

## Things to avoid in IELTS Writing Task 2 giving reasons practice with positive and negative recommendations phrases

*Look at the sections that your teacher tells you to. Take turns choosing one and saying why it is not good (and so why the negative recommendation is being made) and/ or what should be done instead (i.e. what a better thing to do is), and see if your partner agrees. If you aren't sure or can't agree, circle that one to ask the whole class about later, then choose another to speak about.*

*Match the reasons on the following pages to the negative recommendations, using the topics, grammar, logical connections, etc to help.*

*Check as a class or with the suggested answers.*

*Underline useful language for giving reasons for (positive or negative) recommendations in the completed sentences. Each has at least one useful word or phrase.*

*Compare as a class or with the suggested answers.*

*Ask about any which you didn't underline, you are not sure how to use, etc.*

*Fill the gaps in the Gapfill Stage with one word each, with a different word in each gap if you can.*

*What are the differences between these expressions for giving reasons (or are they the same)?*

- affect/ effect
- the main reason/ the chief justification
- the main reason/ a major reason
- the main disadvantage/ a major drawback
- because/ because of
- because/ This is because
- in order to/ to
- as/ since/ because
- because there is a problem/ in case there is a problem
- cause/ be caused by
- cause/ lead to

*Use the same language to give recommendations on doing and preparing for other parts of IELTS such as:*

- Writing Task 1 (flowchart tasks/ process tasks, map tasks, line graph tasks/ trends tasks, bar chart tasks, table tasks, tasks with past data, tasks with future data)
- Speaking (Part One, Part Two, Part Three)
- Listening (Part One, Part Two, Part Three, Part Four, gapfill tasks, multiple choice tasks, map tasks)
- Reading (yes/ no/ not given tasks, matching tasks, labelling diagram tasks, summary questions/ overall understanding questions)

## **Negative advice on IELTS Writing Task 2 to think of reasons for Planning**

You mustn't presume that you can always look at both sides and then have a conclusion.

It isn't usually necessary to brainstorm ideas before writing your plan.

If at all possible, you shouldn't take more than five minutes to plan your Task 2 essay

## **Introduction**

It's not a good idea to start answering the question without an introduction.

Don't copy the question word for word but also don't spend too long rephrasing everything

It doesn't make sense to state your opinion first if you will look at both sides in the body.

It's not ideal to end the intro with a phrase meaning "I will write about this below"

## **Body**

It is best to avoid one-sentence paragraphs in the body

A body paragraph which is one long argument such as a personal story or a detailed explanation of one example is not recommended.

It is never okay to start paragraphs with "Second(ly)" and/ or "Third(ly)"

Try to avoid using the same kind of support for arguments (e.g. two personal experiences)

There is no good reason for making up fake quotes, fake statistics, etc.

## **Final summary or conclusion**

Make sure you don't get confused between a final summary (the same info restated in a shorter way, for example if you have given your opinion first then three reasons in the body) and a final conclusion (your opinion for the first time, based on what is in the body)

You should never start your final conclusion with "In conclusion"

You can't get from two sides in the body to a final conclusion by totally dismissing one of the arguments in the body.

Whatever you do, avoid sitting on the fence in your final conclusion.

There is no need for your final conclusion to be the same as your real opinion.

Avoid one-sentence final summaries.

## **Editing and time management**

Try not to use your eraser.

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### Reasons to match to the negative advice

- Bad points of such shorter versions include that they add nothing to what is already written above and so make it even more important to rephrase the same thing yet again. You should therefore quickly add a second sentence such as advice based on your opinion or a prediction for how things might change.
- Because it needs to link to the rest of the essay, your final conclusion must be based on the strongest arguments you wrote, even if that leads to a conclusion you don't like.
- Reasons why include that making your answer look more like speaking than like writing, and meaning the body will be more difficult to understand without any context.
- The chief downside is that it makes your language simpler than explaining what you really remember with phrases like "I'm not sure where I read this, but...". It also goes against the instructions to use your own experiences and knowledge.
- The chief justification is that its use wastes a large amount of time. Moreover, there are no extra marks for neatness. Instead, just cross through what you want to change and write the new version above the line. You can also use editing marks like arrows to add a word, phrase, or sentence to anywhere in the text that you need to.
- The effect of a conclusion that doesn't come down on one side is that it doesn't answer the question and so causes not achieving the task. However, you can have a weak overall opinion, as long as it is clearly more on one side than the other.
- The main disadvantage of this is that it will make half of the body of no interest to the reader, because they already know that it is not what the writer believes. Another drawback is that it the final conclusion loses its purpose.
- The main reason is that you're graded on the quality of your language, not of your ideas. In addition, such ideas are more likely to flow while writing. Furthermore, in some questions only one kind of plan makes sense so you can start writing right away.
- This is because some task types like "causes and solutions" cannot fit into that plan.
- This tends to lead to simple language and insufficient evidence to base your opinion on. It can also cause you to not achieve the task, for example if it says "advantages".
- This would make that part not worth writing and reading. Instead, you can say which argument is strongest by focussing on one country, the majority of the world, etc.
- as it's obvious you'll do that, and no info is given on how the essay is organised. In its place, you should write a description of each body paragraph with words like "then".
- because of the danger of ignoring the body in your opinion, making it all pointless.
- because the reader won't know what it refers to, the language is simple, and such phrases should be saved to explain the stages of processes in Task 1 flowcharts. You ought to use better options like "The second disadvantage of... is..." and "Turning to the arguments for..." to show your range of language and make the meaning clearer.
- in case it looks like you don't know the difference between sentences and paragraphs. Such short paragraphs could also result in you not supporting your arguments enough.
- in order to leave enough time to answer the question, fully support your arguments, reach the minimum word limit, and leave around five minutes to edit the whole thing.
- since this is a good chance to show your range of language but you can also do that later in the essay and improve it during the editing stage.
- so that you don't write the wrong kind of final paragraph to match your essay, and in order to be able to discuss how to do so without confusion.
- so you can show more range of language, e.g. that you know how to quote vaguely remembered sources and also talk about logical reasons such as causes and effects.

## Suggested answers

### Planning

You mustn't presume that you can always look at both sides and then have a conclusion. This is because some task types like "causes and solutions" cannot fit into that plan.

It isn't usually necessary to brainstorm ideas before writing your plan. The main reason is that you're graded on the quality of your language, not of your ideas. In addition, such ideas are more likely to flow while writing. Furthermore, in some questions only one kind of plan makes sense so you can start writing right away.

If at all possible, you shouldn't take more than five minutes to plan your Task 2 essay in order to leave enough time to answer the question, fully support your arguments, reach the minimum word limit, and leave around five minutes to edit the whole thing.

### Introduction

It's not a good idea to start answering the question without an introduction. Reasons why include that making your answer look more like speaking than like writing, and meaning the body will be more difficult to understand without any context.

Don't copy the question word for word but also don't spend too long rephrasing everything since this is a good chance to show your range of language but you can also do that later in the essay and improve it during the editing stage.

It doesn't make sense to state your opinion first if you will look at both sides in the body. The main disadvantage of this is that it will make half of the body of no interest to the reader, because they already know that it is not what the writer believes. Another drawback is that if the final conclusion loses its purpose.

It's not ideal to end the intro with a phrase meaning "I will write about this below" as it's obvious you'll do that, and no info is given on how the essay is organised. In its place, you should write a description of each body paragraph with words like "then".

### Body

It is best to avoid one-sentence paragraphs in the body, in case it looks like you don't know the difference between sentences and paragraphs. Such short paragraphs could also result in you not supporting your arguments enough.

A body paragraph which is one long argument such as a personal story or a detailed explanation of one example is not recommended. This tends to lead to simple language and insufficient evidence to base your opinion on. It can also cause you to not achieve the task, for example if it says "advantagess".

It is never okay to start paragraphs with "Second(ly)" and/ or "Third(ly)" because the reader won't know what it refers to, the language is simple, and such phrases should be saved to explain the stages of processes in Task 1 flowcharts. You ought to use better options like "The second disadvantage of... is..." and "Turning to the arguments for..." to show your range of language and make the meaning clearer.

Try to avoid using the same kind of support for arguments (e.g. two personal experiences) so you can show more range of language, e.g. that you know how to quote vaguely remembered sources and also talk about logical reasons such as causes and effects.

There is no good reason for making up fake quotes, fake statistics, etc. The chief downside is that it makes your language simpler than explaining what you really remember with phrases like “I’m not sure where I read this, but...”. It also goes against the instructions to use your own experiences and knowledge.

### **Final summary or conclusion**

Make sure you don’t get confused between a final summary (the same info restated in a shorter way, for example if you have given your opinion first then three reasons in the body) and a final conclusion (your opinion for the first time, based on what is in the body) so that you don’t write the wrong kind of final paragraph to match your essay, and in order to be able to discuss how to do so without confusion.

You should never start your final conclusion with “In conclusion” because of the danger of ignoring the body in your opinion, making it all pointless.

You can’t get from two sides in the body to a final conclusion by totally dismissing one of the arguments in the body. This would make that part not worth writing and reading. Instead, you can say which argument is strongest by focussing on one country, the majority of the world, etc.

Whatever you do, avoid sitting on the fence in your final conclusion. The effect of a conclusion that doesn’t come down on one side is that it doesn’t answer the question and so causes not achieving the task. However, you can have a weak overall opinion, as long as it is clearly more on one side than the other.

There is no need for your final conclusion to be the same as your real opinion. Because it needs to link to the rest of the essay, your final conclusion must be based on the strongest arguments you wrote, even if that leads to a conclusion you don’t like.

Avoid one-sentence final summaries. Bad points of such shorter versions include that they add nothing to what is already written above and so make it even more important to rephrase the same thing yet again. You should therefore quickly add a second sentence such as advice based on your opinion or a prediction for how things might change.

### **Editing and time management**

Try not to use your eraser. The chief justification is that its use wastes a large amount of time. Moreover, there are no extra marks for neatness. Instead, just cross through what you want to change and write the new version above the line. You can also use editing marks like arrows to add a word, phrase, or sentence to anywhere in the text that you need to.

## Suggested answers with reasons language in bold

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It doesn't make sense to state your opinion first if you will look at both sides in the body. **The main disadvantage of this is that** it will make half of the body of no interest to the reader, because they already know that it is not what the writer believes. **Another drawback is that** if the final conclusion loses its purpose.

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A body paragraph which is one long argument such as a personal story or a detailed explanation of one example is not recommended. This tends to **lead to** simple language and insufficient evidence to base your opinion on. **It can also cause** you to not achieve the task, for example if it says "advantages".

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## Gapfill stage

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