# IELTS™

# Sample Candidate Writing Responses and Examiner Comments

Both the Academic and General Training Writing Modules consist 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. These descriptors apply to both the Academic and General Training Modules.

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) partly or wholly plagiarised, b) not written as full, connected text (e.g. using bullet points in any part of the response, or note form, is not appropriate).

## Task 1

### Task Achievement

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

Task 1 Academic 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 a diagram, graph, table, chart, map or other visual input, not to speculative explanations that lie outside the given data.

### Coherence and Cohesion

This criterion is concerned with the overall organisation and logical development of the message: how the response organises and links information, ideas and language.

Coherence refers to the linking of ideas through logical sequencing, while cohesion refers to the varied and appropriate use of cohesive devices (e.g. logical connectors, conjunctions and pronouns) to assist in making clear the relationships between and within sentences.

### 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 within the candidate's writing at sentence level.

## Task 2

### Task Response

Both the Academic and General Training Writing Task 2 require the candidates to formulate and develop a position in relation to a given prompt in the form of a question or statement, using a minimum of 250 words. Ideas should be supported by evidence, and examples may be drawn from a candidates' own experience.

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.

**The examiners' guidelines for marking the Writing scripts are very detailed. There are many different ways a candidate may achieve a particular band score. The candidates' answers that follow should not be regarded as definitive examples of any particular band score.**

**Please refer to the publicly available IELTS Writing Key Criteria on our website.**

**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 6**

The key features which are selected are covered and clearly highlighted, but reporting is somewhat mechanical and data is provided to support only some of the descriptions. There is a relevant overview in the final paragraph, with a summary of the main changes. Information and ideas are generally arranged coherently, though there is some repetition [number of trips]. Cohesive devices are used effectively and there is a clear progression overall.
The range of vocabulary is sufficient to allow some flexibility, with some less common items. For a higher band, a wider range of vocabulary could be used, within the scope of the task. 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**

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The statistice show the number of tripe mad by children in one country over the past to years to travel to end from school using different modes of transport.
children walking (13 million) are the by far highset, 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 significant 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 priod there were 12,000,000 children walking in 1990, 11,000,000 children use care in 2010 and 5,000,000 children use bus.

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**Examiner comment**

**Band 4**

This response does generally try to address the requirements of the task but the key features are not adequately covered. Limited detail is provided, for example, there is no reference to the 'walking and bus' categories. 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 mostly inaccurate. The range of vocabulary is not minimally adequate for the task, it is basic and used repetitively. There is limited control over spelling, and errors cause confusion [tripe mad/trips made]. A limited range of sentence forms is used and although some structures are produced accurately, errors are frequent and this does impede meaning.

**Sample Academic Writing *Part 2***

**Candidate Response 1**

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WRITING TASK 2

I completly disagree with the written statment. 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 alimentation 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.

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**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. It is also useful to note, this response does not meet the minimum word count for Task 2 of 250 words, so there is room for further development. 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 is a lack of precision in word choice and there are some errors in spelling and word formation. There also appears to be some interference from the test taker's first language, e.g. '*alimentation*', 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 unhealthier 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 celebraties. 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**

This is a strong response. A clear position is presented at the outset and some ideas are explored to support it. An alternative position is also considered but rejected. Ideas are logically organised and there is a clear progression throughout the response. Cohesive devices are generally used flexibly, but there is some overuse of sequencers in paragraph 2 [Firstly | So | Also | Yet]. Paragraphing is generally effective but could perhaps be used more appropriately 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.