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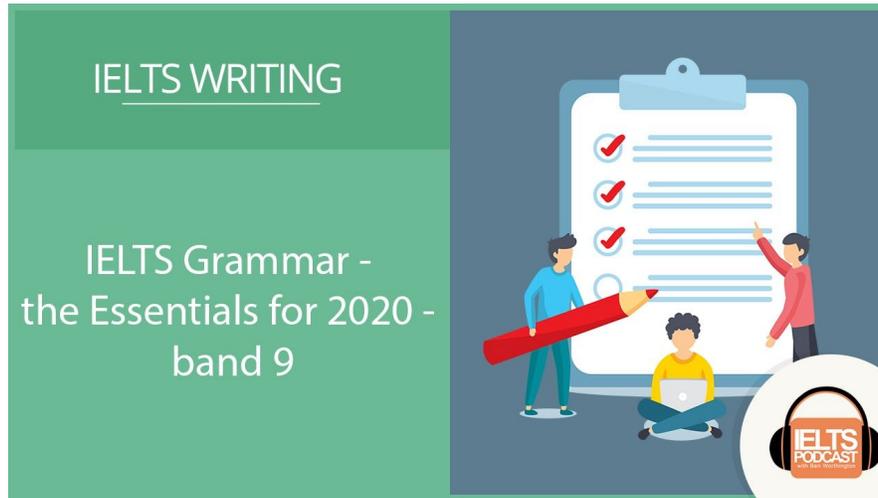
**Female Voice:** You are now listening to the IELTS podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

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## INTRODUCTION

**Ben:** Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we will be continuing with the three-part series we're making about essential grammar for IELTS. This is part 3 and on this tutorial, like the other two, we have Cate. How are you doing, Cate?

**Cate:** Hi, Ben. I'm great. How are you?



**Ben:** I'm good, too. I'm good. Okay. So, I guess we could jump straight into it and by the way, just before we do jump straight into it, if you're struggling with IELTS grammar especially for the writing, there are a few different things you can do.

**FASTEST WAY TO IMPROVE IS WITH ESSAY CORRECTION FEEDBACK**

I think personally the fastest way to improve is to get feedback. We've got this service available at [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com) and we are seeing amazing results with this day in day out. So, what happens is we'll send you a question or you buy the essay correction. We'll send you the question, you write out the essay, and then we'll review your essay and we'll give you feedback.

We won't just criticize you and destroy you and say this is rubbish. This is bad. This is bad. What we aim to do is also highlight what you're doing well and this makes such a big difference. Would you agree, Cate?



**Cate:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ben:** Cate also helps out with the [essay corrections](#) now and again as well and all the teachers actually really have taken this way of teaching. They've taken it to heart and we really do try and emphasize it with our corrections because it's hard.

The study of IELTS is a challenge and if you get your essay back and all that's happening is the teacher is just destroying your writing and just overlooking the parts that you did write because that's also expected then-- it's better than doing nothing, but it's demoralizing. In order to repeat what you've done right again-- not in order to, but it's more likely you repeat what you've done right again if somebody has highlighted that you've done it right. So, this is quite an important concept.

Anyway, let's get into today's tutorial. The first grammar point that we are going to look at if you're aiming for a band 9 is inversions. So, could you explain this for us, please?

### INVERSIONS IN ESSAY WRITING



**Cate:** Yes, Ben. Thank you. So, inversion is actually changing the word order in a sentence, but the thing is that this kind of inversion that we're talking about is done to emphasize something in the sentence without actually using expressions for emphasizing things. So, we're emphasizing by using a certain grammatical structure.

**Ben:** Okay. Could you give us an example of this specifically with the writing perhaps?

**Cate:** Yes, yes. So, for example, certain words require-- certain adverbs especially negative adverbs are used in the beginning of the sentence, for example, hardly or scarcely or seldom. So, they require an inversion and emphasize the main element of the sentence. For example, seldom does a day go by without someone emailing to explain that they have passed their IELTS exam, right? So, that emphasizes the fact that there's absolutely no day without some person emailing us about their success, right?

So, we emphasize a certain important fact only by using a certain negative word, but it's not negative actually. It means there is absolutely no day without that happening.



**Ben:** Yes, it's very extreme that it doesn't happen and Cate giggled a little bit when she was doing the example and I laughed as well because I had jumped in advance. I jumped into the document in advance and modified it just to express how it is like for us working at IELTS podcast. Isn't that right, Cate?

**Cate:** Yes, absolutely. I didn't expect that. I knew I left another example there. That is such a wonderful surprise. And the thing is-- I would like to go on. The thing is that this is an unusual emphatic special way of saying something. Of course, you can say it normally in a neutral way. Every day, someone emails us to explain that they have passed their IELTS exam, but that sounds regular, right? So, that's the point of using inversion; highlighting something, drawing more attention to it.

**Ben:** Excellent point there. I'm glad that you mentioned the normal way of saying it as well because it's always good just to have that contrast of maybe the standard way and then the advanced way. So, thanks for that. Also, how else can we use inversion? Could you give us another example or another structure?



**Cate:** Yes, sure. Many other words and structures require it and they all tend to be negative words like never and nor. For example, never have I thought that grammar requires such a huge effort, right? So, never have I thought. So, never no are words that will require emphatic inversion like here. Again, this can be said absolutely neutrally, but we don't choose easy ways. We want to sound beautiful and sophisticated and that's why we choose less usual ways to emphasize things.

**Ben:** Good point. I the expression which we're just going to go on to next. No sooner; I like this one. I like this and also the one we've got in the example; that little did, but no sooner because-- I like this one because we can also use it in the speaking especially for explaining a situation like no sooner had I popped the kettle or no sooner had I got out of the bath and the door rang, for example.

**Cate:** And the sentence with little did they realize is actually a very useful sentence in essay writing like the example that we have here. Little did they realize or little did the authorities realize what the consequences of their actions or measures will be. Of course, we're thinking



about writing all the time. Of course, we can use them and we should use them in IELTS speaking as well because that's only a huge plus, but of course, we always think about writing.

**Ben:** And also just as I mentioned very briefly at the beginning, when you're using new-- if these phrases are new to you and you are keen on integrating them into your essay writing-- into your essays, I would strongly recommend you get feedback on these before you enter the exam because you want to be 100% confident that you're using these correctly rather than risk it in the exam.

So, moving on to the next point, we can also use this technique with time clauses. Is this right?

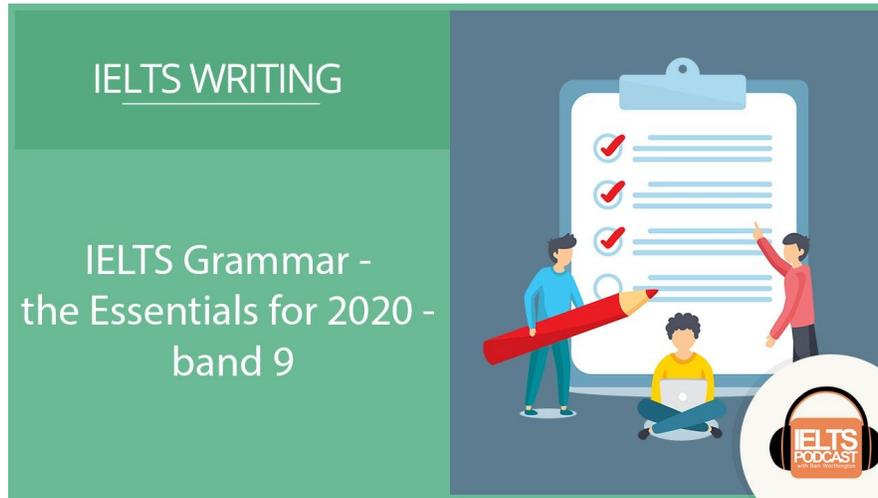
**Cate:** Yes, that's right and the time clause is a clause that refers to some temporal context, something about time, right? That's why it's called a time clause. Look at this one. Not until two days later did they remember to call the school let's say or to call someone. Again, we have a temporal context; not until two days later. So, something happened too late and again, we have a negative word. We have the word not in the beginning.



That's again, a very important hint for anything dealing with the emphatic inversion. It's always going to be a negative word. If you look at all of these words, expressions, and collocations, it's always going to be a negative word.

**Ben:** Just to emphasize that this is a **case of emphasizing**. It's a way of emphasizing what happened. It's slightly more expressive than as we've said before just saying it in the normal style. Okay and we can also use inversion with certain prepositional phrases. Could you give us an example about this?

**Cate:** Yes. We can also call them collocations because in fact, they are collocations, right? Just technically, they tend to be collocations using prepositions. For example, under no circumstances and this is a very formal expression, very formal. Like under no circumstances can a replacement card be issued. This means absolutely no way. So, this is completely impossible. There is no situation when that could be done. This is highly formal. I do not advise using that in speaking because that will sound a bit unusual.



**Ben:** Yes, I agree. I agree. I like this phrase under no circumstances because one, it's a collocation as we've just mentioned, but it's a very strong one. So, there's going to be no ambiguity as to what you're saying assuming that the rest of the phrase is grammatically perfect. It's a strong expression which will clearly signal to the examiner or to the reader what your position is or what somebody else's position is here because it's so strong. Under no circumstances can nuclear power ever be justified, for example. If you were arguing against nuclear power, now it is completely irrefutable. Now, it is completely unquestionable that the writer believes nuclear power could be used.

### HEDGING IN ACADEMIC WRITING

**Cate:** And I would like to add we discussed hedging in a previous podcast and hedging means softening your opinion so that it doesn't sound too categorical. Well, sometimes you do have to sound categorical. [unintelligible 00:11:21.17] like that about nuclear weapons and all of these

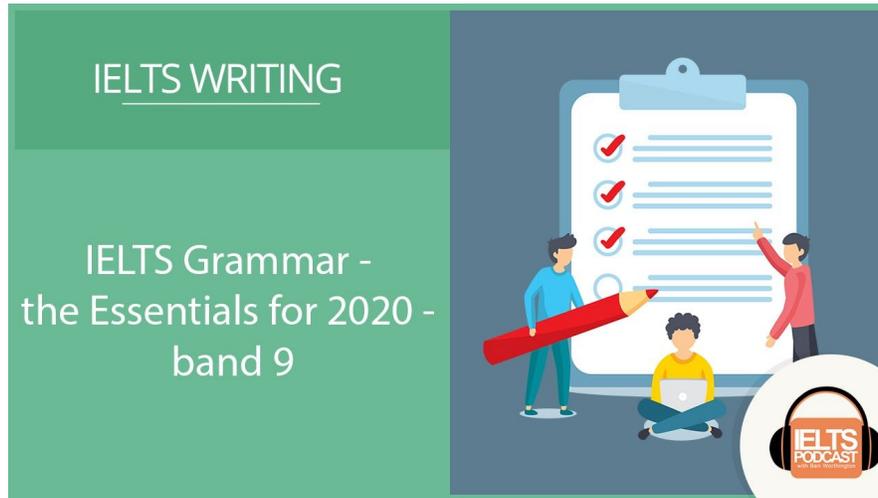


expressions-- negative expressions that do imply require emphatic inversion are exactly the case and no there is-- I don't really think they could be ever combined with hedging. I don't just think so.

**Ben:** I was thinking about this just now, Cate, and I thought-- I was trying to think can this phrase be hedged? What do you think about this if the student wrote something like various or it is commonly-- no. Various experts believe that under no circumstances. It is kind of watered down a little bit, do you think because they say believe.

**Cate:** Technically, yes, but actually you are reporting their extreme position, their categorical position. So, yes. You're kind of saying no, it's not me. It wasn't me. No.

**Ben:** Exactly, yes. You're hedging it like sidestepping the responsibility of these experts believe this. However, I think, nuclear power is an extremely practical energy source, for example, but yes, like you said it is kind of sidestepping and shifting this certainty on to the experts. So, you are therefore writing in a more hedge-like fashion I guess. Okay. I think we've--

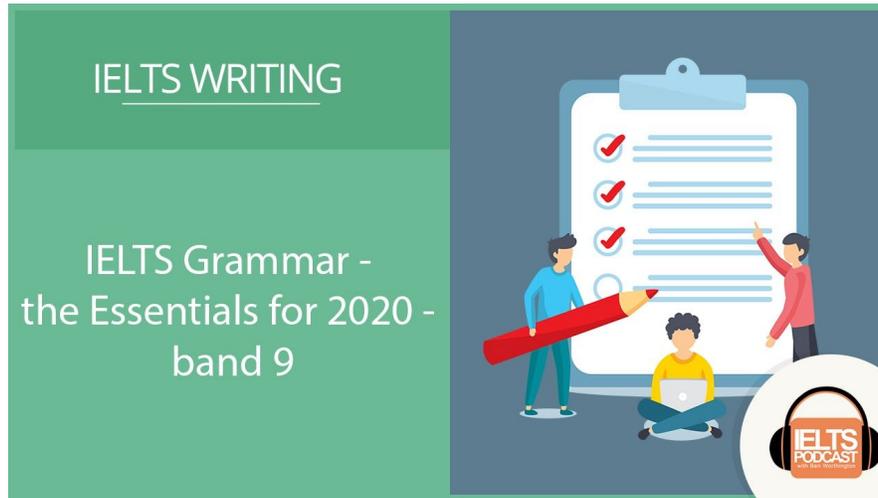


**Cate:** And there are two more very good expressions again very useful I think in essay writing; in no way and at a certain time. Like in no way does that imply and you can bring any negative or positive opinion that you would like to discuss and that's a very interesting way to introduce contrast, to disagree. I would use it for disagreeing if I have to write an argumentative essay.

TRY TO USE COLLOCATIONS

**Ben:** Yes, I love this actually. I love these collocations because as listeners know, we are big fans of using collocations. They help you sound more natural. They automatically give you half a sentence or a fragment of a sentence grammatically perfect, so it takes a lot of stress-- not stress, but it takes a lot of work out of writing a grammatically perfect sentence.

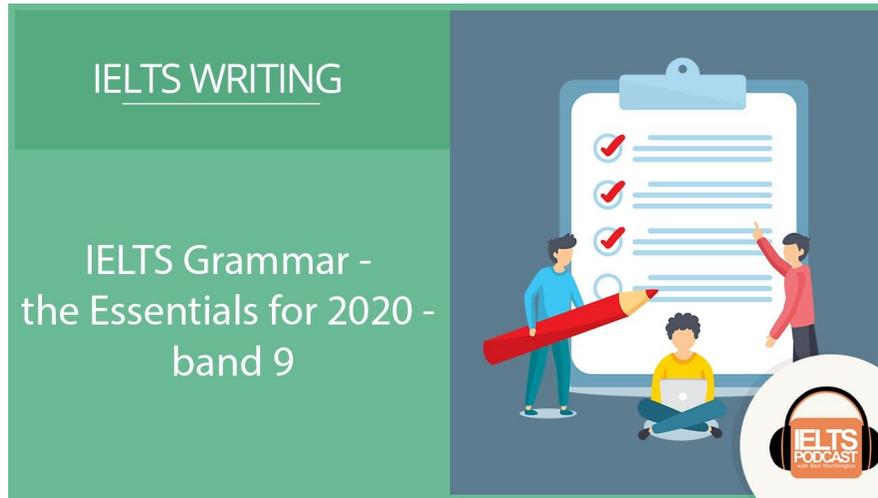
If you use a lot of collocations, you're going to sound more natural and it's going to increase the chances of-- it's going to decrease the chances of grammatical errors. So, in no way does that infer we are fans of nuclear power. In no way does that infer or just in no way does that imply that nuclear power is the only solution because etc. etc.



So, I'm also with Cate on this; using these fragments, using these collocations especially the inversion ones are a good way to build a strong coherent high-scoring essay. Moving on to the next one, we're going to look here at some other advanced conditional structures. Even if; this one I'm a big fan of and I've included this one in the online course. So, could you explain this one, please?

### CONDITIONAL STRUCTURES

**Cate:** Yes. Again, we have discussed conditionals already in structures for band 7, structures for band 8 and this is the final batch of conditional structures and even if is a special condition. It's an extreme condition and a lot of students don't really understand the difference or they mix it up with even though. Even if does stress the fact that no matter what you believe-- like as we have it in the example even if you refuse to believe me, it's true. So, it's a case of an absolute extreme situation.



**Ben:** Yes, yes and it really emphasizes it, doesn't it? Even if you think nuclear power or even if scientists believe nuclear power is the only viable solution, it does not outweigh the security disadvantages or the security risks or whatever.

**Cate:** And curiously-- sorry to interrupt you, Ben, and curiously if you replace even though in the sentence, it's going to change completely and this is how you can test whether you need even if or even though. Sometimes they're similar. Sometimes they're similar. They do introduce concession which is contrast basically if used in the beginnings of sentences, right, but sometimes even if is specifically an extreme condition while even though is contrast clearly.

**Ben:** Interesting. So, that example that I gave that was more contrast, wasn't it then I guess.

**Cate:** Can you say the sentence again?

**Ben:** What was it now? Even if experts believe in nuclear power being the only viable solution, it does not outweigh the risks inherent. That's slightly similar.

**Cate:** So, if you say even though the experts believe and so on and so forth, it doesn't-- that second clause, that second part of the sentence that you have doesn't sound as convincing as it



is with even if because this even if makes you sound like no matter what you believe, look at the result, but even though is kind of balancing. Even though-- like even though nuclear power is really dangerous and many people believe it's unjustifiable to be used and then you go on with the positive side, right? So, that is clearly contrast.

**Ben:** Absolutely, yes and so it's like a softer version, isn't it?

**Cate:** Exactly. Even if is much more extreme. So, when we don't know which one to use, you can always do the test and see does the meaning change because sometimes it doesn't and sometimes it does. There is no unified rule, but you can always remember even if is more about the extreme condition and even though is more about contrast, but context and meaning and whatever we're discussing decides everything and whatever we're contrasting and putting together the black and white that we discuss.

**Ben:** Excellent point there; a good way to summarize. Now, moving on to the next one, we've got unless. I like this one as well. I'm a big fan of this one.



**Cate:** Yes. I'm an even bigger fan of except when because I do see unless in essays here and there, but I'm not sure when I've last seen except when, but they do look similar and they are kind of very close, but again, unless is basically and if not.

**Ben:** Exactly.

**Cate:** For example, we cannot-- I don't believe that this and that country will opt for nuclear power unless it can be made completely safe, right? Again, we're on nuclear power; why don't we continue the topic? So, if it's not made completely safe then that's a no, but except when means only in that case, only absolutely in the situation when that is done because except when is kind of an even if for me.

**Ben:** Yes, yes, yes. That's what I was thinking.

**Cate:** [unintelligible 00:20:01.24], right?



**Ben:** Exactly, exactly. Unless certain conditions are met. Exactly. Okay. Excellent. We've also got another phrase; given that. I like all of these actually, but these first three, definitely. Given that is used when some fact is already known. Yes, this is very useful for the writing.

**Cate:** And it's why given or shows that the fact is already known. The fact is given. That's why we have the word given.

**Ben:** How would we use this in an example?

**Cate:** Let's say given that this area is liable to flooding, it would be unwise in the extreme to consider buying a house here. So, we know that this area is flooded often, right? We know it. We can't say I know this area is flooded every single year. You cannot say it like that. It's too direct. It's too personal. It's not professional. It's not academic, but once you turn it into given that this area is liable to flooding, 1) we use passive, right? Well, it's a kind of a passive construction. Well, it's with an adjective, but still.

So, we focus on the area. We use given instead of I know this fact.



**Ben:** Yes, yes.

**Cate:** It sounds much more formal, much more journalistic kind of.

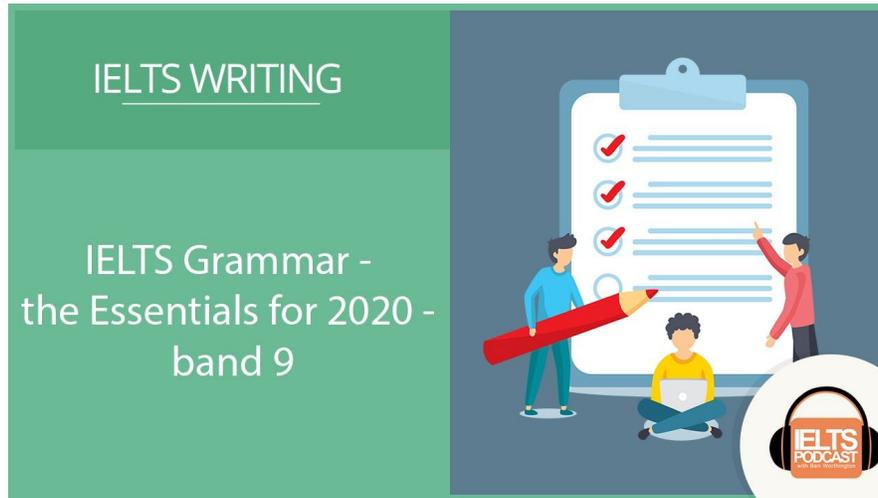
**Ben:** Yes, and it's more sophisticated as well. You could say nuclear power is known to be dangerous. That's one way of saying it, but you could also--

**Cate:** And passive again. Passive passive; it is known to be dangerous.

**Ben:** Or you can say given that nuclear power is known to be dangerous. Yes, I guess we could use both, but it is kind of like a slight concession as well. It's like although we've got this, it is also extremely economical, for example.

**Cate:** Yes, yes and yes, as you said, it is a slight concession. Given that sounds like a very, very slight contrast.

**Ben:** Exactly, yes. Like given that-- or maybe it might be probably more accurate maybe to say although. Although nuclear power-- Anyway, I think we're getting a bit out of topic.



**Cate:** There are shades of meaning. There are contexts where both expressions would work when only one would work, but yes, that's very disputable.

**Ben:** Yes, it depends. As you just said, there are shades of meaning. It depends on what the rest of the essay is saying and the position of the writer in that specific case. Okay, so some more; we've got but, for, and without.

**Cate:** Without is an easy one because we can easily say without the international community's help, Turkey would never have overcome the consequences of the earthquake. Yes, well, I'm watching the news. Let's say we are discussing international collaboration in an essay. I'm making things up as I go. So, we can say without someone's help and that's obvious and this without is super easy on the one hand and it's a very invisible if on the other hand, but the expression but for is so rare and so underestimated that no one even thinks that it's a conditional.



But for the international community's help and you look at this and think what in the world is that? And that's a conditional. If they didn't help them, if they hadn't helped them depends on your conditional of course--oh third. So, that's a well-hidden conditional this but for.

**Ben:** Yes, I'm sure I read it somewhere. Okay. Sorry, I was just trying to think of another example. I don't have it ready. Okay.

**Cate:** It's also very formal by the way but for.

**Ben:** Yes, yes, definitely. Okay. Next one: providing, provided that, and as long as. I like as long as. It's another one of those collocations.

**Cate:** Yes, again as long as is slightly lower in level. I don't know why I put it here because providing provided belong here better, but again, as long as can work as a conditional because it's a conditional and somehow a time implication, too. So, it can be both. Again, very disputable, but let's go back to the difficult ones: providing and provided.

[unintelligible 00:25:25.14] providing and provided that can go with or without that are very similar to given that and in meaning because it is provided. It is given. It is offered, right? It's



right there. So, students very often ask me what's the difference between provided and providing?

Technically, there is no difference, but if we look at this simple grammar behind the words, look at this providing is a gerund or a continuous form. So, there is more emphasis on present, on the immediacy like right now. Providing this is happening, this will happen and provided is less immediate, but it doesn't mean it's going to be used only for the past, no. Providing is kind a bit a bit more immediate.

**Ben:** Yes, I'm thinking these would be very useful in a conclusion, wouldn't they? When you're kind of summarizing your argument for like provided that nuclear power is strongly regulated, there is no reason it cannot be the main power source for a country.

**Cate:** Absolutely, yes, and in this case, you can either say provided or providing and nothing's going to change.



**Ben:** Good point and maybe another sentence in the conclusion: provided that students-- provided that children are closely monitored while using computer games, there is no reason their use should be discouraged, for example.

**Cate:** And curiously, if we replace provided by as long as in the sentence about children and computers, it will sound slightly different. As you said, provided and providing are very well fit for a conclusion and if you say as long as children and so on and so forth are strictly supervised while playing computer games, it sounds tentative. It sounds temporary. As long as okay, maybe, maybe, but then what happens? It sounds less concluding.

**Ben:** Exactly. Yes, good point and just for the students listening, one possible exercise could be to look at [IELTS Task 2 questions](#). Make your plan and then fast forward to the conclusion and just practice writing your concluding paragraphs and write them all with this provided structure just to get it 100% under control. Once you've got that sentence under control, you've got a certain percent of the essay under control.

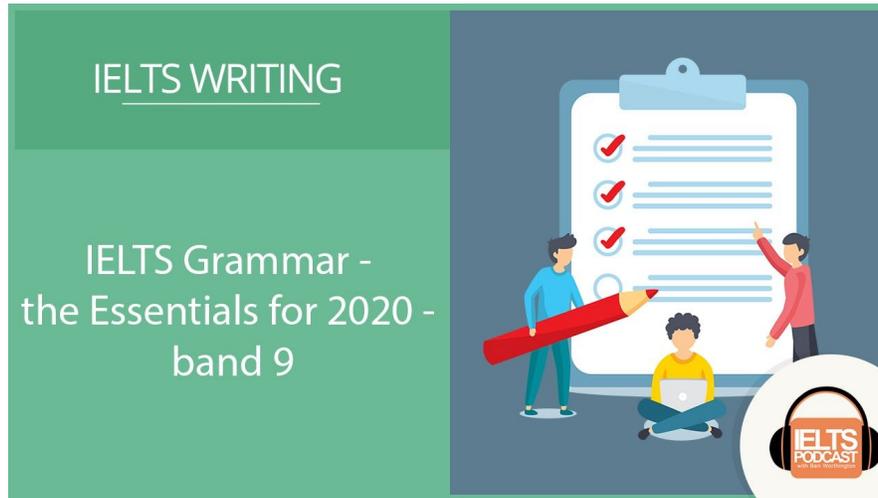


With essay writing being quite a challenging topic and probably the area where most students struggle, as we've recommended in previous podcasts, break it down into its smallest components and focus on dominating each component and once you've dominated it, move on to the next one and within time, you'll find that you've completely dominated the whole essay-writing process.

So, if you are struggling with conclusions or if you've dominated introductions and you've dominated your body paragraphs and now you're just working on conclusions, this would be a very good sentence to master and integrate into your repertoire of sentences and grammar structures that you could start using in your essay writing.

All right. Moving on to the final section now of this tutorial, we're going to be looking at verbs changing meanings and taking gerunds or infinitives. Can you explain this for us?

**Cate:** Yes. We all know that there are verbs that take only gerunds or only infinitives. For example, some verbs take only an infinitive. For example, I encouraged her to wear the uniform. Let's say parents encourage-- no, schools encourage students to wear uniforms



because it promotes equality and whatever whatever, right? So, some other take only gerunds, right? Like she couldn't imagine wearing anything but that dress, but some verbs take both-- I mean take either infinitive or a gerund and there is no change in meaning.

For example-- how will you say they began to discuss the issue or they began discussing the issue? There is no difference actually. Begin, start, cease, continue, they don't really care about what follows and that's how grammar works. However, there are verbs that use or let's say activate different aspects of their meaning depending on what follows and it's not that it's a different word. No. Technically, it's the same word. Let's say remember or let's say mean. I love the change in the verb mean, but when you look at the whole sentence, it's completely something else.

Let me illustrate and I said mean and I'm going to jump to mean right away. Look at this. My example is very, very simple, very trite, nothing sophisticated, but we can adapt it. We can then think of an example for essay writing. For example, the fact that your options are ruined means



buying a new pair of shoes, right? This involves so this means is actually synonymous to the word involves.

However, if you say I meant to say something else, it means I intended, right? So, it's not involve. It's intend and it's the same verb. So, the thing is that it's not the same word meaning different things. It's activating different aspects of meaning because most words in language have many meanings.

**Ben:** Yes, yes, and if you can activate the less common meaning of these verbs by the structure of the sentence, then you're going to be using more uncommon structures which will help you get the higher points. We've got mean, as we just said involve or intended or intend. We've also got-- I like this one as well. He came running into the room as a way of movement and then we've also got they came to accept her opinions. Like they gradually came round to her way of thinking so to speak. Yes, I like this. I like this and what other ones do we have?

**Cate:** I really love the verb regret. On the other hand, it's also very useful because when used appropriately, it can be of great help while writing using different styles. For example, you can



express regret in the past. Yes, you can express your own regret. For example, I regret telling her that she looked bad. It means that you're sorry about that, right? You regret telling her.

You can also say I regret having told her and that will be even more precise if we use the gerund, but it's not wrong to use the present. It's not wrong to say I regret telling. It's still fine. However, if we say I regret to say that you're not properly attired or dressed whatever, this immediately becomes much more formal and this is a regret in the present or this can even become a reproach because if you say I regret to say that your dress code does not correspond to our norms, which means would you please leave and change your attire.

**Ben:** This would be useful for [General Task 1](#), wouldn't it as well?

**Cate:** Yes, it would. Absolutely.

**Ben:** Yes, yes. I regret to say that your charges for the overdue book I returned last Friday were exorbitant to say the least or whatever.

**Cate:** Yes. It would work perfectly in letters of complaint.



**Ben:** Exactly. Yes, yes, good point, good point. Excellent.

**Cate:** So, other verbs that work in a similar fashion are go on, stop, try, again, remember, forget, regret, mean, come here, and some others. So, the list is not exhaustive. We have four examples here. We discussed came running. We discussed regret and mean and we also have go on.

If you say that someone went on talking, it means he continued talking, but if we say he went on to talk about the dress code, it means he moved on to the next topic. In a way, that's continued, but that's a different kind of continue. That's moving from point one to point two.

**Ben:** Yes, excellent point there, excellent. Okay. So, I think we've covered a lot of points here. Just as a word of warning, there are more points obviously and there are more grammar structures when you're aiming for a band 9. We've covered a few here; the ones that we thought would be relatively easier and relatively straightforward to adopt. Don't worry if you find them incredibly challenging, but we just wanted to highlight a few that you can start using and start integrating into your writing.



We are approaching the finishing time now and I'd just like to say that if you are struggling with the exam, please get in touch. Email us and we can offer you some guidance. We can point you to some tutorials. Also, we strongly recommend you join the email list because we're sending out new tutorials numerous times a week and special offers for the online course.

Also, as you probably know, we have the apps for the Apple app and the Android app where you can listen to these tutorials and get the full transcript and follow along. It's a very useful way to improve your vocabulary and to fully comprehend what is being said and to improve your chances of remembering it.

I think that's about it for now. Would you like to add anything before we finish, Cate?

**Cate:** No. I think that's it and the only thing is that the list of topics for band 9 which are absolutely complex grammar and at the same time being proof of supreme mastery of language is not this short. There are more. So, if students want to aim toward band 9 because there are people who do need band 9 for professional certifications. I know of cases like that. So, they should explore anything which is C2-level grammar.



**Ben:** Exactly. Good point, good point and if you want to check out which certain words are C2 level although we do have a framework for essay writing-- for essay structure which includes C2 phrases, you can also check the Cambridge dictionary and maybe write a word there and you can check next to the word. It'll usually say in a blue sort of like oval shape-- it'll say A2, B1, B2, or whatever it is and give you examples. So, that's a very useful resource that we'll probably be including in this tutorial as well if you're going to [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com).

So, that's everything. Thank you very much for listening. Good luck with your exam and remember you're not alone. You've got us to help you, so just reach out. All the best and take care.

[Music]

**Female Voice:** Thanks for listening to [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com)