

Lewis Richards

Build up to IELTS

A step-by-step course

Writing • Listening • Speaking • Reading

5.5
-
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Author acknowledgements

The first draft of this book was co-written with Joel Burchett and Rebecca Scott, and I would like to express my gratitude for all their ideas, input and work in the initial stages of the book.

Thank you to everyone at DELTA and Klett, in particular Nick Boisseau and Bettina Höfels. I would also like to give special thanks to the editor of this book, Catriona Watson-Brown. Her incisive comments on the drafts, along with her support and sense of humour, contributed greatly to the final manuscript.

All the material in the book has been developed in my IELTS classes at Language Specialists International Portsmouth, where I've worked for the last 16 years. I'd like to thank all the students, staff and teachers at LSI for being so supportive and encouraging of this project.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this book to Marine Joly.

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1st edition 1 5 4 3 2 1 | 2023 22 21 20 19

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Delta Publishing, 2019

www.deltapublishing.co.uk

© Ernst Klett Sprachen GmbH, Rotebühlstraße 77, 70178 Stuttgart, 2019

Editor: Catriona Watson-Brown, CWB Editorial Services, UK

Cover: Andreas Drabarek, Stuttgart, Germany

Layout: Andreas Drabarek, Eva Mokhlis, Stuttgart, Germany

Illustrations: Sven Palmowski, Barcelona, Spain

Typesetting: Swabianmedia, Stuttgart, Germany

Cover picture: stock.adobe.com (Daria), Dublin

Printing and binding: Elanders GmbH, Waiblingen, Germany

ISBN 978-3-12-501571-5

Map of the book	4
Introduction	6
1 Living home and away	7
Writing Task 2: Advantage/disadvantage essays	
Listening Part 2: Multiple-choice questions	
Speaking Part 1	
Reading: Matching information	
Pulling it all together	
2 Education	21
Writing Task 2: Opinion essays	
Reading: True/False/Not Given questions	
Listening Part 1: Distractors	
Speaking Part 3	
Pulling it all together	
3 Health and fitness	35
Writing Task 2: Problem/solution essays	
Reading: Identifying information	
Listening Part 1: Predicting answers	
Speaking Parts 1 and 2	
Speaking Part 3	
Pulling it all together	
4 Media and technology	49
Writing Task 2: Two-part essay questions	
Reading: Matching headings	
Listening Part 2: Predicting answers	
Speaking Parts 2 and 3	
Pulling it all together	
5 The environment	63
Writing Task 2: Discussion essays	
Language for key topics	
Reading: Note completion	
Listening Part 3: Multiple choice and sentence completion	
Speaking Parts 2 and 3	
Pulling it all together	
6 Tourism	77
Writing Task 1: Graphs with a trend	
Reading: Matching	
Listening Part 4: Sentence completion	
Speaking Part 3	
Pulling it all together	
7 Work	91
Writing Task 1: Comparative graphs	
Listening Part 3: Sentence completion	
Reading: Summary completion with a wordlist	
Speaking Parts 1, 2 and 3	
Pulling it all together	
8 Urban life	105
Writing Task 1: Maps	
Listening Part 4: Predicting answers	
Reading: Table completion	
Speaking Part 2	
Speaking Part 3	
Pulling it all together	
9 Future plans and predictions	119
Writing Task 1: Future trends graphs and maps	
Listening Part 3: Matching information	
Reading: Matching headings and multiple-choice questions	
Speaking Part 3	
Speaking Part 1	
Pulling it all together	
10 Food and drink	133
Writing Task 1: Describing a process	
Reading: Completing a flowchart	
Speaking Part 2	
Listening Part 2: Sentence completion	
Pulling it all together	
Exam advice	146
Audioscripts	147
Answer key	156

Unit	Writing	
1 Living home and away page 7	Writing Task 2: Advantage/disadvantage essays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay • Topic sentences for advantage/disadvantage essays • Supporting the topic sentence • Giving examples • Introductions for advantage/disadvantage essays • Conclusions for advantage/disadvantage essays
2 Education page 21	Writing Task 2: Opinion essays questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay • Introductions for opinion essays • Topic sentences for opinion essays • Giving opinions • Conclusions for opinion essays • Identifying opinion and advantage/disadvantage essays
3 Health and fitness page 35	Writing Task 2: Problem/solution essays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay • Topic sentences for problem/solution essays • Language for writing about solutions • Vocabulary for writing about solutions • Conclusions for problem/solution essays • Writing about the result of the solution • Introductions for problem/solution essays
4 Media and technology page 49	Writing Task 2: Two-part essay questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay 1 • Grammar: Noun phrases • Model essay 2 • Language for avoiding generalisations
5 The environment page 63	Writing Task 2: Discussion essays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay • Language for introducing ideas • Grammar: Relative clauses • Language for key topics: crime • Language for key topics: the 'good society'
6 Tourism page 77	Writing Task 1: Graphs with a trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay • Verbs and adverbs to describe changes • Adjectives and nouns to describe changes • Introductions for Task 1 essays • Overviews for Task 1 essays • Writing a main-body paragraph • Grammar: Describing changes
7 Work page 91	Writing Task 1: Comparative graphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay • Grammar: Comparative structures • Language for writing about numbers • Other comparative language • Vocabulary for pie charts and ratios • Introductions and overviews for comparative essays
8 Urban life page 105	Writing Task 1: Maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay • Language for describing changes in maps • Introductions and overviews for map essays • Two maps in the past
9 Future plans and predictions page 119	Writing Task 1: Future trends graphs and maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay 1 • Language for future trends graphs • Model essay 2 • Language for future maps • Model essay 3
10 Food and drink page 133	Writing Task 1: Describing a process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model essay • Grammar: Present simple passive • Grammar: Present perfect passive and participle structures • Linking phrases • Introductions and overviews for process essays

Exam advice
page 145


Reading	Listening	Speaking
Reading: Matching information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus 	Listening Part 2: Multiple-choice questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Speaking Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking about what you do • Grammar: tenses
Reading: True/False/Not Given questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Listening Part 1: Distractors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Speaking Part 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving opinions
Reading: Identifying information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Listening Part 1: Predicting answers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus 	Speaking Parts 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common questions related to health and fitness Speaking Part 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving examples from your experience
Reading: Matching headings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Listening Part 2: Predicting answers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Speaking Parts 2 and 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The news • Communication
Reading: Note completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Listening Part 3: Multiple choice and sentence completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Speaking Parts 2 and 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environment
Reading: Matching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Listening Part 4: Sentence completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus 1 • Skills focus 2 	Speaking Part 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism
Reading: Summary completion with a wordlist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus 	Listening Part 3: Sentence completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus 	Speaking Parts 1, 2 and 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking about jobs • Grammar: Cleft sentences • Grammar: Using comparatives
Reading: Table completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Listening Part 4: Predicting answers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Speaking Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A city you enjoyed visiting Speaking Part 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking about improvements
Reading: Matching headings and multiple-choice questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills application 	Listening Part 3: Matching information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills application 	Speaking Part 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future predictions Speaking Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your future plans
Reading: Completing a flowchart <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Listening Part 2: Sentence completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills focus • Skills application 	Speaking Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammar: Linking phrases • Grammar: Modal verbs to talk about the past

Introduction

Aim and approach

This book is designed for students who want to achieve a score of 5.5–6.0 in the Academic IELTS exam. It covers all four parts of the IELTS exam (Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing) in detail and aims to improve your IELTS score in each section. However, special focus has been given to the Writing section, as this is the area that many IELTS candidates experience the most difficulty with. All the exercises in this book have been developed in the classroom, and the material has helped many IELTS students to achieve the scores they need.

Organisation

The book is split into ten units, each covering a different topic. These topics (e.g. education, the environment, media and technology) are some of the most common areas of language that you will need for the exam. All the tasks that directly practise the exam format are indicated by .

Writing

The Writing sections take up approximately half of each unit and are split into two types:

- **Units 1–5** look at different types of Task 2 essays (advantage/disadvantage essays, opinion essays, problem/solution essays, two-part questions and discussion essays).
- **Units 6–10** cover the different type of Task 1 questions you may be asked to write about in the exam (trends, comparatives, maps, mixed questions, future graphs and processes).

Each Writing section begins with a **model essay**, designed to show you how to organise and write a good answer at this level. The following pages guide you through a step-by-step process for writing a good Task 1 or 2 answer. These exercises practise different parts of the essay (e.g. introduction, main body, conclusion), as well as highlighting key grammar and vocabulary for each type of writing question.

At the end of each unit, there is a practice question (or sometimes two) for you to apply what you have learned to a different essay question. Sample answers for all of these are provided in the key, so that you can compare your writing with another model.

Reading and listening

Each unit also contains sections for developing your reading and listening skills for IELTS. The exercises cover the main question types and skills for both Reading (e.g. matching headings, True/False/Not Given, table completion) and Listening (e.g. dealing with distractors, multiple-choice questions, matching information). There are *Skills focus* exercises, which show you the techniques required to tackle different types of reading or listening question, and *Skills application* exercises, which give you the opportunity to practise the techniques you have learned.

Speaking

The book covers all three parts of IELTS Speaking, providing you with strategies (e.g. using linking words to organise your answer in Part 2), as well as grammar and vocabulary which you can use in the Speaking exam. You will hear model answers recorded by native speakers, to show you what is required to gain a good speaking score.

Each unit ends with a section entitled *Pulling it all together*, which reviews key language and skills from the unit, and concludes with the final Writing task. The book concludes with a summary of advice for the exam.

You can access all the audios that accompany the book at www.allango.co.uk. (See page 1.)

There are full transcripts of the audio tracks at the back of the book.

I hope that you enjoy using this book, and I wish you every success in the IELTS exam!

Lewis Richards

Writing Task 2: Advantage / disadvantage essays

Model essay

i In this unit, you're going to look at how to write a Task 2 advantage/disadvantage essay. In the exam, you will have **40 minutes** for Task 2, and you have to write a minimum of **250 words**.

1 Discuss these questions in pairs.

- 1 Have you ever lived in a foreign country?
- 2 Would you like to live in a foreign country in the future? Why?/Why not?
- 3 Do you know anyone who has lived in a foreign country? Did they like it?
- 4 Why do you think many people these days spend time living abroad?

2 Write down two advantages and two disadvantages of living in a foreign country. Compare your answers in pairs.

Advantages	Disadvantages
1	1
2	2

3 Read the exam question and model essay, and see if the ideas are the same as yours.

These days, more and more people spend time living abroad, either to learn a language, to study or to work. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in a foreign country?

In recent years, it has become much more common for people to live in another country. Many people believe that there are significant benefits of doing this, while others argue that there are also drawbacks connected to living abroad. This essay will look at both points of view, and then I will give my opinion.

One advantage of living abroad is that you improve your language skills. This means that when you return to your own country, it will make it easier to get a better job. For example, many young people study in an English-speaking country for a few months or years, and when they come back, they have more job opportunities. Another benefit of living abroad is that you can learn about new cultures. For instance, you will learn about customs, habits and food. The consequence is that people tend to become more open-minded.

On the other hand, there are also some disadvantages. One drawback of living abroad is that people may feel homesick. They often miss their family and friends, and find it difficult to make new friends. Another important drawback of living abroad is that it can be difficult at first to adapt to the new country. This is because the way of life may be very different, and people often become frustrated, because they do not understand the new culture and the language very well.

To sum up, having looked at this topic in detail, it is clear that there are both advantages and disadvantages of living abroad for a while. In my opinion, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. Although it is true that it can be difficult at first, on balance I think that if you live abroad, you will have new experiences which will stay with you for the rest of your life.

(300 words)

4 Answer these questions about the model essay.

- 1 Were the ideas in the essay the same as yours?
- 2 How many paragraphs are in the essay?
- 3 How many advantages and disadvantages are mentioned?
- 4 Where is the writer's opinion included?
- 5 Do you agree with the writer's opinion?

Topic sentences for advantage/disadvantage essays

i A topic sentence is usually the first sentence of each paragraph of the main body of the essay. It is used to introduce the main idea of the paragraph. For example, the topic sentence in the second paragraph of the essay on page 7 is: *One advantage of living abroad is that you improve your language skills.*

1 Look at the model essay on page 7 and underline the other three topic sentences.

2 Complete these topic sentences without looking at the model essay.

- 1 One a____ of l____ abroad is that you improve your language skills.
- 2 A____ b____ of living abroad is that y____ can learn about new cultures.
- 3 One d____ of living abroad i____ t____ people m____ feel homesick.
- 4 Another i____ drawback of living abroad is that i____ c____ be difficult at first to adapt to the new country.

3 Correct the mistakes in these topic sentences.

- 1 One advantage of study English is that you can get a better job.
- 2 Another benefit for studying English is that you can communicate with people all round the world.
- 3 One advantage of living in the countryside is that peaceful.
- 4 Another benefit of living in the countryside it is friendly.
- 5 One disadvantage live in the countryside is that it can take a long time to get to work.
- 6 Another downside of living in the countryside that there is not much to do in the evening.

4 Complete these topic sentences with a suitable ending.

- 1 One advantage of living with your parents ...
- 2 Another advantage of living with your parents ...
- 3 One drawback of living with your parents ...
- 4 Another downside of living with your parents ...

5 Look at this plan for an advantage/disadvantage essay about going abroad on holiday. Write four topic sentences using the notes.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<i>come into contact with a new culture</i>	<i>language barrier</i>
<i>the weather – better than at home?</i>	<i>long time to get there</i>

Supporting the topic sentence

i After you write your topic sentence, you need to support it by writing one or two more sentences to give more detail, describe a result or explain why something happens. Writing good support sentences will enable you to build interesting paragraphs and increase your chances of getting a high mark for Writing Task 2.

1 Match these support sentences with their function (a–c).

- 1 **If** you live abroad, it is likely that **you will** learn the language of the country to a high level.
 - 2 **This means that** when you return to your own country, it will make it easier to get a better job.
 - 3 **In other words**, you will come into contact with people from different cultures and come across different ways of life and of doing things.
 - 4 **The consequence is that** people tend to become more open-minded and learn more about the world.
 - 5 It can be difficult to be separated from your loved ones for a long time while living overseas, **and the result is that** many people feel lonely and depressed.
 - 6 Another important drawback of living abroad is that it can be difficult at first to adapt to the new country. **This is because** the way of life may be very different, and people often become frustrated.
- a Gives more detail about the topic sentence
 - b Describes a result
 - c Gives a reason for something

Giving more detail

Look at four possible ways of giving more detail about this topic sentence:

One advantage of living abroad is that you can broaden your horizons.

- **If you live abroad, you will** come into contact with people from different countries, with different opinions and ideas.
- **In other words**, you come into contact with people from different countries, with different opinions and ideas.
- **Living abroad means that you** come into contact with people from different countries, with different opinions and ideas.
- **By living abroad, you** come into contact with people from different countries, with different opinions and ideas.

2 Write a sentence giving more detail about each of these four topic sentences.

- 1 One advantage of having a mobile phone is that it is easy to contact people. Having a mobile phone ...
- 2 Another benefit of owning a mobile phone is that it is useful if you need information quickly. By having ...
- 3 One drawback of having a mobile phone is that it is expensive. If ...
- 4 A further disadvantage of having a mobile phone is that it can be addictive. In other words ...

Describing results and reasons

The following phrases can be used to describe results and reasons:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 The result/consequence is that ... | 4 This is because ... |
| 2 As a result/consequence, ... | 5 The reason is that ... |
| 3 This means that ... | |

3 Decide whether each of the phrases in the box above introduce a result or a reason.

4 Complete these essay extracts with suitable phrases from the box above.

- 1 One of the main advantages of working from home is that you can save a lot of time.
____ you do not have to spend time driving to the office every day.
- 2 Another main drawback of studying abroad is that students often get homesick.
____ they are not able to enjoy their experience and may not benefit from it.
- 3 One drawback of working from home is that it is easy to get distracted from your work.
____ you do not have a boss checking that you are doing your work properly.
- 4 Another disadvantage of living in the country is that it can take a long time to commute to work every day. ____ you can get home late and be tired at the end of the day.

5 Complete these support sentences with your own ideas.

- 1 One advantage of learning English is that it improves people's chances of finding a good job.
This is because ...
- 2 Another advantage of learning English is that it is spoken all over the world. As a result,
if you learn English ...
- 3 One disadvantage of having a part-time job while you are studying at university is that it
takes up a lot of study time. The consequence is that ...
- 4 Another disadvantage of running your own business is that it can be stressful.
The reason is that ...

6 Write suitable support sentences for these sentences.

- 1 One advantage of living with your parents as an adult is that you can save money.
- 2 Another advantage of living with your parents as an adult is that you can help them around
the house.
- 3 One drawback of living with your parents as an adult is that you have less privacy.
- 4 Another downside of living with your parents as an adult is that you have to follow their rules.

Giving examples

Writing Task 2 questions always ask you to give relevant examples, so you need to be prepared to write one or sentences doing this.

1 Read this paragraph from a Task 2 essay about studying English abroad. Then decide which of the example sentences below (a–c) are suitable and which are not. Give your reasons.

One advantage of studying English abroad is that you can improve your English quickly. Living in an English-speaking country means that you have to listen to English all the time, and speak to native speakers every day. As a result, your level will improve dramatically in a short period of time.

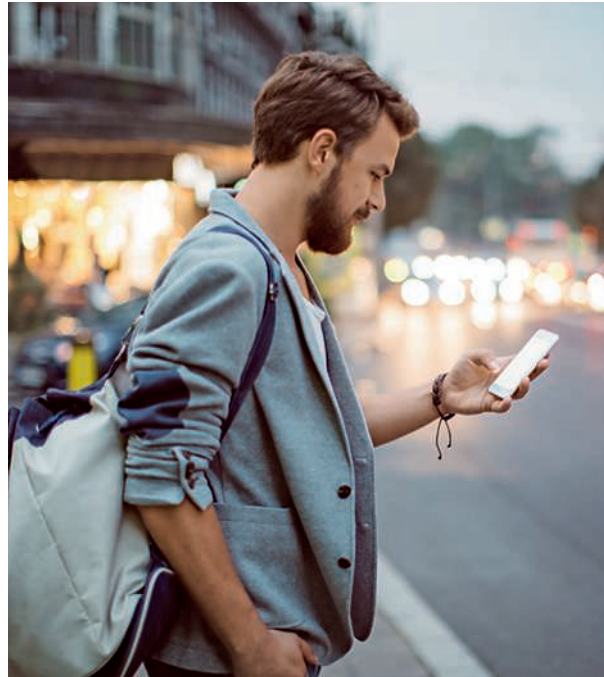
- a Take my cousin Juan, for example. When he went to the USA last year, his English was poor, but he worked really hard and now his English is great.
- b For instance, according to statistics, if you study English abroad, you will learn 30% faster than in your country.
- c For instance, many young people go to study in the UK or the USA for a few months after they finish university so that they can improve their speaking quickly and pass an exam in English.

2 Complete these phrases for giving examples.

- 1 For e____, ...
- 2 For i____, ...
- 3 T____ the UK, for example. In the UK, ...
- 4 A g____ example is ...
- 5 A c____ in point is ...

3 Add an appropriate example to each of these paragraphs.

- 1 One advantage of living in the countryside is that it takes a long time to travel to work. The reason is that you have to drive to the nearest city twice a day, and often there is a lot of traffic. ...
- 2 Another benefit of living with your parents as an adult is that you can help them around the house. By living with your parents, you are always available to give them assistance with shopping, cooking and cleaning. As a result, their life will be easier and they will be more relaxed. ...
- 3 One drawback of having a mobile phone is that it is easy to become addicted. You can find that you are checking your mobile phone many times a day, even during class or at the dinner table.
- 4 One disadvantage of living in a big city is that it can be very expensive. Living in a capital city means that house prices, transport and going out are much more expensive than in small towns or villages.



Introductions for advantage/disadvantage essays



It is important to write a paragraph to introduce your essay. It does not have to be too long, but you need to rephrase the essay question using different words and explain what your essay will do.

1 Discuss these questions in pairs.

- 1 What information should you include in an introduction to an advantage/disadvantage essay?
- 2 How many sentences should you write?
- 3 Should you repeat the essay question word for word?

2 Read the introduction to the model essay again. Are your answers to the questions in Exercise 1 still the same?

¹In recent years, it has become much more common for people to live in another country. ²Many people believe that there are significant benefits of doing this, while others argue that there are also drawbacks connected to living abroad. ³This essay will look at both points of view, and then I will give my opinion.

3 Match the sentences in the introduction (1–3) with their function (a–c).

- a This sentence says what the essay will do.
- b This sentence describes the two different opinions about the topic.
- c This sentence rephrases the question and introduces the topic.

4 Complete these introductory sentences with an appropriate tense of the verbs in brackets.

- 1 In recent years, it ____ (*become*) more common for people to live abroad.
- 2 Today, many people ____ (*want*) to study English in another country.
- 3 In recent decades, the number of people who study English abroad ____ (*increase*) significantly.
- 4 These days, many people ____ (*choose*) to live abroad for work or study.
- 5 The number of people who decide to live abroad ____ (*increase*) all the time.
- 6 The number of people who choose to work from home ____ (*rise*) over the past few years.

5 Complete the table with the tenses in the box.

present continuous ▪ present perfect ▪ present simple

Rules	Tense
1 Facts about now	
2 Recent changes	
3 Things changing now	

6 Complete this introduction.

In recent years, it has become much more common for people to live in another country for an extended period of time. ¹M____ people ²b____ that there are significant ³b____ of doing this, ⁴w____ others ⁵a____ that there are also drawbacks ⁶c____ t____ living abroad. This ⁷e____ will ⁸l____ at both ⁹p____ of ¹⁰v____, and then I will ¹¹g____ my opinion.

7 Complete the introduction below about working from home with the words and phrases in the box.

believe ▪ disadvantages ▪ doing ▪
points of view ▪ rising ▪
significant ▪ this ▪ while ▪
who ▪ will ▪ will

The number of people ¹____ choose to work from home is ²____ year on year. Many people ³____ that there are ⁴____ benefits of ⁵____ this, ⁶____ others argue that there are also ⁷____ connected to working from home. ⁸____ essay ⁹____ look at both ¹⁰____ and then I ¹¹w____ give my opinion.



8 Write an introduction for this topic: 'What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a mobile phone?'

Conclusions for advantage/disadvantage essays

i The most important thing in the conclusion of an advantage/disadvantage essay is to give your opinion. Do you believe there are more advantages or more disadvantages of the topic? You have to make it clear to the examiner what you think.

1 Discuss these topics in pairs. Do you think there are more advantages or more disadvantages for each one?

- 1 Living with your parents as an adult
- 2 Working from home
- 3 Living in the countryside
- 4 Having a mobile phone

2 Discuss these questions in pairs.

- 1 What should you write in a conclusion to an advantage/disadvantage essay?
- 2 How many sentences should you write?

3 Match the sentences in the conclusion of the model essay (1–3) with their function (a–c).

¹To sum up, having looked at this topic in detail, it is clear that there are both advantages and disadvantages of living abroad for a while. ²In my opinion, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. ³Although it is true that it can be difficult at first, on balance I think that if you live abroad, you will have new experiences which will stay with you for the rest of your life.

- a Stating your opinion
- b Saying that the other side of the argument has some good points, and then giving more detail about your opinion
- c Saying that you have examined both sides of the argument

4 Choose the correct words so that the sentences mean the same.

- 1 In my opinion, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.
= I believe there are more *advantages/disadvantages*.
- 2 In my opinion, the drawbacks outweigh the benefits.
= I believe there are more *advantages/disadvantages*.

5 Complete the conclusion with the words in the box.

advantages ▪ although ▪ balance ▪ clear ▪ detail ▪ disadvantages ▪
experiences ▪ having ▪ opinion ▪ outweigh ▪ sum

To ¹____ up, ²____ looked at this topic in ³____, it is ⁴____ that there are both ⁵____ and ⁶____ of living abroad for a while. In my ⁷____, the benefits ⁸____ the drawbacks. ⁹____ it is true that it can be difficult at first, on ¹⁰____ I think that if you live abroad, you will have new ¹¹____ and learn valuable new things, which will stay with you for the rest of your life.

6 Write conclusions for these two topics.

- 1 What are the advantages and disadvantages of working from home?
- 2 What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in the country?

Listening Part 2: Multiple-choice questions



Skills focus

i One of the most common types of listening question in the IELTS test is multiple-choice questions. These questions can be difficult because at least two of the options are usually mentioned. You need good listening technique in order to identify which option is correct and which options are incorrect, and why. You will find multiple-choice questions in all parts of the IELTS Listening test; the questions in this unit are similar to those you might have to answer in Part 2.

- 1 You are going to listen to a presentation about studying and working abroad.**
Before you listen, read questions 1 and 2.

- a Underline the key words in the questions and the options.
b Think of possible synonyms for the key words that you have identified.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Overseas Opportunities moved into a new building in</p> <p>A 1992.
B 1978.
C 2001.</p> | <p>2 Overseas Opportunities send people abroad for</p> <p>A less than a month.
B a maximum of a year.
C more than a year.</p> |
|---|---|



- 2**   Listen to the first part of the presentation and choose the correct letter, A, B or C, for questions 1 and 2.

- 3** Read the audioscript on page 147 and underline the sections that gave you the correct answers. With a partner, discuss why the other two options in each question are incorrect. Then check your answers to Exercise 2 in the key on page 156.

- 4** Underline the key words for questions 3–9 and think of possible synonyms.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>3 Volunteers on a charity placement do not have to pay for</p> <p>A their shopping.
B the house they stay in.
C taking the bus or train to other parts of the country.</p> <p>4 People who want to do a voluntary placement should</p> <p>A have done a similar placement before.
B be happy to live in a simple way.
C speak some of the local language.</p> <p>5 Overseas Opportunities now sends the highest number of volunteers to</p> <p>A South-East Asia.
B India.
C Sub-Saharan Africa.</p> | <p>6 Most of the internships arranged by Overseas Opportunities</p> <p>A do not pay a salary.
B pay a good salary.
C pay a limited salary.</p> <p>7 If you are offered a work placement, you should</p> <p>A pay Overseas Opportunities once for arranging it.
B not pay anything at all.
C pay the company you are going to work for.</p> <p>8 The speaker says that the number-one thing people can get from doing a work placement is</p> <p>A saving money.
B having a better work record when you look for a job.
C doing new things.</p> |
|---|--|

Skills application

- 1**   Listen to the second part of the presentation and choose the correct letter, A, B or C, for questions 3–8. When you finish, check your answers in the audioscript on page 147.

- 2** Discuss this question.

Would you be interested in doing voluntary work overseas? Why?/Why not?

Speaking Part 1

Talking about what you do

i In the first part of the speaking exam, the examiner will ask you a few personal questions, including questions about what you do. These questions are really important because they give you the chance to show the examiner how good your English is. To do this well, you will need to have a good range of grammar.

1 Discuss these questions in pairs.

- 1 Do you work or are you a student?
- 2 How long have you been working or studying?
- 3 What do you enjoy most about what you do?
- 4 What did you do before?
- 5 What are your future plans?

2  **3 You are going to hear a man answering the questions in Exercise 1. Listen and make notes about what he says.**

3  **4 Listen to a woman answering the same questions. Make notes about what she says, then compare in pairs what you heard from both people.**

4  **3,4 Complete what the speakers said with the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Then listen again and check.**

Speaker 1

- 1 So, at the moment, I ____ (*study*) English in a language school.
- 2 I have great teachers, and I ____ (*live*) with a great host family.
- 3 I ____ (*study*) English for about three months and I've got one month left before I finish my course.
- 4 What I really like about studying English is that I ____ (*meet*) lots of interesting people.
- 5 Before I ____ (*come*) here, I ____ (*work*) as a shop assistant in a supermarket, but I ____ (*decide*) that I ____ (*want*) to get a better job, so I ____ (*quit*) and I ____ (*come*) here.
- 6 I ____ (*plan*) to study at university in the UK.
- 7 If I get good results in IELTS, I ____ (*start*) an MBA in London in September.

Speaker 2

- 1 I ____ (*work*) as a nurse in a local hospital. I ____ (*specialise*) in caring for young children who are in intensive care.
- 2 I ____ (*work*) as a nurse for nine years. I ____ (*work*) for six years in a hospital in another city, and I ____ (*work*) in this job for three years.
- 3 What I really ____ (*like*) about my job is that you can make a difference to people's lives.
- 4 When I ____ (*finish*) school, I ____ (*take*) a gap year and I ____ (*travel*) around Asia and Australia for about nine months.
- 5 Next year, I ____ (*apply*) for a promotion to senior nurse.
- 6 If I get it, I ____ (*have*) more responsibility, and of course more money, which will be great.

5 What verb tenses did the speakers use? Discuss in pairs why each tense was used and whether there is more than one tense that could be used.

Grammar: Tenses

1 What is the difference between these two sentences? Discuss in pairs.

- 1 At the moment, **I'm studying** English in the UK.
- 2 **I work** as a nurse.

2 Look at this extract from Speaker 1. If you want to talk about things you did in the past which are finished, which tense do you need?

Before I **came** here, I **worked** as a shop assistant in a supermarket, but I **decided** that I **wanted** to get a better job, so I **quit** and I **came** here.

3 Read these sentences. Which ones talk about finished actions (F), and which ones talk about unfinished actions (U)? Which tense is used in each sentence?

- 1 I worked as a shop assistant for a year.
- 2 I've been working as a nurse for nine years.
- 3 I worked for a few months on a farm in Australia.
- 4 I've been studying English in the UK for three months.

4 What is the difference between these sentences which talk about the future?

- 1 Next year, **I'm going to** apply for a promotion.
- 2 If I get it, **I'll have** more responsibility.
- 3 **I'm planning to** study at university in the UK next year.
- 4 If I get a good result in IELTS, **I'll start** an MBA in London in September.

5 Complete these sentences with the correct tense of the verbs in brackets.

- 1 When I ____ (*finish*) school in 2014, I ____ (*take*) a break from studying for a year, and I ____ (*work*) as a volunteer in a care home.
- 2 At the moment, I ____ (*do*) a part-time job in a café, but in September I'm going to start university.
- 3 If all goes well, I ____ (*start*) my own business in the next year.
- 4 When I finish university next year, I ____ (*plan*) to take six months off and go travelling.
- 5 I started working as a doctor when I finished university, and I ____ (*work*) for six years. I love it, it's a great job!
- 6 Right now, I ____ (*live*) in a host family, and they are very nice, but next month I ____ (*look*) for my own place to live.
- 7 I ____ (*work*) as a dentist. I qualified ten years ago, and I ____ (*work*) as a dentist ever since.
- 8 Before I ____ (*come*) here, I ____ (*spend*) five years working in an office job, but I ____ (*not like*) it very much, so I ____ (*give*) it up, and now I'm studying English.
- 9 I ____ (*apply*) for a place at university last month, and they accepted me. I ____ (*start*) in October.
- 10 I ____ (*graduate*) in French last June and I ____ (*get*) my first job a month later, so I ____ (*work*) for nine months now.



6 Make notes about the questions in Exercise 1 on page 15. Use a variety of tenses.

7 Ask and answer the questions in pairs.