



HIGH SCORING ESSAYS FOCUS ON THE DETAILS

ESSENTIAL ESSAY WRITING SKILLS FOR
IELTS AND CAMBRIDGE ESL STUDENTS
WANTING TO LIFT THEIR SCORE

Approach every essay writing task with confidence.
Find the question, plan your response and deliver
a high scoring IELTS or Cambridge essay every
time.

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Introduction and welcome

We have spent years developing software to help students improve their writing. Dollar Writing Club delivers the passion my team and I have for helping students build good English writing skills.

Whilst our software delivers great instant feedback and guidance on your writing, the first big challenge of writing actually begins with understanding what you have been asked to write about.

We watch many students facing an essay task simply start writing, constructing their response on the fly as they go. It's quite easy now with Word and Google to simply start typing, fixing and changing ideas as you go. Cut and paste become your friend, disorganised writing becomes your habit. Then along comes Grammarly and spell / grammar checkers that transform your words into sentences that you have not written and cannot recreate on exam day.

What we don't see enough of is students taking the time to think about the question and what the question is asking. You must find the topic, understand the constraints and plan an approach before you start writing. Write to a good plan and your writing will improve ten fold.

In this guide, I tell you all I know and have learnt about how to write a high scoring essay. DETAILS are what you need to focus on when. This acronym will guide you through finding the question, planning your response and then how to assemble a Band 9 answer every time.

Register for Dollar Writing Club online where you can practice over 45 different IELTS / TOEFL General and Academic essay tasks. Use the DWC online Scaffold to develop a laser focus for the DETAILS. It's a word that is easy to remember – so don't forget!

Register : <https://www.literatu.com/dwc>
Yours in good writing and planning
Mark



D

Determine the Topic

E

Establish the Underlying Question

T

Thesis Statement is Critical

A

Align Main Topic Ideas to the Thesis

I

Introduction = Thesis + Main Topics

L

Link the Main Ideas to Supporting Details

S

Strong Conclusion

Determine the Topic

To determine the topic, look at the question, choose and highlight the keywords. Develop a clear idea of what you are being asked to write about.

These topic keywords, if well identified, will help you answer ALL aspects of the question.

Write these main points down in your essay plan. They will become your main topic ideas for each paragraph.

Start your *Essay Plan*

It is important to spend some time planning your essay. You will always have time and space to write a rough plan. Use this time well to brainstorm all your ideas.

TIP: Never repeat the question!

As you start to create your plan, start using synonyms of the words you see in the question. Include these in your plan as you will receive good marks for effective paraphrasing.

Example Question

QUESTION

"Some Scientists say that climate change is a direct result of excessive carbon dioxide emissions by developed countries. Do you agree?"

From analysing the question, the topic is identified and the main points to be made in your essay are discovered. Check the notes below. These notes may appear in your plan.

Question Notes

"some scientists"

not all scientists agree.

"climate change"

can mean several things. What do you understand "climate change" to mean?

"direct result"

is very specific. What follows is the only cause of the problem.

"excessive carbon dioxide emissions"

indicates that carbon dioxide emissions are greater than normal. "What is excessive"?

"by developed countries"

indicates that developed countries are the ones that responsible. Are developed countries the only cause of excessive emissions?

Your essay answer must stay on track and be RELEVANT and this is a great way of getting yourself organised.

Establish the Underlying Question

What are you being asked?

What is the best way to approach the question?

You must look for **directive words** in the questions, which include instructions about what to cover. There are three types of questions:

1. Give your opinion
2. Discuss a particular proposal
3. Decide between two different opinions

Examples of directive words are:

- Discuss
- What is your opinion?
- Do you agree or disagree?
- Explore and analyse
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages

'Discuss' always translates to 'critically analyse'. The examiner will expect to read two sides to your argument (positive and negative) in this type of question.

Practise! It will be important to practise each type of question, so that you get experience with the different kinds of responses

Example Question

QUESTION

"Some Scientists say that climate change is a direct result of excessive carbon dioxide emissions by developed countries. Do you agree?"

Look for **directive words** in the questions, which include instructions about what to cover. What is the question asking you to do?

- Discuss a particular proposal
- Give your opinion
- Decide between two different opinions
 1. the scientists' opinion
 2. your opinion

Directive words in the question

"by developed countries" and
"do you agree?"

There are probably some great arguments you could make about non-developed countries causing the emissions, but you **MUST** first address **developed countries**.

So, do you agree or disagree?

Next you'll create your *Thesis Statement*.

Thesis Statement is Critical

Develop a good **thesis statement** – this statement should **clarify your whole argument**.

Look carefully at the keywords and the underlying question to create your thesis statement.

DO NOT rewrite the question word for word.

You should use *Active Voice* and make a strong statement from which your essay will evolve. Don't be scared to *take a stand*.

Useful Language

Phrases: In my opinion; I believe; My viewpoint is; To my mind; The facts indicate; It would appear that; It follows that

Verbs: believe, indicates, feel, think, understand, imagine, determines

Adjectives: positive, undisputed, logical, factual, statistical

Adverbs: certainly, specifically, definitely, probably, possibly, logically, arguably, consequently

Example Question

QUESTION

"Some Scientists say that climate change is a direct result of excessive carbon dioxide emissions by developed countries. Do you agree?"

State your argument clearly.

DO NOT rewrite the question word for word.

Main Ideas

1. *Scientists do not all agree*
2. *Not only developed countries are responsible*
3. *Carbon dioxide is not the only cause of climate change*

Thesis Statement

There does not seem to be a consensus of opinion among scientists that only carbon dioxide emissions from developed countries contribute directly to climate change . In fact, it is not carbon dioxide and developed countries that are the main contributors.

Align Main Topic Ideas to Your Thesis

3 main topic ideas = 3 body paragraphs

Build three main topics that will give each paragraph a focus and provide direction to expand.

Now align your topic ideas to your thesis statement. They need to be related. You should use three of the best ideas you have. Discard the rest.

Main topics are used to develop and group a range of supporting ideas that will describe and expand your thesis across your essay paragraphs.

Your Essay Plan

Question Keywords

Thesis

Introduction

Paragraph 1

Main topic sentence

Paragraph 2

Main topic sentence

Paragraph 3

Main topic sentence

Conclusion

Example Question

QUESTION

“Some Scientists say that climate change is a direct result of excessive carbon dioxide emissions by developed countries. Do you agree?”

Here, we are creating an **Essay Structure Plan** that keeps our writing relevant to the topic and coherent.

QUESTION KEYWORDS

Some Scientists, Climate change, Direct result, Excessive Carbon Dioxide Emissions, Developed Countries

Thesis Statement

Whilst some scientists believe that only developed country emissions contribute directly to climate change, there does not seem to be a consensus of opinion and in fact, it could be argued that it is not carbon dioxide and developed countries that are the main contributors.

PARAGRAPH 1: Main Topic Sentence

*Some scientists **disagree** that carbon dioxide is a significant cause of climate change.*

PARAGRAPH 2: Main Topic Sentence

***Not all** carbon dioxide emissions are linked to **developed countries**.*

PARAGRAPH 3: Main Topic Sentence

*Climate change is **not only warming but also cooling** of the worlds temperatures.*

Introduction = Thesis + Main Topics

Simply combine your thesis statement and your main topics into one paragraph to create the introduction. The reader should finish reading your introduction and know what you are going to discuss.

Make sure that your introduction is completely focused on the question. Don't use the opening paragraph to make general statements about the topic.

Avoid these mistakes:

- Don't be *too broad*. Remember you want to use *Active Voice* and present a strong argument.
- Don't be *repetitious*. Don't re-type the topic or question. You must address the topic immediately without restating it.
- Don't be *clichéd*. Overused opening lines and phrases get written many times. Avoid such openers as " Did you ever wonder."

Approximate Word Count Guide

Introduction:	10% (30 words)
Body (argument):	80% (210 words)
Conclusion:	10% (30 words)

Example Question

QUESTION

“Some Scientists say that climate change is a direct result of excessive carbon dioxide emissions by developed countries. Do you agree?”

Create an Introduction that includes your **Thesis Statement** and **Main Topics**. You just need to introduce the topic; outline your argument and tell the reader how your essay is organised.

Introduction

Some scientists suggest that carbon dioxide is the real cause of climate change, however other leading authorities argue there are more significant sources of carbon dioxide emissions that are not linked to developed countries. Climate change also includes the cooling of world temperatures as well as warming.

This introduction now informs the reader of the of what is going to be discussed in the body of the essay:

1. *Scientists do not all agree*
2. *Not only developed countries are responsible*
3. *Carbon dioxide is not the only cause of climate change*

Now each of these main ideas will need to be expanded upon to create the body of the essay.

Link Main Ideas to Supporting Details

Now, you have a thesis statement, and you have three main ideas to support your thesis. These three main ideas or arguments become the topic sentence (first sentence) for each of your body paragraphs.

You now just need to back up each of your topic sentences with supporting information and relevant examples and link them together.

Thesis Statement

Thesis Statement

Main topic sentence 1
enter supporting information

Main topic sentence 2
enter supporting information

Main topic sentence 3
enter supporting information

To make your essay flow you will need to use linking words and phrases. You should use these to link ideas within paragraphs and also to link the paragraphs together.

Examples

*To start with; In addition to; Similarly
Firstly; Next; Furthermore; Finally
Initially; Despite the fact that; In summary
At first; although; On the whole*

Example Question

QUESTION

"Some Scientists say that climate change is a direct result of excessive carbon dioxide emissions by developed countries. Do you agree?"

PARAGRAPH 1

Main Topic Sentence: *Some scientists disagree that carbon dioxide is a significant cause of climate change.*

Supporting sentences:

Some scientists suggest there are other more important causes of climate change.

Some scientists who do not agree with the research that is being trusted to make such strong assertions about climate change.

Some scientists who say that climate will change by itself across cycles that we have no influence over.

All scientists claim to have strong evidence.

PARAGRAPH 2

Main Topic Sentence: *Not all carbon dioxide emissions are linked to developed countries.*

Supporting sentences:

There are other sources of carbon dioxide supply that are not related to developed countries.

Many of these sources are from very isolated places and un-controlled locations- such as Volcanoes and rotting forests.

Scientists disagree on what is excessive and what is not.

PARAGRAPH 3

Main Topic Sentence: *Climate change is not only warming but also cooling of the worlds temperatures.*

Supporting sentences:

There are other ways of defining climate change.

Some climates are cooling whilst others are warming.

The evidence used in arguments for warming are not relevant to climates that are cooling.

Strong Conclusion

You must have a strong conclusion. The conclusion briefly supports your thesis and reminds the reader of your argument.

It should not be more than a few sentences long and **should not** include new ideas!

Types of Conclusions

Restatement:

restate your thesis and main arguments

Prediction:

summarise all the information in your essay and suggest what might happen next.

Recommendation:

suggest your readers do something based on the information you presented

Generalisation:

you can use all of the information provided and make a generalisation about it.

Example Question

QUESTION

"Some Scientists say that climate change is a direct result of excessive carbon dioxide emissions by developed countries. Do you agree?"

Briefly supports your thesis and reminds the reader of your argument.

Conclusion

It is clear that scientists are divided on their definition of climate change and its causes. Climate change refers to both global warming and cooling, which is equally likely to stem from the emissions of an active volcano as it is from a rotting forest and we don't only find these in developed countries.

Example Question

QUESTION

“Some Scientists say that climate change is a direct result of excessive carbon dioxide emissions by developed countries. Do you agree?”

Some scientists suggest that carbon dioxide is the real cause of climate change, however other leading authorities argue there are more significant sources of carbon dioxide emissions that are not linked to developed countries. Climate change also includes the cooling of world temperatures as well as warming.

Some scientists disagree that carbon dioxide is a significant cause of climate change and that there are more important causes. There is strong evidence to suggest that the climate changes naturally with disturbances such as El Nino and we have no control over it.

Moreover; the scientist suggestions that all carbon dioxide emissions are linked to developed countries is a gross generalisation. There are other sources of carbon dioxide supply that are not related to developed countries. Many of these sources are from very isolated places and uncontrolled locations, such as Volcanoes and rotting forests.

Climate change is not only warming but also cooling of the worlds temperatures.

There are other ways of defining climate change as ‘global warming’ is only one form change. Some climates are cooling whilst others are warming. Therefore the evidence used in arguments for warming are not relevant to climates that are cooling.

It is clear that scientists are divided on their definition of climate change and its causes. Climate change refers to both global warming and cooling, which is equally likely to stem from the emissions of an active volcano as it is from a rotting forest and we don’t only find these in developed countries.

Congratulations!

You have completed the IELTS Writing Task

You have completed several different tasks which will help you to prepare for the IELTS test. You are now familiar with the following skills:

- Planning an Essay
- Reviewing an Essay
- Writing an Essay

No Surprises – Remember you do not want any surprises in the test, so as you go through this series we will make sure you get more practice with these types of questions.

You worked on key writing skills needed for your academic English, but more importantly for achieving top results in your test. Use these tips so that you are not just preparing for the test, but building on critical test skills as you work through.

Online Practice – Register at www.literatu.com/scribo for IELTS writing practice online. Scribo lets you practice over 45 essay types and topics for IELTS General and Academic writing. Instant feedback and a CEFR – IELTS indicative Band score is delivered on demand. Are you ready to take your test?

Review – You may have completed all the questions in this worksheet, but there is still a lot to learn:

Go back through the worksheet and review all the guidance.

Analyse how you answered the question ensuring that you have followed the guidance checklists

Read through any *Tips* and write down the important ones so that you don't forget.

Click or Touch on any resource links as these will give you further exposure to the topic and help you to develop your vocabulary.

Next Worksheet – Scribo practice online is designed to give you practice with all types of test questions. Once you complete a series you will have experience with them all! Now go on , register and get practicing with your new found skills. **Good luck!**