

TỔNG HỢP 50

BÀI MẪU IELTS WRITING TASK 2 - BAND 9.0

TỪ THẦY SIMON



ALAND Amy Nguyen
Mai Linh

Một tuyệt phẩm đến từ



- Tài liệu: **Tổng hợp 50 bài mẫu Writing task 2 – band 9.0 từ thầy Simon**
- Website: <https://ielts-simon.com/>
- Tổng hợp: **Ms Mai Linh + Ms Amy Nguyen | Aland English**
- From: **“Động 8IELTS” – Aland English**
- Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ielts.aland/>

MỤC LỤC

0. a little secret about my essay	5
1. foreign films	6
2. foreign tourists	7
3. independence.....	8
4. salary	9
5. animal testing	10
6. artists	11
7. unpaid work.....	12
8. music	13
9. video games.....	14
10. life expectancy	15
11. help	16
12. technology.....	17
13. hobbies.....	18
14. equality.....	19
15. gender and university.....	20
16. museums	21
17. study&work.....	22
18. minority languages	23
19. humans&environment	24
20. Happiness	25
21. wild animals.....	26
22. Road Safety	27
23. business responsibilities	28
24. difficult urban life.....	29
25. live alone.....	30
26. university subjects	31
27. ex-prisoner as tutor	32
28. traditional views	33

29. job satisfaction	34
30. happiness 2	35
31. born talent	36
32. born characteristics	37
33. sports professionals	38
34. change.....	39
35. traditional skills	40
36. gap year travel	41
37. student behaviour.....	42
38. paid work for kids	43
39. teach children	44
40. traffic and pollution problems	45
41. single-sex education	46
42. children learning foreign language	47
43. unpaid community service	48
44. sports facilities for public health.....	49
45. Punishment for kids	50
46. Countries become similar	51
47. economic progress.....	52

0. a little secret about my essay

It surprises some people when I tell them that they only need to write 13 sentences for writing task 2:

Introduction: 2 câu hỏi

First main body paragraph: 5 câu hỏi

Second main body paragraph: 5 câu hỏi

Conclusion: 1 câu hỏi

Please note: It is not a 'rule' that you must write 13 sentences. This is just my approach or method.

1. foreign films

Topic:

Many people prefer to watch foreign films rather than locally produced films. Why could this be? Should governments give more financial support to local film industries?

Sample:

It is true that foreign films are more popular in many countries than domestically produced films. There could be several reasons why this is the case, and I believe that governments should promote local film-making by subsidising the industry.

There are various reasons why many people find foreign films more enjoyable than the films produced in their own countries. Firstly, the established film industries in certain countries have huge budgets for action, special effects and to shoot scenes in spectacular locations. Hollywood blockbusters like 'Avatar' or the James Bond films are examples of such productions and the global appeal that they have. Another reason why these big-budget films are so successful is that they often star the most famous actors and actresses, and they are made by the most accomplished producers and directors. The poor quality, low-budget filmmaking in many countries suffers in comparison.

In my view, governments should support local film industries financially. In every country, there may be talented amateur film-makers who just need to be given the opportunity to prove themselves. To compete with big-budget productions from overseas, these people need money to pay for film crews, actors and a host of other costs related to producing high-quality films. If governments did help with these costs, they would see an increase in employment in the film industry, income from film sales, and perhaps even a rise in tourist numbers. New Zealand, for example, has seen an increase in tourism related to the 'Lord of the Rings' films, which were partly funded by government subsidies.

In conclusion, I believe that increased financial support could help to raise the quality of locally made films and allow them to compete with the foreign productions that currently dominate the market.

(295 words, band 9)

2. foreign tourists

Topic:

Foreign visitors should pay more than local visitors for cultural and historical attractions. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Sample:

It is sometimes argued that tourists from overseas should be charged more than local residents to visit important sites and monuments. I completely disagree with this idea.

The argument in favour of higher prices for foreign tourists would be that cultural or historical attractions often depend on state subsidies to keep them going, which means that the resident population already pays money to these sites through the tax system. However, I believe this to be a very shortsighted view. Foreign tourists contribute to the economy of the host country with the money they spend on a wide range of goods and services, including food, souvenirs, accommodation and travel. The governments and inhabitants of every country should be happy to subsidise important tourist sites and encourage people from the rest of the world to visit them.

If travellers realised that they would have to pay more to visit historical and cultural attractions in a particular nation, they would perhaps decide not to go to that country on holiday. To take the UK as an example, the tourism industry and many related jobs rely on visitors coming to the country to see places like Windsor Castle or Saint Paul's Cathedral. These two sites charge the same price regardless of nationality, and this helps to promote the nation's cultural heritage. If overseas tourists stopped coming due to higher prices, there would be a risk of insufficient funding for the maintenance of these important buildings.

In conclusion, I believe that every effort should be made to attract tourists from overseas, and it would be counterproductive to make them pay more than local residents.

(269 words, band 9)

3. independence

Topic:

Some people think that in the modern world we are more dependent on each other, while others think that people have become more independent. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Sample:

People have different views about whether we are more or less dependent on others nowadays. In my view, modern life forces us to be more independent than people were in the past.

There are two main reasons why it could be argued that we are more dependent on each other now. Firstly, life is more complex and difficult, especially because the cost of living has increased so dramatically. For example, young adults tend to rely on their parents for help when buying a house. Property prices are higher than ever, and without help it would be impossible for many people to pay a deposit and a mortgage. Secondly, people seem to be more ambitious nowadays, and they want a better quality of life for their families. This means that both parents usually need to work full-time, and they depend on support from grandparents and babysitters for child care.

However, I would agree with those who believe that people are more independent these days. In most countries, families are becoming smaller and more dispersed, which means that people cannot count on relatives as much as they used to. We also have more freedom to travel and live far away from our home towns. For example, many students choose to study abroad instead of going to their local university, and this experience makes them more independent as they learn to live alone. Another factor in this growing independence is technology, which allows us to work alone and from any part of the world.

In conclusion, while there are some reasons to believe that people now depend on each other more, my own view is that we are more independent than ever.

Note:

As usual, try to analyse this essay in terms of task response (does it fully answer the question?), organisation, 'band 7-9' vocabulary, and grammar.

4. salary

Topic:

When choosing a job, the salary is the most important consideration. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Sample:

Many people choose their jobs based on the size of the salary offered. Personally, I disagree with the idea that money is the key consideration when deciding on a career, because I believe that other factors are equally important.

On the one hand, I agree that money is necessary in order for people to meet their basic needs. For example, we all need money to pay for housing, food, bills, health care, and education. Most people consider it a priority to at least earn a salary that allows them to cover these needs and have a reasonable quality of life. If people chose their jobs based on enjoyment or other non-financial factors, they might find it difficult to support themselves. Artists and musicians, for instance, are known for choosing a career path that they love, but that does not always provide them with enough money to live comfortably and raise a family.

Nevertheless, I believe that other considerations are just as important as what we earn in our jobs. Firstly, personal relationships and the atmosphere in a workplace are extremely important when choosing a job. Having a good manager or friendly colleagues, for example, can make a huge difference to workers' levels of happiness and general quality of life. Secondly, many people's feelings of job satisfaction come from their professional achievements, the skills they learn, and the position they reach, rather than the money they earn. Finally, some people choose a career because they want to help others and contribute something positive to society.

In conclusion, while salaries certainly affect people's choice of profession, I do not believe that money outweighs all other motivators.

5. animal testing

Nowadays animal experiments are widely used to develop new medicines and to test the safety of other products. Some people argue that these experiments should be banned because it is morally wrong to cause animals to suffer, while others are in favour of them because of their benefits to humanity.

Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Sample:

It is true that medicines and other products are routinely tested on animals before they are cleared for human use. While I tend towards the viewpoint that animal testing is morally wrong, I would have to support a limited amount of animal experimentation for the development of medicines.

On the one hand, there are clear ethical arguments against animal experimentation. To use a common example of this practice, laboratory mice may be given an illness so that the effectiveness of a new drug can be measured. Opponents of such research argue that humans have no right to subject animals to this kind of trauma, and that the lives of all creatures should be respected. They believe that the benefits to humans do not justify the suffering caused, and that scientists should use alternative methods of research.

On the other hand, reliable alternatives to animal experimentation may not always be available. Supporters of the use of animals in medical research believe that a certain amount of suffering on the part of mice or rats can be justified if human lives are saved. They argue that opponents of such research might feel differently if a member of their own families needed a medical treatment that had been developed through the use of animal experimentation. Personally, I agree with the banning of animal testing for non-medical products, but I feel that it may be a necessary evil where new drugs and medical procedures are concerned.

In conclusion, it seems to me that it would be wrong to ban testing on animals for vital medical research until equally effective alternatives have been developed.

(270 words, band 9)

6. artists

Topic:

Some people think that governments should give financial support to creative artists such as painters and musicians. Others believe that creative artists should be funded by alternative sources. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Sample:

People have different views about the funding of creative artists. While some people disagree with the idea of government support for artists, I believe that money for art projects should come from both governments and other sources.

Some art projects definitely require help from the state. In the UK, there are many works of art in public spaces, such as streets or squares in city centres. In Liverpool, for example, there are several new statues and sculptures in the docks area of the city, which has been redeveloped recently. These artworks represent culture, heritage and history. They serve to educate people about the city, and act as landmarks or talking points for visitors and tourists. Governments and local councils should pay creative artists to produce this kind of art, because without their funding our cities would be much less interesting and attractive.

On the other hand, I can understand the arguments against government funding for art. The main reason for this view is that governments have more important concerns. For example, state budgets need to be spent on education, healthcare, infrastructure and security, among other areas. These public services are vital for a country to function properly, whereas the work of creative artists, even in public places, is a luxury. Another reason for this opinion is that artists do a job like any other professional, and they should therefore earn their own money by selling their work.

In conclusion, there are good reasons why artists should rely on alternative sources of financial support, but in my opinion government help is sometimes necessary.

7. unpaid work

Topic:

Some people think that all teenagers should be required to do unpaid work in their free time to help the local community. They believe this would benefit both the individual teenager and society as a whole.

Do you agree or disagree?

Sample:

Many young people work on a volunteer basis, and this can only be beneficial for both the individual and society as a whole. However, I do not agree that we should therefore force all teenagers to do unpaid work.

Most young people are already under enough pressure with their studies, without being given the added responsibility of working in their spare time. School is just as demanding as a full-time job, and teachers expect their students to do homework and exam revision on top of attending lessons every day. When young people do have some free time, we should encourage them to enjoy it with their friends or to spend it doing sports and other leisure activities. They have many years of work ahead of them when they finish their studies.

At the same time, I do not believe that society has anything to gain from obliging young people to do unpaid work. In fact, I would argue that it goes against the values of a free and fair society to force a group of people to do something against their will. Doing this can only lead to resentment amongst young people, who would feel that they were being used, and parents, who would not want to be told how to raise their children. Currently, nobody is forced to volunteer, and this is surely the best system.

In conclusion, teenagers may choose to work for free and help others, but in my opinion we should not make this compulsory.

(250 words, band 9)

8. music

Topic:

There are many different types of music in the world today. Why do we need music? Is the traditional music of a country more important than the international music that is heard everywhere nowadays?

Sample:

It is true that a rich variety of musical styles can be found around the world. Music is a vital part of all human cultures for a range of reasons, and I would argue that traditional music is more important than modern, international music.

Music is something that accompanies all of us throughout our lives. As children, we are taught songs by our parents and teachers as a means of learning language, or simply as a form of enjoyment. Children delight in singing with others, and it would appear that the act of singing in a group creates a connection between participants, regardless of their age. Later in life, people's musical preferences develop, and we come to see our favourite songs as part of our life stories. Music both expresses and arouses emotions in a way that words alone cannot. In short, it is difficult to imagine life without it.

In my opinion, traditional music should be valued over the international music that has become so popular. International pop music is often catchy and fun, but it is essentially a commercial product that is marketed and sold by business people. Traditional music, by contrast, expresses the culture, customs and history of a country. Traditional styles, such as ...(example)..., connect us to the past and form part of our cultural identity. It would be a real pity if pop music became so predominant that these national styles disappeared.

In conclusion, music is a necessary part of human existence, and I believe that traditional music should be given more importance than international music.

(261 words, band 9)

9. video games

Topic:

Some people regard video games as harmless fun, or even as a useful educational tool. Others, however, believe that video games are having an adverse effect on the people who play them. In your opinion, do the drawbacks of video games outweigh the benefits?

Sample:

Many people, and children in particular, enjoy playing computer games. While I accept that these games can sometimes have a positive effect on the user, I believe that they are more likely to have a harmful impact.

On the one hand, video games can be both entertaining and educational. Users, or gamers, are transported into virtual worlds which are often more exciting and engaging than real-life pastimes. From an educational perspective, these games encourage imagination and creativity, as well as concentration, logical thinking and problem solving, all of which are useful skills outside the gaming context. Furthermore, it has been shown that computer simulation games can improve users' motor skills and help to prepare them for real-world tasks, such as flying a plane.

However, I would argue that these benefits are outweighed by the drawbacks. Gaming can be highly addictive because users are constantly given scores, new targets and frequent rewards to keep them playing. Many children now spend hours each day trying to progress through the levels of a game or to get a higher score than their friends. This type of addiction can have effects ranging from lack of sleep to problems at school, when homework is sacrificed for a few more hours on the computer or console. The rise in obesity in recent years has also been linked in part to the sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercise that often accompany gaming addiction.

In conclusion, it seems to me that the potential dangers of video games are more significant than the possible benefits.

(258 words, band 9)

10. life expectancy

Topic:

In the developed world, average life expectancy is increasing. What problems will this cause for individuals and society? Suggest some measures that could be taken to reduce the impact of ageing populations.

Sample:

It is true that people in industrialised nations can expect to live longer than ever before. Although there will undoubtedly be some negative consequences of this trend, societies can take steps to mitigate these potential problems.

As people live longer and the populations of developed countries grow older, several related problems can be anticipated. The main issue is that there will obviously be more people of retirement age who will be eligible to receive a pension. The proportion of younger, working adults will be smaller, and governments will therefore receive less money in taxes in relation to the size of the population. In other words, an ageing population will mean a greater tax burden for working adults. Further pressures will include a rise in the demand for healthcare, and the fact young adults will increasingly have to look after their elderly relatives.

There are several actions that governments could take to solve the problems described above. Firstly, a simple solution would be to increase the retirement age for working adults, perhaps from 65 to 70. Nowadays, people of this age tend to be healthy enough to continue a productive working life. A second measure would be for governments to encourage immigration in order to increase the number of working adults who pay taxes. Finally, money from national budgets will need to be taken from other areas and spent on vital healthcare, accommodation and transport facilities for the rising numbers of older citizens.

In conclusion, various measures can be taken to tackle the problems that are certain to arise as the populations of countries grow older.

(265 words, band 9)

11. help

Topic

We cannot help everyone in the world that needs help, so we should only be concerned with our own communities and countries.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Sample:

Some people believe that we should not help people in other countries as long as there are problems in our own society. I disagree with this view because I believe that we should try to help as many people as possible.

On the one hand, I accept that it is important to help our neighbours and fellow citizens. In most communities there are people who are impoverished or disadvantaged in some way. It is possible to find homeless people, for example, in even the wealthiest of cities, and for those who are concerned about this problem, there are usually opportunities to volunteer time or give money to support these people. In the UK, people can help in a variety of ways, from donating clothing to serving free food in a soup kitchen. As the problems are on our doorstep, and there are obvious ways to help, I can understand why some people feel that we should prioritise local charity.

At the same time, I believe that we have an obligation to help those who live beyond our national borders. In some countries the problems that people face are much more serious than those in our own communities, and it is often even easier to help. For example, when children are dying from curable diseases in African countries, governments and individuals in richer countries can save lives simply by paying for vaccines that already exist. A small donation to an international charity might have a much greater impact than helping in our local area.

In conclusion, it is true that we cannot help everyone, but in my opinion national boundaries should not stop us from helping those who are in need.

(280 words, band 9)

12. technology

Nowadays the way many people interact with each other has changed because of technology. In what ways has technology affected the types of relationships that people make? Has this been a positive or negative development?

Sample:

It is true that new technologies have had an influence on communication between people. Technology has affected relationships in various ways, and in my opinion there are both positive and negative effects.

Technology has had an impact on relationships in business, education and social life. Firstly, telephones and the Internet allow business people in different countries to interact without ever meeting each other. Secondly, services like Skype create new possibilities for relationships between students and teachers. For example, a student can now take video lessons with a teacher in a different city or country. Finally, many people use social networks, like Facebook, to make new friends and find people who share common interests, and they interact through their computers rather than face to face.

On the one hand, these developments can be extremely positive. Cooperation between people in different countries was much more difficult when communication was limited to written letters or telegrams. Nowadays, interactions by email, phone or video are almost as good as face-to-face meetings, and many of us benefit from these interactions, either in work or social contexts. On the other hand, the availability of new communication technologies can also have the result of isolating people and discouraging real interaction. For example, many young people choose to make friends online rather than mixing with their peers in the real world, and these 'virtual' relationships are a poor substitute for real friendships.

In conclusion, technology has certainly revolutionised communication between people, but not all of the outcomes of this revolution have been positive.

13. hobbies

Some people believe that hobbies need to be difficult to be enjoyable.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Sample:

Some hobbies are relatively easy, while others present more of a challenge. Personally, I believe that both types of hobby can be fun, and I therefore disagree with the statement that hobbies need to be difficult in order to be enjoyable.

On the one hand, many people enjoy easy hobbies. One example of an activity that is easy for most people is swimming. This hobby requires very little equipment, it is simple to learn, and it is inexpensive. I remember learning to swim at my local swimming pool when I was a child, and it never felt like a demanding or challenging experience. Another hobby that I find easy and fun is photography. In my opinion, anyone can take interesting pictures without knowing too much about the technicalities of operating a camera. Despite being straightforward, taking photos is a satisfying activity.

On the other hand, difficult hobbies can sometimes be more exciting. If an activity is more challenging, we might feel a greater sense of satisfaction when we manage to do it successfully. For example, film editing is a hobby that requires a high level of knowledge and expertise. In my case, it took me around two years before I became competent at this activity, but now I enjoy it much more than I did when I started. I believe that many hobbies give us more pleasure when we reach a higher level of performance because the results are better and the feeling of achievement is greater.

In conclusion, simple hobbies can be fun and relaxing, but difficult hobbies can be equally pleasurable for different reasons.

14. equality

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the relationship between equality and personal achievement. Some people believe that individuals can achieve more in egalitarian societies. Others believe that high levels of personal achievement are possible only if individuals are free to succeed or fail according to their individual merits.

What is your view of the relationship between equality and personal success?

Sample:

In my opinion, an egalitarian society is one in which everyone has the same rights and the same opportunities. I completely agree that people can achieve more in this kind of society.

Education is an important factor with regard to personal success in life. I believe that all children should have access to free schooling, and higher education should be either free or affordable for all those who chose to pursue a university degree. In a society without free schooling or affordable higher education, only children and young adults from wealthier families would have access to the best learning opportunities, and they would therefore be better prepared for the job market. This kind of inequality would ensure the success of some but harm the prospects of others.

I would argue that equal rights and opportunities are not in conflict with people's freedom to succeed or fail. In other words, equality does not mean that people lose their motivation to succeed, or that they are not allowed to fail. On the contrary, I believe that most people would feel more motivated to work hard and reach their potential if they thought that they lived in a fair society. Those who did not make the same effort would know that they had wasted their opportunity. Inequality, on the other hand, would be more likely to demotivate people because they would know that the odds of success were stacked in favour of those from privileged backgrounds.

In conclusion, it seems to me that there is a positive relationship between equality and personal success.

(260 words)

15. gender and university

Universities should accept equal numbers of male and female students in every subject. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Sample:

In my opinion, men and women should have the same educational opportunities. However, I do not agree with the idea of accepting equal proportions of each gender in every university subject.

Having the same number of men and women on all degree courses is simply unrealistic. Student numbers on any course depend on the applications that the institution receives. If a university decided to fill courses with equal numbers of males and females, it would need enough applicants of each gender. In reality, many courses are more popular with one gender than the other, and it would not be practical to aim for equal proportions. For example, nursing courses tend to attract more female applicants, and it would be difficult to fill these courses if fifty per cent of the places needed to go to males.

Apart from the practical concerns expressed above, I also believe that it would be unfair to base admission to university courses on gender. Universities should continue to select the best candidates for each course according to their qualifications. In this way, both men and women have the same opportunities, and applicants know that they will be successful if they work hard to achieve good grades at school. If a female student is the best candidate for a place on a course, it is surely wrong to reject her in favour of a male student with lower grades or fewer qualifications.

In conclusion, the selection of university students should be based on merit, and it would be both impractical and unfair to change to a selection procedure based on gender.

(265 words, band 9)

16. museums

Some people think that museums should be enjoyable places to entertain people, while others believe that the purpose of museums is to educate.

Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Sample:

People have different views about the role and function of museums. In my opinion, museums can and should be both entertaining and educational.

On the one hand, it can be argued that the main role of a museum is to entertain. Museums are tourist attractions, and their aim is to exhibit a collection of interesting objects that many people will want to see. The average visitor may become bored if he or she has to read or listen to too much educational content, so museums often put more of an emphasis on enjoyment rather than learning. This type of museum is designed to be visually spectacular, and may have interactive activities or even games as part of its exhibitions.

On the other hand, some people argue that museums should focus on education. The aim of any exhibition should be to teach visitors something that they did not previously know. Usually this means that the history behind the museum's exhibits needs to be explained, and this can be done in various ways. Some museums employ professional guides to talk to their visitors, while other museums offer headsets so that visitors can listen to detailed commentary about the exhibition. In this way, museums can play an important role in teaching people about history, culture, science and many other aspects of life.

In conclusion, it seems to me that a good museum should be able to offer an interesting, enjoyable and educational experience so that people can have fun and learn something at the same time.

(253 words, band 9)

17. study&work

Some people believe that studying at university or college is the best route to a successful career, while others believe that it is better to get a job straight after school.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Sample:

When they finish school, teenagers face the dilemma of whether to get a job or continue their education. While there are some benefits to getting a job straight after school, I would argue that it is better to go to college or university.

The option to start work straight after school is attractive for several reasons. Many young people want to start earning money as soon as possible. In this way, they can become independent, and they will be able to afford their own house or start a family. In terms of their career, young people who decide to find work, rather than continue their studies, may progress more quickly. They will have the chance to gain real experience and learn practical skills related to their chosen profession. This may lead to promotions and a successful career.

On the other hand, I believe that it is more beneficial for students to continue their studies. Firstly, academic qualifications are required in many professions. For example, it is impossible to become a doctor, teacher or lawyer without having the relevant degree. As a result, university graduates have access to more and better job opportunities, and they tend to earn higher salaries than those with fewer qualifications. Secondly, the job market is becoming increasingly competitive, and sometimes there are hundreds of applicants for one position in a company. Young people who do not have qualifications from a university or college will not be able to compete.

For the reasons mentioned above, it seems to me that students are more likely to be successful in their careers if they continue their studies beyond school level.

(271 words, band 9)

18. minority languages

Several languages are in danger of extinction because they are spoken by very small numbers of people. Some people say that governments should spend public money on saving these languages, while others believe that would be a waste of money.

Discuss both these views and give your opinion.

Sample:

It is true that some minority languages may disappear in the near future. Although it can be argued that governments could save money by allowing this to happen, I believe that these languages should be protected and preserved.

There are several reasons why saving minority languages could be seen as a waste of money. Firstly, if a language is only spoken by a small number of people, expensive education programmes will be needed to make sure that more people learn it, and the state will have to pay for facilities, teachers and marketing. This money might be better spent on other public services. Secondly, it would be much cheaper and more efficient for countries to have just one language. Governments could cut all kinds of costs related to communicating with each minority group.

Despite the above arguments, I believe that governments should try to preserve languages that are less widely spoken. A language is much more than simply a means of communication; it has a vital connection with the cultural identity of the people who speak it. If a language disappears, a whole way of life will disappear with it, and we will lose the rich cultural diversity that makes societies more interesting. By spending money to protect minority languages, governments can also preserve traditions, customs and behaviours that are part of a country's history.

In conclusion, it may save money in the short term if we allow minority languages to disappear, but in the long term this would have an extremely negative impact on our cultural heritage.

(258 words)

19. humans&environment

Explain some of the ways in which humans are damaging the environment. What can governments do to address these problems? What can individual people do?

Sample:

Humans are responsible for a variety of environmental problems, but we can also take steps to reduce the damage that we are causing to the planet. This essay will discuss environmental problems and the measures that governments and individuals can take to address these problems.

Two of the biggest threats to the environment are air pollution and waste. Gas emissions from factories and exhaust fumes from vehicles lead to global warming, which may have a devastating effect on the planet in the future. As the human population increases, we are also producing ever greater quantities of waste, which contaminates the earth and pollutes rivers and oceans.

Governments could certainly make more effort to reduce air pollution. They could introduce laws to limit emissions from factories or to force companies to use renewable energy from solar, wind or water power. They could also impose 'green taxes' on drivers and airline companies. In this way, people would be encouraged to use public transport and to take fewer flights abroad, therefore reducing emissions.

Individuals should also take responsibility for the impact they have on the environment. They can take public transport rather than driving, choose products with less packaging, and recycle as much as possible. Most supermarkets now provide reusable bags for shoppers as well as 'banks' for recycling glass, plastic and paper in their car parks. By reusing and recycling, we can help to reduce waste.

In conclusion, both national governments and individuals must play their part in looking after the environment.

20. Happiness

Happiness is considered very important in life.

Why is it difficult to define?

What factors are important in achieving happiness?

Sample:

It is no doubt true that the majority of people would like to be happy in their lives. While the personal nature of happiness makes it difficult to describe, there do seem to be some common needs that we all share with regard to experiencing or achieving happiness.

Happiness is difficult to define because it means something different to each individual person. Nobody can fully understand or experience another person's feelings, and we all have our own particular passions from which we take pleasure. Some people, for example, derive a sense of satisfaction from earning money or achieving success, whereas for others, health and family are much more important. At the same time, a range of other feelings, from excitement to peacefulness, may be associated with the idea of happiness, and the same person may therefore feel happy in a variety of different ways.

Although it seems almost impossible to give a precise definition of happiness, most people would agree that there are some basic preconditions to achieving it. Firstly, it is hard for a person to be happy if he or she does not have a safe place to live and enough food to eat. Our basic survival needs must surely be met before we can lead a pleasant life. Secondly, the greatest joy in life is usually found in shared experiences with family and friends, and it is rare to find a person who is content to live in complete isolation. Other key factors could be individual freedom and a sense of purpose in life.

In conclusion, happiness is difficult to define because it is particular to each individual, but I believe that our basic needs for shelter, food and company need to be fulfilled before we can experience it.

(292 words, band 9)

21. wild animals

Wild animals have no place in the 21st century, so protecting them is a waste of resources. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Sample:

Some people argue that it is pointless to spend money on the protection of wild animals because we humans have no need for them. I completely disagree with this point of view.

In my opinion, it is absurd to argue that wild animals have no place in the 21st century. I do not believe that planet Earth exists only for the benefit of humans, and there is nothing special about this particular century that means that we suddenly have the right to allow or encourage the extinction of any species. Furthermore, there is no compelling reason why we should let animals die out. We do not need to exploit or destroy every last square metre of land in order to feed or accommodate the world's population. There is plenty of room for us to exist side by side with wild animals, and this should be our aim.

I also disagree with the idea that protecting animals is a waste of resources. It is usually the protection of natural habitats that ensures the survival of wild animals, and most scientists agree that these habitats are also crucial for human survival. For example, rainforests produce oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide and stabilise the Earth's climate. If we destroyed these areas, the costs of managing the resulting changes to our planet would far outweigh the costs of conservation. By protecting wild animals and their habitats, we maintain the natural balance of all life on Earth.

In conclusion, we have no right to decide whether or not wild animals should exist, and I believe that we should do everything we can to protect them.

(269 words, band 9)

22. Road Safety

Some people think that strict punishments for driving offences are the key to reducing traffic accidents. Others, however, believe that other measures would be more effective in improving road safety. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Sample:

People have differing views with regard to the question of how to make our roads safer. In my view, both punishments and a range of other measures can be used together to promote better driving habits.

On the one hand, strict punishments can certainly help to encourage people to drive more safely. Penalties for dangerous drivers can act as a deterrent, meaning that people avoid repeating the same offence. There are various types of driving penalty, such as small fines, licence suspension, driver awareness courses, and even prison sentences. The aim of these punishments is to show dangerous drivers that their actions have negative consequences. As a result, we would hope that drivers become more disciplined and alert, and that they follow the rules more carefully.

On the other hand, I believe that safe driving can be promoted in several different ways that do not punish drivers. Firstly, it is vitally important to educate people properly before they start to drive, and this could be done in schools or even as part of an extended or more difficult driving test. Secondly, more attention could be paid to safe road design. For example, signs can be used to warn people, speed bumps and road bends can be added to calm traffic, and speed cameras can help to deter people from driving too quickly. Finally, governments or local councils could reduce road accidents by investing in better public transport, which would mean that fewer people would need to travel by car.

In conclusion, while punishments can help to prevent bad driving, I believe that other road safety measures should also be introduced.

(269 words)

23. business responsibilities

As well as making money, businesses also have social responsibilities. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Sample:

Businesses have always sought to make a profit, but it is becoming increasingly common to hear people talk about the social obligations that companies have. I completely agree with the idea that businesses should do more for society than simply make money.

On the one hand, I accept that businesses must make money in order to survive in a competitive world. It seems logical that the priority of any company should be to cover its running costs, such as employees' wages and payments for buildings and utilities. On top of these costs, companies also need to invest in improvements and innovations if they wish to remain successful. If a company is unable to pay its bills or meet the changing needs of customers, any concerns about social responsibilities become irrelevant. In other words, a company can only make a positive contribution to society if it is in good financial health.

On the other hand, companies should not be run with the sole aim of maximising profit; they have a wider role to play in society. One social obligation that owners and managers have is to treat their employees well, rather than exploiting them. For example, they could pay a "living wage" to ensure that workers have a good quality of life. I also like the idea that businesses could use a proportion of their profits to support local charities, environmental projects or education initiatives. Finally, instead of trying to minimise their tax payments by using accounting loopholes, I believe that company bosses should be happy to contribute to society through the tax system.

In conclusion, I believe that companies should place as much importance on their social responsibilities as they do on their financial objectives.

(285 words, band 9)

24. difficult urban life

More and more people are migrating to cities in search of a better life, but city life can be extremely difficult. Explain some of the difficulties of living in a city. How can governments make urban life better for everyone?

Sample:

Cities are often seen as places of opportunity, but there are also some major drawbacks of living in a large metropolis. In my opinion, governments could do much more to improve city life for the average inhabitant.

The main problem for anyone who hopes to migrate to a large city is that the cost of living is likely to be much higher than it is in a small town or village. Inhabitants of cities have to pay higher prices for housing, transport, and even food. Another issue is that urban areas tend to suffer from social problems such as high crime and poverty rates in comparison with rural areas. Furthermore, the air quality in cities is often poor, due to pollution from traffic, and the streets and public transport systems are usually overcrowded. As a result, city life can be unhealthy and stressful.

However, there are various steps that governments could take to tackle these problems. Firstly, they could invest money in the building of affordable or social housing to reduce the cost of living. Secondly, politicians have the power to ban vehicles from city centres and promote the use of cleaner public transport, which would help to reduce both air pollution and traffic congestion. In London, for example, the introduction of a congestion charge for drivers has helped to curb the traffic problem. A third option would be to develop provincial towns and rural areas, by moving industry and jobs to those regions, in order to reduce the pressure on major cities.

In conclusion, governments could certainly implement a range of measures to enhance the quality of life for all city residents.

(273 words, band 9)

25. live alone

In some countries, many more people are choosing to live alone nowadays than in the past. Do you think this is a positive or negative development?

Sample:

In recent years it has become far more normal for people to live alone, particularly in large cities in the developed world. In my opinion, this trend could have both positive and negative consequences in equal measure.

The rise in one-person households can be seen as positive for both personal and broader economic reasons. On an individual level, people who choose to live alone may become more independent and self-reliant than those who live with family members. A young adult who lives alone, for example, will need to learn to cook, clean, pay bills and manage his or her budget, all of which are valuable life skills; an increase in the number of such individuals can certainly be seen as a positive development. From an economic perspective, the trend towards living alone will result in greater demand for housing. This is likely to benefit the construction industry, estate agents and a whole host of other companies that rely on homeowners to buy their products or services.

However, the personal and economic arguments given above can be considered from the opposite angle. Firstly, rather than the positive feeling of increased independence, people who live alone may experience feelings of loneliness, isolation and worry. They miss out on the emotional support and daily conversation that family or flatmates can provide, and they must bear the weight of all household bills and responsibilities; in this sense, perhaps the trend towards living alone is a negative one. Secondly, from the financial point of view, a rise in demand for housing is likely to push up property prices and rents. While this may benefit some businesses, the general population, including those who live alone, will be faced with rising living costs.

In conclusion, the increase in one-person households will have both beneficial and detrimental effects on individuals and on the economy.

(band 9)



26. university subjects

Some people think that all university students should study whatever they like. Others believe that they should only be allowed to study subjects that will be useful in the future, such as those related to science and technology.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

People have different views about how much choice students should have with regard to what they can study at university. While some argue that it would be better for students to be forced into certain key subject areas, I believe that everyone should be able to study the course of their choice.

There are various reasons why people believe that universities should only offer subjects that will be useful in the future. They may assert that university courses like medicine, engineering and information technology are more likely to be beneficial than certain art degrees. From a personal perspective, it can be argued that these courses provide more job opportunities, career progression, better salaries, and therefore an improved quality of life for students who take them. On the societal level, by forcing people to choose particular university subjects, governments can ensure that any knowledge and skill gaps in the economy are covered. Finally, a focus on technology in higher education could lead to new inventions, economic growth, and greater future prosperity.

In spite of these arguments, I believe that university students should be free to choose their preferred areas of study. In my opinion, society will benefit more if our students are passionate about what they are learning. Besides, nobody can really predict which areas of knowledge will be most useful to society in the future, and it may be that employers begin to value creative thinking skills above practical or technical skills. If this were the case, perhaps we would need more students of art, history and philosophy than of science or technology.

In conclusion, although it might seem sensible for universities to focus only on the most useful subjects, I personally prefer the current system in which people have the right to study whatever they like.

(297 words, band 9)

27. ex-prisoner as tutor

Some people who have been in prison become good citizens later, and it is often argued that these are the best people to talk to teenagers about the dangers of committing a crime.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

It is true that ex-prisoners can become normal, productive members of society. I completely agree with the idea that allowing such people to speak to teenagers about their experiences is the best way to discourage them from breaking the law.

In my opinion, teenagers are more likely to accept advice from someone who can speak from experience. Reformed offenders can tell young people about how they became involved in crime, the dangers of a criminal lifestyle, and what life in prison is really like. They can also dispel any ideas that teenagers may have about criminals leading glamorous lives. While adolescents are often indifferent to the guidance given by older people, I imagine that most of them would be extremely keen to hear the stories of an ex-offender. The vivid and perhaps shocking nature of these stories is likely to have a powerful impact.

The alternatives to using reformed criminals to educate teenagers about crime would be much less effective. One option would be for police officers to visit schools and talk to young people. This could be useful in terms of informing teens about what happens to lawbreakers when they are caught, but young people are often reluctant to take advice from figures of authority. A second option would be for school teachers to speak to their students about crime, but I doubt that students would see teachers as credible sources of information about this topic. Finally, educational films might be informative, but there would be no opportunity for young people to interact and ask questions.

In conclusion, I fully support the view that people who have turned their lives around after serving a prison sentence could help to deter teenagers from committing crimes.

(287 words, band 9)

28. traditional views

The older generations tend to have very traditional ideas about how people should live, think and behave. However, some people believe that these ideas are not helpful in preparing younger generations for modern life.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view?

It is true that many older people believe in traditional values that often seem incompatible with the needs of younger people. While I agree that some traditional ideas are outdated, I believe that others are still useful and should not be forgotten.

On the one hand, many of the ideas that elderly people have about life are becoming less relevant for younger people. In the past, for example, people were advised to learn a profession and find a secure job for life, but today's workers expect much more variety and diversity from their careers. At the same time, the 'rules' around relationships are being eroded as young adults make their own choices about who and when to marry. But perhaps the greatest disparity between the generations can be seen in their attitudes towards gender roles. The traditional roles of men and women, as breadwinners and housewives, are no longer accepted as necessary or appropriate by most younger people.

On the other hand, some traditional views and values are certainly applicable to the modern world. For example, older generations attach great importance to working hard, doing one's best, and taking pride in one's work, and these behaviours can surely benefit young people as they enter today's competitive job market. Other characteristics that are perhaps seen as traditional are politeness and good manners. In our globalised world, young adults can expect to come into contact with people from a huge variety of backgrounds, and it is more important than ever to treat others with respect. Finally, I believe that young people would lead happier lives if they had a more 'old-fashioned' sense of community and neighbourliness.

In conclusion, although the views of older people may sometimes seem unhelpful in today's world, we should not dismiss all traditional ideas as irrelevant.

29. job satisfaction

As most people spend a major part of their adult life at work, job satisfaction is an important element of individual wellbeing.

What factors contribute to job satisfaction?

How realistic is the expectation of job satisfaction for all workers?

Nowadays many adults have full-time jobs and the proportion of their lives spent doing such jobs is very high. So feelings about one's job must reflect how an individual feels about his or her life as a whole, and because of this, job satisfaction is indeed very important for the wellbeing of that person.

Employees get job satisfaction in a number of ways. Firstly, a person needs to feel that they are doing valued and valuable work, so positive feedback from superior is very important in his respect. A sense of fulfillment is also encouraged if a worker feels the job is worth doing because it contributes to the society or the economy as a whole. Secondly, when someone feels they are improving or developing their skills through training opportunities, for example, then there is a sense of progress and purpose that rewards a worker. The sense of belonging to a team or a working community also contributes to job satisfaction because colleagues help each other to enjoy their working lives. Satisfaction is also increased by a sense of responsibility for the loyal to a team.

Of course not everyone enjoys their work. Hard economic realities mean that many people have little choice in the kind of job they can get. In some cases an employee is working in a job that suits neither their skills nor their personality. Some jobs are repetitive and boring, and labor relations may be poor and lead to resentment and insecurity rather than to job satisfaction.

However, even though it is unlikely that all workers do feel happy in their work, I think it is not unrealistic to promote more job satisfaction in any job. If the factors identified above implemented, then any job can be improved and more workers can feel greater degrees of job satisfaction.

30. happiness 2

Happiness is considered very important in life.

Why is it difficult to define?

What factors are important in achieving happiness?

Happiness is very difficult to define, because it means so many different things to different people. While some people link happiness to wealth and material success, others think it lies in emotions and loving personal relationships. Yet others think that spiritual paths, rather than either the material world or relationships with people, are the only way to true happiness.

Because people interpret happiness for themselves in so many different ways, it is difficult to give any definition that is true for everyone. However, if there are different kinds of happiness for different individuals that the first step in achieving it would be to have a degree of self-knowledge. A person needs to know who he or she is before being able to know what it is that makes him or her happy.

Of course, factors such as loving relationships, good health, the skills to earn a living and a peaceful environment all contribute to our happiness too. But this does not mean that people without these conditions cannot be happy.

Overall, I think an ability to keep clear perspectives in life is a more essential factor in achieving happiness. By that I mean an ability to have a clear sense of what is important in our lives (the welfare of our families, the quality of our relationships, making other people happy, etc.) and what is not (a problem at work, getting annoyed about trivial things, etc.).

Like self-awareness, this is also very difficult to achieve, but I think these are the two factors that may be most important for achieving happiness.

31. born talent

It's generally believed that some people are born with certain talents, for instance for sport or music, and others are not. However, it is sometimes claimed that any child can be taught to become a good sports person or musician.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

The relative importance of natural talent and training is a frequent topic of discussion when people try to explain different levels of ability in, for example, sport, art or music.

Obviously, education systems are based on the belief that all children can effectively be taught to acquire different skills, including those associated with sport, art or music. So from our own school experience, we can find plenty of evidence to support the view that a child can acquire these skills with continued teaching and guided practice.

However, some people believe that innate talent is what differentiates a person who has been trained to play a sport or an instrument, from those who become good players. In other words, there is more to the skill than to a learned technique, and this extra talent cannot be taught, no matter how good the teacher or how frequent a child practices.

I personally think that some people do have talents that are probably inherited via their genes. Such talents can give individuals a facility for certain skills that allow them to excel, while more hard-working students never manage to reach a comparable level. But, as with all questions of nature versus nurture, they are not mutually exclusive. Good musicians or artists and exceptional sports stars have probably succeed because of both good training and natural talent. With the natural talent, continuous training would be neither attractive nor productive, and without the training, the child would not learn how to exploit and develop their talent.

In conclusion, I agree that any child can be taught particular skills, but to be really good in areas such as music, art or sport, then some natural talent is required.

32. born characteristics

Research indicates that the characteristics we are born with have much more influence on your personality and development than any experiences we may have in our life.

Which do you consider to be the major influence?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Today the way we consider human psychology and mental development is heavily influenced by the genetic sciences. We now understand the importance of inherited characteristics more than ever before. Yet we are still unable to decide whether an individual's personality and development are more influenced by genetic factors (nature) or by the environment (nurture).

Research, relating to identical twins, has highlighted how significant inherited characteristics can be for an individual's life. But whether these characteristics are able to develop within the personality of an individual surely depends on whether the circumstances allow such a development. It seems that the experiences we have in life are so unpredictable and so powerful, that they can boost or over-ride other influences, and there seems to be plenty of research findings to confirm this.

My own view is that there is no one major influence in a person's life. Instead, the traits we inherit from our parents and the situations and experiences that we encounter in life are constantly interacting. It is the interacting of the two that shapes a person's personality and dictates how that personality develops. If this were not true, then we would be able to predict the behaviour and character of a person from the moment they were born.

In conclusion, I do not think that either nature or nurture is the major influence on a person, but that both have powerful effects. How these factors interact is still unknown today and they remain largely unpredictable in a person's life.

33.sports professionals

Successful sports professionals can earn a great deal more money than people in other important professions. Some people think this is fully justified while others think it is unfair.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

As a result of constant media attention, sports professionals in my country have become stars and celebrities, and those at the top are paid huge salaries. Just like movie stars, they live extravagant lifestyles with huge houses and cars.

Many people find their rewards unfair, especially when comparing these super salaries with those of top surgeons or research scientists, or even leading politicians who have the responsibility of governing the country. However, sports salaries are not determined by considering the contribution to society a person makes, or the level of responsibility he or she holds. Instead, they reflect the public popularity of sport in general and the level of public support that successful stars can generate. So the notion of 'fairness' is not the issue.

Those who feel that sports stars are justified might argue that the number of professionals with real talent are very few, and the money is a recognition of the skills and dedication a person needs to be successful. Competition is constant and a player is tested every time they perform in their relatively short career. The pressure from the media is intense and there is little privacy out of the spotlight. So all of these factors may justify the huge earnings.

Personally, I think that the amount of money such sports stars is more justified than the huge earnings of movie stars, but at the same time, it indicates that our society places more value on sport than on more essential professionals and achievements.

34. change

Some people prefer to spend their lives doing the same things and avoiding change. Others, however, think that change is always a good thing.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Over the last half century the pace of change in the life of human beings has increased beyond our wildest expectations. This has been driven by technological and scientific breakthroughs that are changing the whole way we view the world on almost daily basis. This means that change is not always a personal option, but an inescapable fact of life, and we need to constantly adapt to keep pace to it.

Those people who believe they have achieved some security by doing the same, familiar things are living in denial. Even when people believe they are resisting change themselves, they cannot stop the world around them from changing. Sooner or later they will find that the familiar jobs no longer exist, or that the 'safe' patterns of behavior are no longer appropriate.

However, reaching the conclusion that change is inevitable is not the same as assuming that change is always for the better. Unfortunately, it is not always the case that new things are prompted because they have good impacts for the majority of people. A lot of innovations are made with the aim of making money for a few. This is because it is the rich and powerful people in our society who are able to impose changes (such as in working conditions or property developments) that are in their interests.

In conclusion, I would say that change can be stimulating and energizing for individuals when they pursue it themselves, but that all change, including which is imposed on people, does not necessarily have good outcomes.

35. traditional skills

When a country develops its technology, the traditional skills and ways of life die out. It is pointless to try and keep them alive.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Overall, I disagree with the opinion expressed. I would like to begin by pointing out that 'traditional skills and ways of life' are not automatically of one country, but of a culture or community.

In many ways, the history of civilization is the history of technology: from the discovery of fire to the invention of the wheel to the development of the Internet, we have been moving on from previous ways of doing things. Some technologies, such as weapons of mass destruction, are of negative impact. Others, such as medical advances, positively help people to live better or longer, and so very much help traditional ways of life. Surely, few people would seek to preserve such traditions as living in caves!

Interestingly, technology can positively contribute to the keeping alive of traditional skills and ways of life. For example, the populations of some islands are too small to have normal schools. Rather than breaking up families by sending children to the mainland, education authorities have been able to use the Internet to deliver schooling online. In addition, the Internet, and modern refrigeration techniques, are being used to keep alive the traditional skills of producing salmon; it can now be ordered from, and delivered to, anywhere in the world.

In conclusion, without suggesting that all technology is necessarily good, I think it is by no means 'pointless', in any way, to try to keep traditions alive with technology. We should not ignore technology, because it can be our friend and support our way of life.

36. gap year travel

In some countries young people are encouraged to work or travel for a year between finishing high school and starting university studies.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages for young people who decide to do this.

It is quite common these days for young people in many countries to have a break from studying after graduating from high school. The trend is not restricted to rich students who have the money to travel, but is also evident among poorer students who choose to work and become economically independent for a period of time.

The reasons for this trend may involve the recognition that a young adult who passes directly from school to university is rather restricted in terms of general knowledge and experience of the world. By contrast, those who have spent some time earning a living or travelling to other places, have a broader view of life and better personal resources to draw on. They tend to be more independent, which is a very important factor in academic study and research, as well as giving them an advantage in terms of coping with the challenges of student life.

However, there are certainly dangers in taking time off at the important age. Young adults may end up never returning to their studies or finding it difficult to readapt to an academic environment. They may think that it is better to continue in a particular job, or to do something completely different from a university course. But overall, I think this is less likely today, when academic qualifications are essential for getting a reasonable career.

My view is that young people should be encouraged to broaden their horizons. That is the best way for them to get a clear perspective of what they are hoping to do with their lives and why. Students with such a perspective are usually the most effective and motivated ones and taking a year off may be the best way to gain this.

37. student behaviour

In many countries schools have severe problems with student behaviour.

What do you think are the causes of this?

What solutions can you suggest?

Poor student behaviour seems to be an increasingly widespread problem and I think that modern lifestyles are probably responsible for this.

In many countries, the birth rate is decreasing so that families are smaller with fewer children. These children are often spoilt, not in terms of love and attention because working parents do not have the time for this, but in more material ways. They are allowed to have whatever they want, regardless of price, and to behave as they please. This means that the children grow up without consideration for others and without any understanding of where their standard of living comes from.

When they get to school age they have not learnt any self control or discipline. They have less respect for their teachers and refuse to obey school rules in the way that their parents did.

Teachers continually complain about this problem and measures should be taken to combat the situation. But I think the solution to the problem lies with the families, who need to be more aware of the future consequences of spoiling their children. If they could raise them to be considerate of others and to be social, responsible individuals, the whole community would benefit.

Perhaps parenting classes are needed to help them to do this, and high quality nursery schools could be established that would support families more in terms of raising the next generation. The government should fund this kind of parental support, because this is no longer a problem for individual families, but for society as a whole.

38. paid work for kids

In many countries children are engaged in some kind of paid work. Some people regard this as completely wrong, while others consider it as valuable work experience, important for learning and taking responsibility.

What are your opinions on this?

The issue of children doing paid work is a complex and sensitive one. It is difficult to say who has the right to judge whether children working is 'wrong' or 'valuable'. Opinions will also differ as to 'learning' benefits; no doubt teachers and factory owner, for example, would have varying concerns.

An important consideration is the kind of work undertaken. Young children doing arduous and repetitive tasks on a factory production line, for example, are less likely to be 'learning' than older children helping in an old people's home. There are health and safety issues to be considered as well. It is an unfortunate fact that many employers may prefer to use the services of children simply to save money by paying them less than adults and it is this type of exploitation that should be discouraged.

However, in many countries children work because their families need the additional income, no matter how small. This was certainly the case in the past in many industrialized countries, and it is very difficult to judge that it is wrong for children today to contribute to the family income in this way.

Nevertheless, in better economic circumstances, few parents would choose to send their children out to full-time paid work. If learning responsibilities and work experience are considered to be important, then children can acquire these by having light, part-time paid work or even doing tasks such as helping their parents around the family home, which are unpaid, the undoubtedly of value in children's development.

39. teach children

Some people think that parents should teach children how to be good members of society.

Others, however, believe that school is the place to learn this.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

A child's education has never been about learning information and basic skills only. It has always included teaching the next generation how to be good members of society. Therefore, this cannot be the responsibility of the parents alone.

In order to be a good member of any society the individual must respect and obey the rules of their community and share their values. Educating children to understand the need to obey rules and respect others always begins in the home and is widely thought to be the responsibility of parents. They will certainly be the first to help children learn what is important in life, how they are expected to behave and what role they will play in their world.

However, learning to understand and share the value system of a whole society cannot be achieved just in the home. Once a child goes to school, they are entering a wider community where teachers and peers will have just as much influence as their parents do at home. At school, children will experience working and living with people from a whole variety of backgrounds from the wider society. This experience should teach them how to co-operate with each other and how to contribute to the life of their community.

But to be a valuable member of any community is not like learning a simple skill. It is something that an individual goes on learning throughout life and it is the responsibility of every member of a society to take responsibility for helping the younger generation to become active and able members of that society.

40. traffic and pollution problems

Increasing the price of petrol is the best way to solve growing traffic and pollution problems.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

What other measures do you think might be effective?

This is no doubt that traffic and pollution from vehicles have become huge problems, both in cities and on motorways everywhere. Solving these problems is likely to need more than a simple rise in the price of petrol.

While it is undeniable that private car use is one of the main causes of the increase in traffic and pollution, higher fuel costs are unlikely to limit the number of drivers for long. As this policy would also affect the cost of public transport, it would be very unpopular with everyone who needs to travel on the roads. But there are various other measures that could be implemented that would have a huge effect on these problems.

I think to tackle the problem of pollution, cleaner fuels need to be developed. The technology is already available to produce electric cars that would be both quieter and cleaner to use. Persuading manufactures and travelers to adopt this new technology would be more effective strategy for improving air quality, especially in cities.

However, traffic congestion will not be solved by changing the type of private vehicle people can use. To do this, we need to improve the choice of public transport services available to travelers. For example, if sufficient sky trains and underground trains systems were built and effectively maintained in our major cities, then traffic on the roads would be dramatically reduced. Long-distance train and coach services should be made attractive and affordable alternatives to driving your own car for long journeys.

In conclusion, I think that long-term traffic and pollution reductions would depend on educating the public to use public transport more, and on governments using public money to construct and run efficient systems.



41. single-sex education

Some people think that it is better to educate boys and girls in separate schools. Others, however, believe that boys and girls benefit more from attending mixed schools.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Some countries have single-sex education models, while in others single sex and mixed schools co-exist and it is up to the parents or the children to decide which model is preferable.

Some educationalists think it is more effective to educate boys and girls in single-sex schools because they believe this environment reduces distractions and encourages pupils to concentrate on their studies. This is probably true to some extent. It also allows more equality among pupils and gives more opportunity to all those at the school to choose subjects more freely without gender prejudice. For example, a much higher proportion of girls study science to a high level when they attend girls' schools than their counterparts in mixed schools do. Similarly, boys in single-sex schools are more likely to take cookery classes and to study languages, which are often thought of as traditional subjects for girls.

On the other hand, some experts would argue that mixed schools prepare their pupils better for their future lives. Girls and boys learn to live and work together from an early age and are consequently not emotionally underdeveloped in their relations with the opposite sex. They are also able to learn from each other, and to experience different types of skill and talent than might be evident in a single gender environment.

Personally, I think that there are advantages to both systems. I went to a mixed school, but feel that I myself missed the opportunity to specialize in science because it was seen as the natural domain and career path for boys when I was a girl. So because of that, I would have preferred to go to a girls' school. But hopefully times have changed, and both genders of student can have equal chances to study what they want to in whichever type of school they attend.

42. children learning foreign language

Some experts believe that it is better for children to begin learning a foreign language at primary school rather than secondary school.

Do the advantages of this outweigh the disadvantages?

Traditionally, children have begun studying foreign languages at secondary school, but introducing them earlier is recommended by some educationalists. This policy has been adopted by some educational authorities or individual schools, with both positive and negative outcomes.

The obvious argument in its favour is that young children pick up languages much more easily than teenagers. Their brains are still programmed to acquire their mother tongue, which facilitates learning another language, and unlike adolescents, they are not inhibited by self-consciousness.

The greater flexibility of the primary timetable allows for more frequent, shorter sessions and for a play-centred approach, thus maintaining learners' enthusiasm and progress. Their command of the language in later life will benefit from this early exposure, while learning other languages subsequently will be easier for them. They may also gain a better understanding of other cultures.

There are, however, some disadvantages. Primary school teachers are generalists, and may not have the necessary language skills themselves. If specialists have to be brought in to deliver these sessions, the flexibility referred to above is diminished. If primary language teaching is not standardized, secondary schools could be faced with a great variety of levels in different languages within their intakes, resulting in a classroom experience which undoes the earlier gains. There is no advantage if enthusiastic primary pupils become demotivated as soon as they change schools. However, these issues can be addressed strategically within the policy adopted.

Anything which encourages language learning benefits society culturally and economically, and early exposure to language learning contributes to this. Young children's innate abilities should be harnessed to make these benefits more achievable.

43. unpaid community service

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?

It has been suggested that high school students should be involved in unpaid community services as a compulsory part of high school programmes. Most of the colleges are already providing opportunities to gain work experience, however these are not compulsory. In my opinion, sending students to work in communities services is a good idea as it can provide them with many lots of valuable skills.

Life skills are very important and by doing voluntary work, students can learn how to communicate with others and work in a team but also how to manage their time and improve their organizational skills. Nowadays, unfortunately, teenagers do not have many after-school activities. After-school clubs are no longer that popular and students mostly go home and sit in front of the TV, browse internet or play video games.

By giving them compulsory work activities with charitable or community organisations, they will be encouraged to do something more creative. Skills gained through compulsory work will not only be an asset on their CV but also increase their employability. Students will also gain more respect towards work and money as they will realize that it is not that easy to earn them and hopefully will learn to spend them in a more practical way.

Healthy life balance and exercise are strongly promoted by the NHS, and therefore any kind of spare time charity work will prevent from sitting and doing nothing. It could also possibly reduce the crime level in the high school age group. If students have activities to do, they will not to be bored and come up with silly ideas which can be dangerous for them or their surroundings.

In conclusion, I think this is a very good idea, and I hope this programme will be put into action for high schools' colleges shortly.(band 8)

44. sports facilities for public health

Some people say that the best way to improve public health is by increasing the number of sports facilities. Others, however, say that this would have little effect on public health and that other measures are required.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

A problem of modern societies is the declining level of health in the general population, with conflicting views on how to tackle this worrying trend. One possible solution is to provide more sports facilities to encourage a more active lifestyle.

Advocates of this believe that today's sedentary lifestyle and stressful working conditions mean that physical activity is no longer part of either our work or our leisure time. If there were easy-to-reach local sports centres, we would be more likely to make exercise a regular part of our lives, rather than just collapsing in front of a screen every evening. The variety of sports that could be offered would cater for all ages, levels of fitness and interests: those with painful memories of PE at school might be happier in the swimming pool than on the school pitch.

However, there may be better ways of tackling this problem. Interest in sports is not universal, and additional facilities might simply attract the already fit, not those who most need them. Physical activity could be encouraged relatively cheaply, for example by installing exercise equipment in parks, as my local council has done. This has the added benefit that parents and children often use them together just for fun, which develops a positive attitude to exercise at an early age.

As well as physical activity, high tax penalties could be imposed on high-fat food products, tobacco and alcohol, as excessive consumption of any of these contributes to poor health. Even improving public transport would help: it takes longer to walk to the bus stop than to the car.

In my opinion, focusing on sports facilities is too narrow an approach and would not have the desired results. People should be encouraged not only to be more physically active but also adopt a healthier lifestyle in general.

45. Punishment for kids

It is important for children to learn the difference between right and wrong at an early age. Punishment is necessary to help them learn this distinction.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

What sort of punishment should parents and teachers be allowed to use to teach good behaviour to children?

One important stage in a child's growth is certainly the development of a conscience, which is linked to the ability to tell right from wrong. This skill comes with time and good parenting, and my firm conviction is that punishment does not have much of a role to play in this. Therefore I have to disagree almost entirely with the given statement.

To some extent the question depends on the age of the child. To punish a very young child is both wrong and foolish, as an infant will not understand what is happening or why he or she is being punished. Once the age of reason is reached however, a child can be rewarded for good behaviour and discouraged from bad. This kind but firm approach will achieve more than harsh punishments, which might entail many negative consequences unintended by the parents.

To help a child learn the difference between right and wrong, teachers and parents should firstly provide good role modelling in their own behaviour. After that, if sanctions are needed, the punishment should not be of a physical nature, as that merely sends the message that it is acceptable for larger people to hit smaller ones - an outcome which may well result in the child starting to bully others. Nor should the punishment be in any way cruel.

Rather, teachers and parents can use a variety of methods to discipline their young charges, such as detention, withdrawal of privileges, and time-out. Making the punishment fit the crime is a useful notion, which would see children being made to pick up rubbish they have dropped, clean up graffiti they have drawn, or apologise to someone they have hurt. In these ways responsibility is developed in the child, which leads to much better future behaviour than does punishment.

46. Countries become similar

Countries are becoming more and more similar because people are able to buy the same products anywhere in the world.

Do you think this is a positive or negative development?

It is said that countries are becoming similar to each other because of the global spread of the same products, which are now available for purchase almost anywhere. I strongly believe that this modern development is largely detrimental to culture and traditions worldwide.

A country's history, language and ethos are all inextricably bound up in its manufactured artefacts. If the relentless advance of international brands into every corner of the world continues, these bland packages might one day completely oust the traditional objects of a nation, which would be a loss of richness and diversity in the world, as well as the sad disappearance of the manifestations of a place's character. What would a Japanese tea ceremony be without its specially crafted teapot, or a Fijian kava ritual without its bowl made from a certain type of tree bark?

Let us not forget either that traditional products, whether these be medicines, cosmetics, toys, clothes, utensils or food, provide employment for local people. The spread of multinational products can often bring in its wake a loss of jobs, as people turn to buying the new brand, perhaps thinking it more glamorous than the one they are used to. This eventually puts old-school craftspeople out of work.

Finally, tourism numbers may also be affected, as travellers become disillusioned with finding every place just the same as the one they visited previously. To see the same products in shops the world over is boring, and does not impel visitors to open their wallets in the same way that trinkets or souvenirs unique to the particular area do.

Some may argue that all people are entitled to have access to the same products, but I say that local objects suit local conditions best, and that faceless uniformity worldwide is an unwelcome and dreary prospect.

47.economic progress

Here's the full essay that I wrote with my students for the question below.

Many governments think that economic progress is their most important goal. Some people, however, think that other types of progress are equally important for a country.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

People have different views about how governments should measure their countries' progress. While economic progress is of course essential, I agree with those who believe that other measures of progress are just as important.

There are three key reasons why economic growth is seen as a fundamental goal for countries. Firstly, a healthy economy results in job creation, a high level of employment, and better salaries for all citizens. Secondly, economic progress ensures that more money is available for governments to spend on infrastructure and public services. For example, a government with higher revenues can invest in the country's transport network, its education system and its hospitals. Finally, a strong economy can help a country's standing on the global stage, in terms of its political influence and trading power.

However, I would argue that various other forms of progress are just as significant as the economic factors mentioned above. In particular, we should consider the area of social justice, human rights, equality and democracy itself. For example, the treatment of minority groups is often seen as a reflection of the moral standards and level of development of a society. Perhaps another key consideration when judging the progress of a modern country should be how well that country protects the natural environment, and whether it is moving towards environmental sustainability. Alternatively, the success of a nation could be measured by looking at the health, well-being and happiness of its residents.

In conclusion, the economy is obviously a key marker of a country's success, but social, environmental and health criteria are equally significant.

(262 words, band 9)