



Sample Candidate Writing Responses and Examiner Comments

The Academic Writing test consists of two tasks, Task 1 and Task 2. Each task is assessed independently. The assessment of Task 2 carries more weight in marking than Task 1.

Detailed performance descriptors have been developed which describe written performance at the 9 IELTS bands.

Task 1 responses are assessed on the following criteria:

- *Task Achievement*
- *Coherence and Cohesion*
- *Lexical Resource*
- *Grammatical Range and Accuracy*

Task 2 responses are assessed on the following criteria:

- *Task Response*
- *Coherence and Cohesion*
- *Lexical Resource*
- *Grammatical Range and Accuracy*

Candidates should note that responses will be penalised if they are a) under the minimum word length, b) partly or wholly plagiarised, c) not written as full, connected text (e.g. using bullet points in any part of the response, or note form, etc. is not appropriate).

Task 1

Task Achievement

This criterion assesses how appropriately, accurately and relevantly the response fulfils the requirements set out in the task, using the minimum of 150 words.

Task 1 is a writing task which has a defined input and a largely predictable output. It is basically an information transfer task which relates narrowly to the factual content of an input diagram and not to speculated explanations that lie outside the given data.

Coherence and Cohesion

This criterion is concerned with the overall clarity and fluency of the message: how the response organises and links information, ideas and language. Coherence refers to the linking of ideas through logical sequencing. Cohesion

refers to the varied and appropriate use of cohesive devices (for example, logical connectors, pronouns and conjunctions) to assist in making the conceptual and referential relationships between and within sentences clear.

Lexical Resource

This criterion refers to the range of vocabulary the candidate has used and the accuracy and appropriacy of that use in terms of the specific task.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

This criterion refers to the range and accurate use of the candidate's grammatical resource as manifested in the candidate's writing at sentence level.

Task 2

Task Response

Task 2 requires the candidates to formulate and develop a position in relation to a given prompt in the form of a question or statement. Ideas should be supported by evidence, and examples may be drawn from the candidates' own experience. Responses must be at least 250 words in length.

The other criteria for Task 2 are the same as for Task 1 (*Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy*).

Writing responses are marked by trained and certificated IELTS examiners.

Scores may be reported as whole bands or half bands.

Below you will find candidates' responses to the two tasks in the sample Academic Writing test. There are two responses for each task. Each response has been awarded a band score and is accompanied by an examiner comment on the candidate's performance for that task.

Sample Academic Writing *Part 1*

Candidate Response 1

The chart gives you information on how children travelled to and from school in the years 1990 and 2010. The modes of transport were by car, walking, cycling, walking and by bus and by bus only.

A striking feature in this chart is that the number of children who travelled by car has increased from 1990 to 2010. In 1990 the most number of trips per year by children were by walking. However in 2010 it reduced to up to 6 million trips per year. The total number of trips to school by cycling and walking and bus were approximately 6 million in 1990. However the number of trips to school by cycling reduced to 2 million and the number of trips to school by walking and bus reduced to about 3 million in 2010. There isn't a significant change to the number of trips to school by bus. In 1990 it was about 7 million and in 2010 it came down to approximately 5 million.

In 1990 the amount of children who travelled to and from school by car was significantly lower than the children who travelled by walking. In contrast in 2010 the number of children who travelled to school by car increased and the number of children walking to school has decreased. In 2010 children travelled to school by bus more than they cycled to school.

Examiner comment

Band 5.5

The key features are all covered, but reporting is somewhat mechanical and data is provided to support only some of the descriptions. The response also lacks an overview. Information and ideas are generally arranged coherently, though this is lost towards the end of the response. Cohesive devices are used effectively and there is a clear progression overall. The range of vocabulary is both adequate and appropriate and spelling is accurate, but there is insufficient flexibility and not enough use of less common vocabulary to justify a higher band. There is a mix of simple and complex sentence structures, used fairly accurately, but again, there is not a wide enough variety of structures to achieve a higher band.

Sample Academic Writing *Part 1*

Candidate Response 2

The statistics show the number of trips made by children in one country over the past ten years to travel to and from school using different modes of transport. Children walking (13 million) are the by far highest, while, the children use bus (7 million) are a bit higher than the children use car in 1990. However, the children use car (11 million) in 2010 is significantly higher than the children use bus (5 million) in 2010. In contrast, the children walking (6 million) are twice as high as the children use cycling (3 million) in 2010. Overall, at the end period there were 12,000,000 children walking in 1990, 11,000,000 children use cars in 2010 and 5,000,000 children use bus.

Examiner comment

Band 3.5

The test taker attempts to address the task, but not all the key features are covered (there is no reference to the 'walking and bus' category). The response is also significantly under-length. The Task Achievement rating is affected by these deficiencies. Information is presented, but it is difficult to identify organisation and there is no clear progression within the response. There are some cohesive devices but these are not always used accurately. The range of vocabulary is basic and tends to be used repetitively. There is limited control over spelling, and errors are noticeable throughout. A limited range of sentence forms is used and although some structures are produced accurately, errors are frequent.

Sample Academic Writing *Part 2*

Candidate Response 1

WRITING TASK 2

I completely disagree with the written statement. I believe that most of the people in the world have more information about their health and also about how they can improve their healthy conditions.

Nowadays, information about how harmful is to smoke for our bodies can be seen in many packets of cigars. This is a clear example how things can change from our recent past.

There is a clear trend in the diminishing of smokers and if this continues it will have a positive impact in our health.

On the other hand, the alimention habbits are changing all over the world and this can affect people's health. However every one can choose what to eat every day. Mostly everybody, from developed societies, know the importance of having a healthy diet.

Advances such as the information showed in the menus of fast food restaurants will help people to have a clever choice before they choose what to eat.

Another important issue that I would like to mention is how medicine is changing. There are new discovers and treatments almost every week and that is an inequivoque sintom of how things are changing in order to improve the world's health.

Examiner comment

Band 5.5

A clear position is presented from the outset, supported by relevant ideas. These would require further development to achieve a higher score. The response is under-length, however. Information and ideas are generally arranged coherently and there is a clear overall progression. Cohesive devices are used effectively, but paragraphing is not always logical. A range of vocabulary is attempted, although there are some errors in spelling, word choice and word formation. There also appears to be some interference from the test taker's first language, e.g. '*alimention*', but these features do not make the answer difficult to understand. There is a mix of sentence forms, but the level of error is too high to achieve a higher band score.

Sample Academic Writing *Part 2*

Candidate Response 2

Recently, there have been a lot of discussions about health and whether it is going to improve or not. In my opinion, I think that people will become healthier in the future than they are now.

There are many reasons that support the idea of people becoming unhealthy in the future. Firstly, one reason is that of food. People tend to eat more fast food nowadays. They tend to treat themselves with sweets and chocolate whenever they want. This appears to be because people are busier now than they used to be. So, people don't have a chance to cook or even learn the art of cookery. Also, having a lot of unhealthy food can lead to obesity and it could be a serious issue in the future. Another reason is that technology is developing everyday. Young people enjoy buying new gadgets and the latest devices. This has a negative impact on their health, especially when they enjoy video games. Spending long hours looking at a screen can lead to bad eyesight and obesity as well. Yet another reason is that laziness is a big issue. Different forms of exercise might disappear in the future because people don't like sports. Also, people prefer spending most of their time on the internet and the internet is growing every single day.

Other people might disagree and say that health will improve in the future. They believe that new sports and new ways to exercise will appear in the future. However, I don't think it can happen since the majority of people spend less time outdoors. Moreover, other people believe that technology will try and help people improve their health. For example, there have been some games released on the Wii console that makes people exercise but technology is developing more in a negative way. For instance, many phone industries are developing new applications everyday and today's generation likes to follow every trend. This prevents people to go outside to exercise. They like to spend more time on the internet downloading new programmes or reading gossips about celebrities. This affects people's health badly.

In conclusion, I believe that people's health is affected negatively by fast food, technology and sports and it will be a problem in the future.

Examiner comment

Band 7.5

The test taker presents a clear position at the outset and explores some ideas to support this. An alternative position is also considered, but rejected. This is a strong response, but there is rather too much emphasis on technology: other aspects of the proposition could also be considered, e.g. less physical work and more sedentary work, greater reliance on cars meaning less exercise, aging populations in some countries leading to more complex health issues. Ideas are organised logically and there is a clear progression throughout the response, with good use of cohesive devices and logical paragraphing. The response could perhaps be improved by breaking down paragraphs 2 and 3. There is a wide range of vocabulary with good use of less common items as well as evidence of higher level features, such as 'softening', e.g. '*They tend to*', '*This appears to be*', and '*might disagree*'. Errors in spelling and word formation are rare. There is also a variety of complex structures with frequent error-free sentences, though some errors do occur and there is some overuse of rather short sentence forms.