

## How to prepare for Part 2 of the Academic IELTS Writing Test

In Part 2 of the IELTS Writing test, you are asked to write an essay on an academic subject. You do not need any specialist knowledge.

Your essay should be at least 250 words long and the recommended time to complete this section is about 40 minutes. As in IELTS Writing Part 1, there is no choice in subject or title. Everyone taking the Academic IELTS test on that day is set the same essay question.

### Question types

The IELTS part 2 question types follow three main patterns with small variations. They are:

1. Argumentative - an essay with a 'for' and an 'against' side
2. Problem and solution - you should explain how a situation has happened and suggest ways to solve it
3. Opinion - usually an opinion of a topic from your point of view

### Planning your answer

Under the pressure of an exam, students often skip planning in order to save themselves time. Don't make this mistake! Organising your thoughts can have a vital impact on your final score, because it makes your script more coherent.

If you're unsure how to plan, here are some tips. Read the question below and quickly write down any ideas you have on a piece of paper. Try to spend no more than 5 minutes

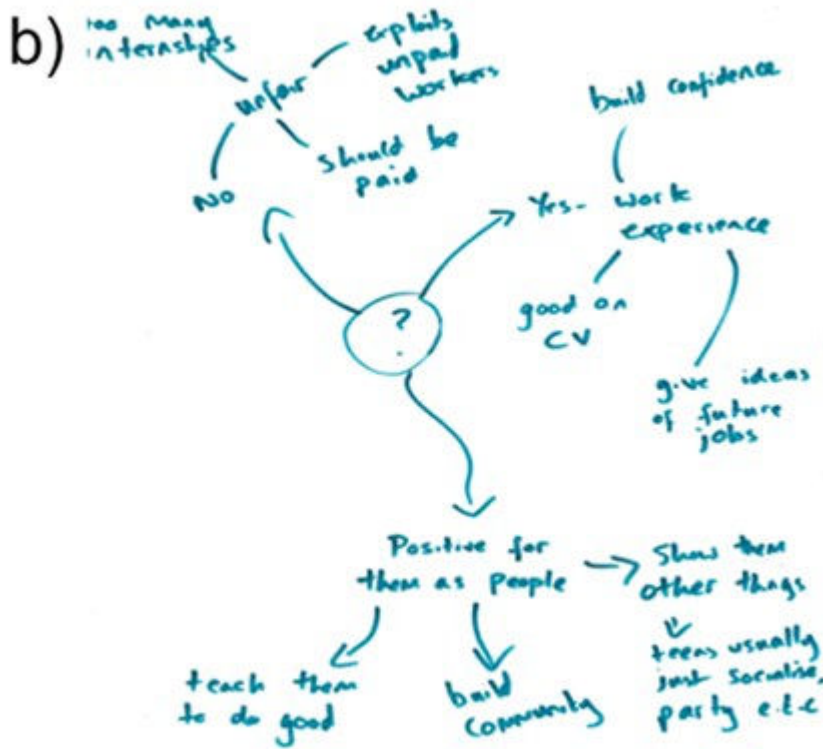
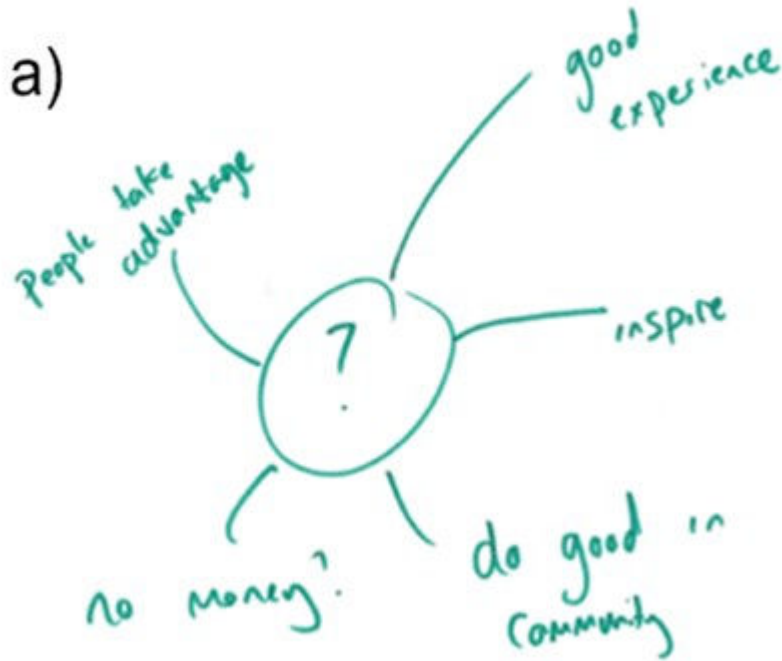
### IELTS Part 2 Sample Question

*Some people believe that unpaid community service should be a compulsory part of high school programmes (for example working for a charity, improving the neighbourhood or teaching sports to younger children). To what extent do you agree or disagree?*

Now look at the two plans below. Which one do you think is better?



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You chose (b), right? Here's why (b) is better...

Although plan (a) has some good ideas, they are not organised into paragraphs and there are no examples. This means that during the exam, the writer will have to pause to structure their argument. This takes away from the time they could spend focussing on getting their vocabulary and grammar to a high standard, which is necessary for a good score.

Plan (b) is divided into 3 main ideas with at least 3 examples to support each idea. Each idea can now be used as the main focus of a paragraph, which is a good way to organise your essay. Because there are at least 3 examples for each paragraph, you shouldn't struggle to write 250 words.

So when you go into your writing exam make sure you plan for the first 5 minutes – You won't regret it!

### Writing tips

Here are some more writing tips to use for Part 2 of the IELTS Writing paper.

1. Learn how much writing 250 words and more is in your handwriting, as counting the words at the end of the test can eat into your writing time.
2. Do not try and use a memorised essay, as you will never be able to accurately remember one for every type of question and you will make mistakes.
3. While planning, and indeed while writing too, keep asking yourself "Am I answering the question?", "Am I keeping to the topic?" In this way you will stay focussed and the essay will not need extensive revision.
4. Do leave enough time to edit and check your essay. In particular look for word agreement, grammatical accuracy at a fundamental level, and articles. These are basic and the penalties are greater than a mistake with a more advanced piece of grammar.

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