### Banning Mobile Phones in Public Areas

1 intrusive

2 adverse

3 designated areas

4 violate

5 to be on the verge of

6 to curtail

IELTS Liz

### Technology has Helped People Become more Social

1 abolish

2 build up

3 reconnect

4 disrupt

5 prioritise

6 disseminate

### The Gap between Old and Young has Widened due to Technology

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

### Mankind is Now Dependent on Modern Technology

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

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### Technology Increases the Gap between Rich and Poor

1 the

2 a

3 they

4 very

5 any

### The Internet is Mankind's Most Important Invention

*The invention of the telephone, the light-bulb and the computer made the Internet possible.*  
This argument does not support the idea that mankind's most important invention is the Internet.

*It is the first invention that turned our planet into a global village.* This argument supports the idea that mankind's most important invention is the Internet.

## ANSWERS: TOURISM

### Tourism

boost: **i)** stimulate

influence: **a)** affect

alter: **b)** change

adversely: **e)** negatively

rely: **c)** depend

downturn: **g)** recession

### Tourism Causes Damage to Historical Buildings

1 regrettably

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- 2 recorded
- 3 irreparable

### People Need to Learn the Language in order to Travel

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- 1 resolved
- 2 venture
- 3 enquire
- 4 renders
- 5 seek
- 6 cope

### People should Adapt to the Culture of the Country they are Visiting

deeply	gravely	punishable by law	chargeable
unpleasant	awkward	conflict	clash
firsthand	directly	depend	rely
enhance	enrich	discard	forgo
fixed	established		

### People Do Not Need to Travel if They Have TV

*Many people actually watch programmes about places they have already been to, or which they intend to visit.* This sentence *counters* the argument that people do not need to travel if they have TV.

*You can see more of a country and learn more about it in a 30-minute documentary than you would during a month's holiday there.* This sentence *supports* the argument that people do not need to travel if they have TV.

### Travel in a Group or Alone

- 1 in company
- 2 to dishearten sb
- 3 measures

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**Ecotourism**

- 1 and
- 2 an
- 3 they
- 4 by
- 5 in

**ANSWERS: TRANSPORT****Congestion in Cities**

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

**Is increasing Tax on Flights the Best Way to Reduce Air Travel?**

- 1 to increase / raise / put up / a tax
- 2 to decrease / cut / lower / reduce / slash / taxes
- 3 to put / introduce / levy / impose / a tax
- 4 to evade / dodge / taxes

**Retake the Driving Test Every Five Years**

- 1 c    2 c    3 b    4 a

**Public Transport**

- 1 essential
- 2 unreliable
- 3 sustainable
- 4 flexible
- 5 rife

**Increased Car Ownership**

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- 1 depletion
- 2 tax revenue
- 3 fossil fuels
- 4 to take a detour
- 5 to incur
- 6 to keep up with the Joneses

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owning a car means you no longer have to travel with other people, which means avoiding the spread of illness, the discomfort of overcrowding and the possibility of pickpocketing.</li> <li>• Having a car means that you can travel easily with lots of luggage rather than carrying it all when using public transport.</li> <li>• Cars allow people to commute further to work, which means housing in the suburbs or outside the city becomes a more viable option.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More traffic accidents occur due to the increase in traffic.</li> <li>• Many roads and streets in city centres were not built to cope with such a high volume of traffic resulting in serious congestion problems.</li> <li>• It is healthier to travel short distances on foot or by bike. Cars do not contribute towards better health.</li> </ul>

### The Government should Spend More on Railways

- 1 **railway** / train / station / timetable / travel / network / infrastructure / ~~motorist~~
- 2 ~~CO2-emissions~~ / high-speed / state / electric / private / regional / **railway**
- 3 **rail** / infrastructure / service / ~~depletion~~ / network / transport / travel / passenger
- 4 **train** / delays / journey / travellers / timetable / fare / ~~crossroads~~ / line
- 5 **road** / congestion / network / ~~highway~~ / infrastructure / closure / access / development

## ANSWERS: WATER

### Oceans

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1 a 2 d 3 f 4 e 5 g 6 b 7 c

### Water Pollution

- 1 dispose of / get rid of / ~~pollute~~ / dump / clean up / store / process / recycle **waste**
- 2 poisonous / radioactive / toxic / harmful / hazardous / ~~wildlife~~ / industrial **waste**
- 3 ~~contaminate~~ / reduce / minimise / tackle / combat / prevent / avoid / limit **pollution**
- 4 atmospheric / marine / water / river / industrial / ~~consumption~~ / chemical / nitrate **pollution**

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### Marine Life

- 1 supports
- 2 depend on
- 3 absorbs
- 4 put an end to
- 5 reduce
- 6 take part in

IELTS Liz

### Water Use should be Controlled by the Government

develop	formulate	conserve	save
set	impose	raising	increasing
promoting	encouraging	cutting	slashing
punish	penalise	jeopardise	endanger

### Drinking Water should be Free, not Sold (No Bottled Water)

*Unlike the air that we breathe, water needs a costly infrastructure that has to be maintained permanently. This is an argument against the idea that drinking water should be free.*

*Disposable plastic water bottles have a disastrous effect on the environment. This is an argument in favour of the idea that drinking water should be free, not sold in bottles.*

## ANSWERS: WORK

**The Best Way to Get a Good Job**

a struggle	difficult	hands-on	practical
proof	evidence	landing	getting
rise through the ranks	advance professionally	a head start	an advantage
from the outset	from the start	hire	employ
value	rate	degree	qualification

**Job Satisfaction**

- 1 competition
- 2 despair
- 3 unemployment

IELTS Liz

**Problems with Work-Life Balance**

- 1 blurs the boundaries
- 2 takes its toll
- 3 make a point
- 4 are on call
- 5 wind down

**Who should Have High Salaries**

- 1 the
- 2 and
- 3 for
- 4 it
- 5 can

**Children and Part-Time Work**

- 1 vulnerable
- 2 spontaneously
- 3 to make ends meet
- 4 to take advantage of someone
- 5 to juggle (one thing with another)

**Children and Work Exploitation (Child Labour)**

- 1 d    2 c    3 e    4 a    5 b

**Teachers Do Not Want to Work in Rural Areas**

- 1 in poor repair
- 2 a counterpart
- 3 an incentive
- 4 a fringe benefit
- 5 (to feel) daunted (by something)
- 6 to retain

IELTS Liz

**Working Online from Home**

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

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working from home gives you the freedom to work anytime, anywhere.</li> <li>• There is no dress code.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you work at home, it is much more difficult to achieve a healthy work-life balance.</li> <li>• There are far too many distractions and interruptions in one's home environment.</li> </ul>

**All Employees should have the Same Salary in a Company**

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## Answer Key: Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics

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

**Factors Influencing Career Choice**

- 1 in debt
- 2 pay off
- 3 a decisive influence
- 4 rise through the ranks
- 5 commensurate with

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**Changing Jobs vs A Job for Life**

- 1 experience
- 2 switch
- 3 guarantee
- 4 achieve
- 5 end up
- 6 stagnate

IELTS Liz

**Women in the Armed Forces**

- 1 spend
- 2 expertise
- 3 achieve

**The Retirement Age should be Extended**

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

**Robots and Work**

*Robots in the workplace means more people are laid off work.* This is an argument *against* using robots.

*Robots can be easily replaced and reprogrammed for other duties.* This is an argument *in favour* of using robots.

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## ANSWERS: WORLD ISSUES

**World Overpopulation: Causes / Problems / Solutions**

1 a    4 b    7 b    9 a    11 a    13 b    14 b    17 a    18 b

**Aging World Population**

1 to exceed

2 to contribute

3 to divert

4 strained

**Global Warming**

1 c, f    2 j    3 l    4 e    5 h    6 g    7 b    8 c, f    9 a    10 d

**International Aid from Rich Countries to Poor Countries**

1 (+)	2 (+)	3 (-)	4 (+)	5 (-)	6 (+)
7 (-)	8 (-)	9 (+)	10 (-)	11 (+)	12 (+)
13 (-)	14 (-)	15 (-)	16 (+)		

**Growing Gap between Rich and Poor**

1 wealth

2 opportunities

3 cycle

4 wage

5 standard

6 gap

**The Brain Drain: Migration of Skilled Workers Out of a Country**

1 the

2 for

3 they

4 it

5 away

6 and

IELTS Liz