

Different kinds of IELTS Writing Task Two questions

Part One – Speaking

Do the task(s) from here that your teacher tells you to, with the topics on the next page:

- Your teacher will give you and your partner a topic to talk about. Talk about exactly that topic, then change groups. Summarise that discussion for your new partner, without using the underlined words (but rephrasing them if you like/ if you need to). Your new partner should try to guess exactly what your task was. All the tasks have the same first sentence (and therefore the same topic) but the tasks tell you to look at different aspects of that situation. If possible, your new partner should try to guess your task without looking at the different options.
- Read the topic that your teacher gives you, but don't show it to anyone else. Give a presentation of your views on exactly the topic that you are given to your partner, avoiding the underlined words. Your partner should try to guess exactly what your topic card says.
- With your partner, look at all the “No underlining version”, match up similar tasks, then compare each task to similar and different tasks.
- Underline important words in the “No underlining version” of the tasks, then compare with the “Underlined version”.

Part Two – Introductions

Do the task(s) from here that your teacher tells you to:

- Together write introductions to as many of those tasks as you can in ten minutes
- Match the introductions that your teacher gives you to the tasks.

Part Three – Planning and conclusions

What would be the topic of the paragraphs in the body of each essay that you have an introduction for? Are other essay structures possible to answer the same questions (with different introductions)?

What would be in the final paragraph of each of the essays? Would each one probably be a (real) conclusion, or just a summary? If it is a real conclusion, what would it need to say?

Match the plans that your teacher gives you to the tasks and introductions.

Part Four – Language and tactics

What do the introductions have in common? What (3 or 4) elements can they be divided into?

Brainstorm useful phrases for those functions, then find similar phrases in the examples.

Brainstorm other phrases for the same functions.

Brainstorm similar tactics, functions and language for final summaries and conclusions.

Underline synonyms of words in the tasks that are used to rephrase in the introductions.

Different kinds of essay task cards – No underlining version

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|---|
| <p>1. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. To what extent do you agree with this idea?</p> |
| <p>2. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Under what circumstances might this be a good or bad idea?</p> |
| <p>3. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. What could be the advantages and disadvantages of taking such an approach, and which of those factors would be the most important?</p> |
| <p>4. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. What could the consequences of such a policy be for the children and society?</p> |
| <p>5. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. In your opinion, who should decide on such matters and what factors should they take into account?</p> |
| <p>6. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Using personal experience and other people's experiences that you have heard or read about, judge whether this is generally a good thing or not.</p> |
| <p>7. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Discuss whether this is a good policy in the majority of cases, and what exceptions there might be.</p> |
| <p>8. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Examine the short and long term consequences of such a policy.</p> |

Different kinds of essay task cards – Underlined version

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| <p>1. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. To what <u>extent</u> do you agree with this idea?</p> |
| <p>2. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Under what <u>circumstances</u> might this be a good or bad idea?</p> |
| <p>3. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. What could be the advantages and disadvantages of taking such an approach, and which of those <u>factors</u> would be the <u>most important</u>?</p> |
| <p>4. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. What could the <u>consequences</u> of such a policy be for the <u>children</u> and <u>society</u>?</p> |
| <p>5. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. In your opinion, <u>who</u> should <u>decide</u> on such matters and <u>what factors</u> should they <u>take into account</u>?</p> |
| <p>6. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Using <u>personal experience</u> and <u>other people's experiences</u> that you have heard or read about, judge whether this is <u>generally</u> a good thing or not.</p> |
| <p>7. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Discuss whether this is a good policy in <u>the majority of cases</u>, and what <u>exceptions</u> there might be.</p> |
| <p>8. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Examine the <u>short and long term consequences</u> of such a policy.</p> |

Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers

1. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. To what extent do you agree with this idea?

E: It is a common view in many countries that one role of schools is to help students standardise their language use, usually meaning more similar to that of the capital city and its region. However, others argue against this philosophy and practice. Although I can understand both points of view, I am quite a strong supporter of this idea in the majority of cases. I will give three reasons for this in the paragraphs below.

iv. This essay plan:

- This introduction
- One reason supporting your view, with support
- Another reason supporting your view
- A third reason
- Summary, including a brief mention of the other side

Another possible essay plan

- Introduction not giving your view
- Arguments for standardising
- Arguments against
- Conclusion with your view

2. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Under what circumstances might this be a good or bad idea?

A: Many people are of the opinion that it is a good idea to make sure students learn a well accepted way of speaking the national language such as Oxford English or RP in the UK, but this obviously depends on the national and local situation. In this essay, I aim to select when this policy should be recommended and then describe times when it ought to be advised against.

viii. *This essay plan:*

- *This introduction*
- *Situations in which it's a good policy*
- *Situations in which it's a bad policy*
- *Conclusion (e.g. whether it's generally a good idea or not, or what the situation is locally)*

Another essay plan:

- *An introduction with a different final sentence*
- *One typical situation and whether it is a good or bad idea then*
- *Another*
- *Probably another*
- *Conclusion*

3. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. What could be the advantages and disadvantages of taking such an approach, and which of those factors would be the most important?

F: There is an assumption in many places that schools should teach a standardised version of the national language, like using Castilian Spanish in all Spanish classrooms. As in that country, however, there is also a lot of resistance to this idea. In the two paragraphs below I will look at both sides of the argument in turn, then I will conclude by selecting the most crucial of those aspects.

v. *This essay plan:*

- *This introduction*
- *Advantages*
- *Disadvantages*
- *Conclusion (choosing the most important and therefore saying if it's generally a good idea or not)*

Another essay plan:

The same, but disadvantages before advantages

4. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. What could the consequences of such a policy be for the children and society?

B: Many countries have a written or unwritten policy of using schools to help students soften or lose the regional way that they speak. This can have both good and bad effects on the pupils themselves, on the local area, and even on the whole nation. I will look at the positive and negative results of this policy in turn.

vi. This essay plan:

- *This introduction*
- *Positive results*
- *Negative results*
- *Conclusion (including whether it is generally a good policy or not)*

Another essay plan

- *Introduction with a different last sentence*
- *Consequences for the children*
- *Consequences for society*

5. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. In your opinion, who should decide on such matters and what factors should they take into account?

G: In many countries most children start school with so-called non-standard language use, for example using words which would never be heard on national TV. It is possible to combine the two in some way. However, schools still have to choose between either emphasising pride in that part of their local culture or teaching pupils to be able to produce a more generally understood version of the language. I believe that this decision should almost always be taken by the parents. I will justify this opinion below, and then look at what things parents should consider when making that difficult choice.

iii. This essay plan:

- *This introduction*
- *Reasons why the parents should choose*
- *Things parents should take into account*
- *Summary*

Another possible essay plan:

- *Introduction with a different last two sentences*
- *Examining and deciding on who should choose*
- *Things that those people should take into account*
- *Summary*

6. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Using personal experience and other people's experiences that you have heard or read about, judge whether this is generally a good thing or not.

C: Almost all young children start by picking up their parents' way of speaking, often meaning pronunciation, vocabulary and even grammar that is specific to the place where they are from. Many teachers and schools, however, aim to be a counterweight to this tendency, consciously teaching the version of the language that is used by the elite and in national media. Although I have no personal experience of growing up speaking a non-standard way, most of what I have read and heard makes me think that there is rarely any need for such a policy. I will look at the experiences of people I have met that support this position in the paragraph below, then expand my outlook to include experiences of other people that I am aware of.

vii. This essay plan:

- *This introduction*
- *Experiences of people you know*
- *Experiences of people you have read or heard about*
- *Conclusion*

Another possible essay plan:

- *Introduction with different last two sentences*
- *Reasons why it might be a good idea, supported by experiences*
- *Reasons why it might be a bad idea, supported by experiences*
- *Conclusion*

7. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Discuss whether this is a good policy in the majority of cases, and what exceptions there might be.

D: Many teachers, schools and educational authorities in the world have an aim to standardise the language that their students use to write or even speak, usually meaning getting rid of regional variation. Whether this is a good idea or not really depends on the children, school and country involved, but I believe in general it is probably a good thing. I will therefore give some examples of situations in which this policy should have mainly positive consequences, and then look at a few cases in which the opposite is true.



ii. *This essay plan:*

- *This introduction*
- *Situations in which it is positive*
- *Situations in which it is negative*
- *Summary*

Another possible essay plan:

- *Not stating your position in the introduction*
- *Situations in which it is positive*
- *Circumstances in which it is negative*
- *Conclusion*

(Or switch the second and third paragraphs, looking at negative things first)

8. Some people think that children who speak a dialect or have a regional accent should be taught to speak the national standard way. Examine the short and long term consequences of such a policy.

H: Perhaps a majority of teachers in the world have to deal with the issue of children starting their first day of school with a variety of language which will meet with prejudice or incomprehension outside their community. Such educators could perhaps choose to focus on fostering pride in students' way of speaking while expecting the more high-status language forms to be picked up naturally. Many, however, try to force a more standard way of speaking on the students. The latter policy will obviously have both good and bad effects in the weeks, months, years, decades and even centuries following its implementation. I will look at the two extremes of those time periods in the paragraphs below, and then use that to come to a conclusion on how welcome this policy might be.

i. *This essay plan:*

- *This introduction*
- *Short term consequences*
- *Long term consequences*
- *Conclusion*

Another possible essay plan:

- *Introduction with a different final sentence*
- *Good consequences in the short and long term*
- *Bad consequences in the short and long term*
- *Conclusion*

Brainstorming useful phrases for IELTS Writing Task Two essay introductions

Without looking above for now, brainstorm useful phrases into the spaces below. Many phrases not above are also possible.

Setting the scene/ Background to the question/ Rephrasing the question

(optional) Setting out your position at the beginning (if you'll only look at one side of the argument)

Explaining the structure of the essay

Find useful phrases in the introductions above, brainstorm more ideas, then compare as a class or with a list of phrases.

Brainstorm similar phrases for a final summary paragraph or final conclusion paragraph.
Summarising (when you have already given your opinion in the introduction)

2 Adding a further point (a recommendation, prediction, etc) that leads on from your summary or conclusion

1B Giving a conclusion/ Linking the conclusion to the content of the essay (when you haven't given your opinion in the introduction)

1Bi Briefly mentioning the arguments above

**1Bii Saying which factor is most relevant/ Saying which factor is most important/
Discounting one factor**

1Biii Giving your conclusion

Perhaps after using model answers and/ or key words to help, compare your ideas as a class or with a list of phrases.