

Environmental processes speaking and phrases with useful language for IELTS Writing Task 1

With phrases describing the first step in the process

Choose one of the starters below and work together to describe the rest of that process. If you are not sure what the topic is, choose another, ask, or check the list of topics.

Describe one of those processes to another group and see if they have questions, can add anything, etc. Then ask about phrases you don't understand, processes you are not sure how to continue, etc.

Show your partner just the key words at the bottom of the page, and check the phrases they make from them. Other phrases are possible, so check if you are not sure if their phrase is correct. Then try to make phrases from the words at the bottom in the same way.

With phrases describing the following steps in the process (second step, etc)

Look at the following page. Choose one of those steps and work together to say both the step(s) before that stage and the steps after, using the key words from the first stage to help if you like.

Describe one of those processes to another group and see if they can add details, etc.

Ask about processes you are not sure how to start or continue, etc. Then try to make related phrases from the key words at the bottom of that page, with your partner checking.

Show your partner just the key words at the bottom of the page, and check the phrases they make from them. Other phrases not below may be possible, so please check if you are not sure if their phrase is correct or not.

With phrases for describing the final stage/ how the process ends

Look at the following page and together describe processes ending with a line from there. You can use the key words from the previous stage to help with the middle stages, but try to use different starting phrases with no help.

Do the same steps as above, changing who is tested on the phrases first.

With phrases for things happening at the same time/ alternatives/ splits

Choose a line and work together to describe the alternatives and what comes before and/ or after. Then do the same steps as above, changing who is tested on the phrases first.

With phrases for starting the second half of the process/ second process (body two)

Choose a line and work together to describe what goes before and/ or after. Then do the same steps as above, changing who is tested on the phrases first.

Phrases for describing the first step in the process

- At the beginning of the process, the slash and burn farmers set light to woodland.
- At the start of the process, a genetic mutation leads to a single individual who has a survival advantage such as better camouflage.
- First of all, chemicals are added to the spilt oil to split up the oil slick.
- The cycle begins with small organisms such as bacteria digesting the dead bodies of large predators such as sharks.
- The first part of the procedure is special bacteria in the roots of some plants fixing nitrogen in the soil.
- The first stage of the process is someone deciding that they will no longer wear an item of clothing.
- The initial part of the process is water vapour rising from the sea to form clouds.
- The procedure starts with a consumer finishing a canned drink.
- The process starts with plants changing carbon dioxide into carbon and oxygen.
- The system gets underway with national governments deciding what they want from the next climate agreement.
- The very first step is teaching school children to be more environmentally aware.
- To initiate the process, the management of a company decide that they want some kind of ecological certification.
- To start with, the farmer decides that they want their farm to become organic.

-----fold, cover or cut-----

- all
- at
- beginning
- begins
- cycle
- first
- gets
- initial
- initiate
- is
- of
- part
- procedure
- process
- stage
- start(s)
- step
- the
- to
- underway
- very
- with

Phrases for describing the following steps in the process (second step, etc)

- After completing that step, a green subsidies bill is submitted to parliament.
- After that has been completed, the wind speed and consistency are tested.
- After that stage, the fishers sort the fish into wanted and unwanted species, sizes, etc.
- At that point in time, the ancient wolves became used to being near humans and so semi-domesticated.
- At that time, the birds begin to gather together in large numbers in trees, on the sea, etc, near their summer feeding grounds.
- At this point, a suitable location for the new nuclear power station is sought.
- Following that, the process moves onto washing the used glass bottles.
- Having finished that, the process progresses to banning the sale of new petrol cars.
- Next, the paper is divided from the other rubbish.
- Once that is completed, the next step is to find a suitable place to put the solar panels, such as on your house's roof.
- Subsequently, people are removed from areas of possible radioactive contamination.
- The following stage is an expert checking the site of the potential development for ecological impact such as the presence of endangered species.
- The next step is removing the fur from the animal.
- This is followed by clearing the land where the lake will be of people, archaeological remains, etc.
- This leads onto the predators having less to eat and so their numbers dropping too.
- When that part of the process is complete, the ground is tested to see whether it is likely to have oil beneath it.

-----fold, cover or cut-----

- after/ once/ when
- at
- been
- by
- complete/ completed/ completing
- finished
- followed/ following
- has/ having
- is
- leads
- moves
- next
- of
- onto
- (point in) time
- process
- progresses
- stage/ step/ part
- subsequently
- the
- this/ that
- to

Phrases for describing the final stage/ how the process ends

- Butterflies laying more eggs brings the process to a close.
- Eventually, it may become socially unacceptable to drink water from a disposable plastic bottle.
- Finally, the plastic is either recycled, burnt or buried.
- In the final stage, the pollen reaches another flower.
- Last of all, buildings are built on the reclaimed land.
- Last, the species either becomes extinct or is eventually taken off the endangered species list.
- Lastly, the meat is eaten.
- Opening the national park to visitors ends the procedure.
- The final step is the product in its cardboard box etc being delivered to the consumer.
- The last stage is aftershocks over the following days, weeks and/ or months.
- The procedure concludes with the CO2 from the burnt biofuels being absorbed back into plants.
- The process comes to a close with electricity being generated without producing CO2.
- The system ends with the cleaned water going into rivers, into the sea or back into the water distribution system.

-----fold, cover or cut-----

- a
- all
- brings
- close
- comes
- concludes
- ends
- eventually
- final/ finally
- in
- is
- last/ lastly
- of
- procedure
- process
- stage
- step
- the
- to
- with

Phrases for describing things happening at the same time/ alternatives/ when the flowcharts split

- Alternatively, animal cells can be grown in a lab to make a material that mimics meat.
- Another alternative is to introduce natural predators of the invasive species.
- Another option is to reduce government services to match the future lower population.
- Another possibility is breeding plants which resist attack by the pests.
- At the same time, governments can advertise the benefits of using a “bag for life”.
- Concurrently, information on temperatures etc is gathered from ground weather stations.
- During this step, some sawdust and wood chips are collected to be sold. Others...
- One subsequent route for the whale meat is to schools. Another parallel...
- Simultaneously, consumers can reduce the amount that they consume.
- Some people reuse their glass bottles and jars, while others...
- Then the oxygen is mainly either breathed in by animals or...
- There are then (two/...) different ways for people to campaign against the air pollution.
- While that is underway, governments can also put taxes on things that directly cause carbon emissions such as petrol.
- While this is still in progress, sufferers can also wear masks to block the pollen.
- Whilst that is still ongoing, countries can also buy carbon credits off other companies who have managed to reduce their carbon consumption.

-----fold, cover or cut-----

- alternative
- another
- at
- concurrent
- during
- either
- in
- is
- -ly
- one
- ongoing/ underway
- option/ possibility
- parallel
- progress
- route
- same
- simultaneous
- some
- step
- still
- subsequent
- the
- this/ that
- time
- to
- ways
- while/ whilst

Phrases for starting to describe the second half of the process/ second process (in body paragraph two)

- As for the other flowchart, it shows how desertified land can be regreened.
- Looking at the parts of the process which come after the human hunter catches the prey,...
- Moving onto second half of the process, the empty aquifers then...
- The lower diagram shows how the carbon from the coal is then captured.
- The other flowchart shows how humans react after they notice that a hurricane, typhoon, etc is approaching.
- The remainder of the process starts with the egg hatching.
- The second chart illustrates what happens with that milk.
- The second half of the process starts with the mineral water being pumped up out of the ground
- Turning our attention to how honey is used,...
- Turning to the rest of the procedure, humans then selected the domesticated cats which had the characteristics which they most favoured such as mouse-catching ability and cuteness.

-----fold, cover or cut-----

- as
- at
- attention
- chart
- diagram
- flowchart
- for
- half
- looking
- lower
- moving
- of
- onto
- other
- our
- procedure
- process
- remainder
- rest
- second
- starts
- the
- to
- turning

Brainstorming stage

First of all without any help, write as many useful phrases as you can in each gap below.

Phrases for describing the first step in the process

Phrases for describing the following steps in the process (second step, etc)

Phrases for describing the final stage/ how the process ends

Describing things happening at the same time/ alternatives/ when flowcharts split

Starting to describe the second half of the process/ second process (in body two)

Use the key words to help, then compare with above.

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Processes connected to nature and the environment to describe

Choose a process below and describe it in as much detail and using as many different phrases as you can. Your partners will then ask for more details, try to add extra stages, suggest alternatives, suggest alternative language, etc. Topics not above are in italics.

- Air (hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, carbon dioxide, etc)
- Animal experimentation
- Bottles/ Bottling
- *Calculating carbon footprints*
- Canals
- Cans/ Tins/ Canning
- Carbon capture/ Carbon sequestering
- Carbon offsetting
- Carbon taxes
- Carbon trading
- Clearing up an oil spill
- Climate agreements (COP, etc)
- CO₂
- *Coral/ Reefs*
- Dairy farming/ Dairy products (cheese, milk, yoghurt, etc)
- Decomposition
- Deliveries/ Logistics/ Transportation (shipping, air, etc)
- Deserts/ Desertification
- *Disposable goods (ballpoint pens, razors, chopsticks, nappies, etc)*
- *Disposal of...*
- Domestic animals/ Domesticating animals (dogs, cats, etc)
- *Droughts*
- Earthquakes
- *Eco-tourism*
- Eggs
- Electric vehicles
- Endangered animals (becoming endangered/ being saved)
- Environmental campaigning
- Environmental certification
- *Epidemics/ Pandemics*
- *Erosion (soil erosion, coastal erosion, cliff erosion, etc)*
- Evolution/ Natural selection
- Extraction/ Mining (fracking, oil production, etc)
- Farming/ Agriculture (*subsistence farming*, slash and burn agriculture, etc)
- Fishing/ The fishing industry
- *Flooding*
- *Fur/ Leather*
- *Gardening*
- *Glass*
- *Global warming/ The greenhouse effect*
- *Grains (rice, wheat, barley, buckwheat, etc)*
- Green subsidies
- Hay fever

- Honey
- Hot springs
- Hunting (and gathering)
- Hurricanes/ Tornadoes/ Cyclones/ Typhoons
- Hybrid vehicles
- Hydrogen
- *Ice (the polar icecaps, icebergs, etc)*
- Invasive species (*Japanese knotweed, parakeets, fire ants, palm civets, etc*)
- Lab-grown meat
- Land reclamation/ Reclaimed land (artificial islands, etc)
- *Landslides/ Avalanches/ Mudslides*
- Lifecycle of an animal (butterfly, *cicada, frog, turtles, eels, birds, etc*)
- Meat
- Migration
- Nitrogen
- Nuclear energy/ Nuclear power (stations)/ Nuclear waste/ Radiation
- Oil/ Petrochemicals
- Packaging (plastic wrap, cardboard boxes, etc)
- Paper
- *Parasites*
- Pesticides/ *Herbicides*
- Plants
- Plastic (bottles, carrier bags, etc)
- Pollination
- Pollution (air pollution, *light pollution, etc*)
- Population/ Depopulation
- Predators (wolves, etc)
- *Product lifecycle (from production to disposal and/ or recycling)*
- *Production of...*
- Rain
- Renewable energy (solar panels, *geothermal energy*, wind turbines, offshore wind farms, tidal power, wave power, hydroelectric energy/ dams, biofuels, hydrogen, etc)
- *Rivers*
- *Rubbish/ Trash/ Garbage/ Waste*
- Setting up a national park/ nature reserve
- *Soil/ Earth*
- The three Rs (reuse, reduce and recycle)
- *Tidal waves/ Tsunamis*
- *Volcanoes*
- Waste water/ Sewage
- Water (tap water, bottled water, wells, etc)
- Weather forecasting
- Whales/ Whaling
- Wood/ Forestry

Ask about any vocabulary above that you don't understand, processes you can't imagine how to explain, etc, working together to explain a suitable process/ flowchart each time.