Female Voice: You are now listening to the IELTS podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

Ben: Band 9 IELTS essay review. In this tutorial, we're going to look at an essay and we're going to look at a model answer and we're going to dissect it. We're going to break it down word by word phrase by phrase to really understand what you need to be doing to get a band 9.

Now, this will be extremely helpful for you especially if you're at around a 6 or a 6.5 because you can steal or borrow phrases from this essay and you can really get an insight into what the examiner is thinking, what criteria they're using. This commentary is all by an ex-IELTS examiner, so you can be sure that you're on the right track. The ex-IELTS examiner is on our team and she helps out in our company and I asked her to review some essays and we started off with the best, with the band 9.

All right, so let's have a look at the question. "Online education and training is becoming increasingly popular in the business world. Do the advantages of this development outweigh the disadvantages?" Now, I will not go into the next steps that you should do for planning and writing your essay. I've mentioned it in previous episodes, in previous videos and tutorials and there's a very easy straight forward technique to use, which is shared in the online course in a quite detailed fashion and is very effective, but let's have a look at the introduction.

First of all, obviously something that the examiner hasn't noticed is that it's two to three sentences. Two sentences to be specific. That wasn't accidental. We need a light, brief introduction. So, first of all, this is the introduction. "Enthusiasm for digital technology is at an all-time high not least in the workplace as companies around the world turn to internet-based training to keep their employees abreast of all the latest developments."

What can we pull from this first sentence? Well, the first part is-- the examiner points it out that this is topic specific vocabulary and is an appropriate use of paraphrasing, "enthusiasm for digital technology…" In the question, the words online education was used. The writer has used digital technology, so we're paraphrasing.

Also, it says "becoming increasingly popular". Another way to say that is "enthusiasm for". So, appropriate use of paraphrasing. Cohesion and coherence was the next point. He said, "…not least in the workplace..." Okay, so it's quite a sophisticated and smooth way to link these two ideas. One, "the growing enthusiasm for digital technology", okay and "in the business world". It says in the question "in the business world". So, I paraphrase and I put "…not least in the work place..."

The other point that I mentioned was "…is at an all-time high..." This demonstrates a wide range of vocabulary. So, just to summarize so far in the first part of the sentence, we've covered lexical resource twice, topic specific vocabulary, paraphrasing, and wide range of vocabulary and then cohesion and coherence by linking the ideas together smoothly. "...not least in the work place..."

Next part of the sentence: "As companies around the world turn to internet-based training to keep their employees abreast of all the latest developments..." makes use of natural-- makes natural use of sophisticated vocabulary. Why was this sophistication there? Well, "…to keep employees abreast of all the latest developments…" To keep breast is to keep updated, but it's not the most common word and it's not the most common phrase. "…to keep abreast of all the latest developments…"

So, this is the level we should be aiming for and also none of this sounds forced. It's very natural. Next one, "As with all new trends..." once again linking sentences together so that the essay flows." As with all new trends..." next one "...there is some debate whether this transition is for the best."

Let's bring it back to the question. Let's get it back on topic and we're going to end this sentence-- end this introductory paragraph so that it can lead smoothly into the main essay. Also, just bring it back to the question as well, which is-- obviously because this essay is band 9, is on topic. If we bring it back to the question, we're just making sure that we're all on-- that it's all on topic.

Next one-- by the way, some of these sentences might be like double counted. For example, "enthusiasm for digital technology" might not just be a lexical resource point. It could maybe be a point for some other part of the criteria. Also, there could have been some points for grammatical range and accuracy, but just for simplicity, I'm trying to pick out parts from-- I'm just going to pick out sentences and then just show you how they scored in a specific criteria. Otherwise, we could be here all day.

So, let's have a look at the next paragraph. "One key reason for this move away from more traditional training methods is the fact that e-learning offers business the opportunity to reduce their expenditure significantly." Now then, "one key reason for this move." This would be helpful for cohesion and coherence because it links the introductory paragraph to the main essay.

Next one-- well I guess it would be body paragraph 1 to the main essay. You could also say introductory paragraph. Now, task response. Which sentence of what I just mentioned was useful for task response? Well, the final part, okay, because it says "to reduce their expenditure significantly," you see? Let's just go back to the question.

"Do the advantages of this development outweigh the disadvantages?" Well, I just mentioned "to reduce their expenditure significantly." So, I'm inferring that this is obviously an advantage. As I just mentioned before, some of these sentences will score points in two other criteria and this is an example, okay? It's also because that sentence or that fragment "reduce their expenditure significantly" also helps you with your lexical resource because it's a natural use of a wide range of vocabulary and we've also got a collocation: "reduce their expenditure significantly."

Next part. "Providing face-to-face training can be exorbitantly expensive." I hope you picked up on two of the phrases there. "Face-to-face training"; topic specific vocabulary and beautiful, beautiful collocation if I say so myself: "exorbitantly expensive". All right, let's move on. So, there's a natural use of collocation there.

Now, next part of the sentence where we just put a comma in, "...particularly in terms of travel costs and lost productivity and online courses can greatly reduce the expense of keeping employees well informed and up to date." This is also another argument in favor of online education. We're keeping with task response. We're not going off topic.

More importantly, this was an-- the final part of that sentence helps you with grammatical range and accuracy because it's an accurate use of a complex sentence. I'll say it again, "...particularly in terms of travel costs and lost productivity." So there's a collocation there, "lost productivity", "...and online courses can greatly reduce the expenses of keeping employees well informed and up to date." So, it's a complex sentence, but it's accurately expressed with no errors.

Next point, "Computer training renders geographical location irrelevant." Now, this sentence would be very good for sophisticated use of vocabulary for lexical resource and also 'renders'; that's not a very common phrase and it's also used in a natural and correct manner.

Next part of the sentence. "...and this eliminates the need to pay an instructor to travel to your office or cover the cost of sending your employees to a training center." Can you see? This extends and supports the main idea. Bring it back to task response. "...this eliminates the need to pay an instructor to travel to your office or cover the cost of sending your employees to a training center."

So, all through the essay, all through this body paragraph, we're keeping on topic and we're building up our arguments. We're adding additional arguments. Final sentence-- no, penultimate sentence, "...It also minimizes the amount of time wasted..." That's a very short sentence and there's nothing wrong with a short sentence.

The error is when you pack your essay full of short sentences. What we need is what you can see right in front of you or what you've just heard, which is a balanced approach using a mixture of long sentences accurately, some medium sentences, and some short sentences.

Final sentence, "...From a purely financial perspective, there is no doubt that this shift to digital learning makes perfect sense." That's like if we're playing on a casino, not in a casino, sorry. If

we're playing in one of those bandits and then it just goes all into line and goes ding, ding, ding, that's exactly what is happening here because we're scoring points, okay? So it's a well-constructed complex sentence that's also packed with collocations. "...purely financial perspective..."

Also for the grammar, "…there is no doubt..." Then we've got "this shift". Shift, again, is a word that we're not going to hear all that often. It just basically means a move. "...this shift to digital learning makes perfect sense..." Another collocation: "perfect sense." So, first paragraph in favor, lots of topic specific vocabulary and a mixture of sentence length and very, very coherently tied together.

Let's move on to the next paragraph. "...However, research suggests that the quality and effectiveness of web-based courses lag behind the efficiency of those delivered in a classroom setting." So, not only are we going to score points for task response here because we're linking it back to the main idea, yes?

What was the main idea in the question? "Do the advantages of this development, digital learning in business, outweigh the disadvantages?" Here, we're bringing it back to the question. "...The quality and effectiveness of these courses lag behind the efficiency of those delivered in a classroom setting..." Can you see? "It lags behind" So, we're directly answering it. We're giving the examiner basically information and reason for us to score high in task response.

Let's move on. So, "however"; appropriate use of a linking word to contrast ideas. This is how we started our body paragraph two. Next one, "Research suggests…" That's a good sentence, a very useful sentence. "…that the quality and effectiveness of web-based courses lag behind in efficacy of those delivered in a classroom setting."

So, cohesion and coherence is very important and we've mentioned it twice in that sentence because we said-- we've referenced and what we're going to mention now because we said, "...lag behind in efficacy of those classes delivered in a classroom setting..." But we don't say "those classes", we're just referring to it and that's the cohesiveness.

Next one, "People crave interaction and while digital training courses may offer a welcome addition to a company's professional development plan, many educators believe that they should be used to complement rather than replace instructor led sessions." So, we've got a very well-constructed complex sentence here.

We've got the conjunction "while", okay? "People crave interaction while digital course may be a welcome addition to a company's professional development plan, many educators believe that..." So, we've got this sentence that kind of represents two kinds of views and then we kind of extended it and we supported the main idea of this body paragraph, which as we mentioned before corresponds with the initial question. So, "…they should be used to complement rather than replace instructor-led sessions..." bringing it back to the original question.

Next one, "Some subject matter such as compliance training is well suited to an online format whereas..." This is another example of good cohesion and coherence because it's linking these ideas together smoothly. "...whereas management or leadership courses which are more collaborative in nature are best taught in person."

"In person" there is good vocabulary, topic specific vocabulary especially related to education. This is also another useful sentence for grammatical range and accuracy. Let me read it again. "...management or leadership courses which are more collaborative in nature are best taught in person." So, here we've shown the examiner we can use a wide range of structures.

Next sentence, "Many companies are starting to implement blended learning programs..." "Blended learning" collocation there, "...which aim to combine the best of both worlds." Now, here we've effectively used a relative clause "which aim to". Getting a good control of your relative clauses such as which and who and the rest is a very useful technique to improve your grammar.

Now the last part; appropriate use of high-level vocabulary. "…combining the best of both worlds." It's almost a phrase. It's almost a saying in itself. "Combine the best of both worlds." So, you might even want to write down that sentence and include it in the next essay you write of course, only if it's appropriate.

Let's move on. We're finishing now. "In conclusion..." cohesion and coherence score there. It introduces the final paragraph. "In conclusion, although the rise of computer-based education is very attractive in terms of reducing overheads..." Once again we've got with this sentence "although", the conjunction. "...although the rise of computer-based education is very attractive..."

The first part of the conjunction and we've used it and we've used it correctly. Then "in terms of reducing overheads" a wide range of lexical resource there. The second part of that conjunction "...for the moment at least, more traditional training still has its place in the workplace." So, you can see that sentence there and using the conjunction "although" and then using "at least" has helped us to score points.

Now, final sentence, "...the challenge for businesses is to find the right balance between the two." So, that final sentence helps us with task response because if we go back to the question, "Online education and training is becoming increasingly popular in the business world. Do the advantages of this development outweigh the disadvantages?"

Let's just go back to that final sentence. "...the challenge for businesses is to the right balance between the two." Between physical classes and-- well basically between digital education and physical classes. They're not addressing the advantages and disadvantages of online education.

So, thank you very much for being with us today while we went through this essay. If you want more help, then the next step is to go to ieltspodcast.com and you can sign up there. Leave us your email and we'll send you a big jumbo e-book full of sample essays and sample questions where we dissect essays, we show you all the different essays that you can write. There's just lots of basic IELTS materials in that book.

Also, if this has been useful for you, then please send it on to somebody else. Send somebody this link and help them also. If you can think of anyone who's struggling with IELTS at the moment then perhaps send them this video or this resource, this audio.

Then my final thing that I want to say is if you're in a hurry to pass IELTS then you can have a look at our online course at ieltspodcast.com, our online IELTS course and also you can check

out the Essay Correction service which is very popular. Weld love to give you feedback on your essays because it's a very fast and effective way to improve.

The online course includes lots of opportunities for feedback and lots of essay corrections included in the course. So, you're looking at tutorials, you're getting advice, you're putting that advice into your work and you're getting feedback of your work. It's a very fast and effective way to improve.

My name is Ben Worthington. Thank you very much for being with us today. All the best with your IELTS preparation. Take care.

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