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INTRODUCTION

Ben: Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we are going to look at recent essay questions seen by students who've done the exam recently and then sent in the question they saw and we will be looking specifically at positive-negative questions. Is this a positive or a negative development?

And we will be looking at generating ideas and sample answers specifically the ideas and how we go about planning and organizing these ideas in order to build coherent paragraphs that score high both for task response and cohesion and coherence. Also along the way as normal, I will be



giving you pointers and advice and encouragement with regards to the other criteria such as lexical resource and grammatical range and accuracy.

My name is Ben Worthington and you probably know me by now and you know my story, but if you don't I'll just remind you. I used to live in Spain. I'm originally from a small town near Manchester and you may have picked out my northern accent. It has been watered down a lot over the last I don't know 15 years since I left northern England. First, I went to Spain. I started teaching English and yes, as you probably know, most English teachers or a lot of English teachers lose their accent or a lot of native English speakers when they move abroad end up losing their regional accent just so they could be understood by people who are not from the UK.

Anyway, that's exactly what happened to me to a point. Some people still recognize it, but anyway I started teaching and eventually I started teaching IELTS. I was really determined to get results for my students. So, I started interviewing some of the best experts around: ex-IELTS examiners, pronunciation experts, higher education experts, linguistic experts; all these experts to



find out what was working to help students pass the exam. Some of the advice was absolute rubbish, so I just threw it out, but I was testing everything and eventually, I kept all the winning tips, all the winning strategies after trying them out and put them in the online course which a lot of students every week are using to get their IELTS certificate.

And it's so good I offered a guarantee jump to band 7 or it's free. So, have a look at that if you're struggling with your IELTS exam and yes, get in contact. We'd love to help you. There's Daphne, Ellen, myself, Candice and we're all here to help you pass the IELTS exam. We're very results orientated.

IELTS Task 2 Essay Questions

Anyway, let's jump into these recent [IELTS Task 2 questions](#) and as I said, we are focusing specifically on is this a positive or a negative development? Give reasons for your answer and



include relevant examples. First question: in many countries around the world, young people decide to leave their parents' home once they finish school. They start living on their own or sharing a home with friends. Is this a positive or a negative development? Give reasons for your answer and include relevant examples.

That was my southern English Received Pronunciation accent. So, let's jump into it. Now, there is a distracting sentence there. There's one or two there. So, let's just break down this question and simplify it and this is the cohesive task response table method or T method that we teach in the course.

And the reason I can do this so quickly is not only have I been doing this for years, but also it's the most straightforward technique you can use to really understanding what the question wants from you. And when you really understand what the question wants, what the question requires, it's easy to score points for task response.



So, let's see. In many countries around the world, blah, blah, blah young people decide to leave their parents' home once they finish school. They live on their own sometimes with friends. Positive or negative. Let's see. I'm just going to go with for body paragraph 1 this is a positive development because... I have to use because or I have to use why. This is the crooks. This is the structure of a cohesive paragraph; asking why and developing it, not just jumping on to another answer.

So, children-- sorry. Where is it-- young people leaving their homes to live alone or with friends is a positive development because. Now, I just simplified the question and put down my position probably in capital letters and from there, I'm going to brainstorm ideas why it is a positive development.

It's a positive development because the young people become independent. They learn life skills such as cooking. I'd probably put a list in there. They learn life skills. Life skills is perfect topic-specific vocabulary for this topic all about people or youngsters leaving the nest and



starting out on their own. So, life skills such as cooking-- what else would you gain? Cooking, cleaning, and independent living. Furthermore-- so, I'm going to add more additional arguments in this.

Furthermore, they often become self-reliant and they are usually pushed to get a job so that they can pay the rent. They are basically joining the real world and this entails many benefits such as a faster career development. For example, a recent government study states that when a student finishes university and works and lives away from home, they are five times more likely to find a career-related job rather than a weekend job.

So, I've given the evidence. Now, I've given the evidence for my last point. I've listed roughly around three or four points and I've developed the final point with more evidence, with an example in there and this just makes for a solid essay because I haven't got one point and developed it. I've got one or two points and then I just developed in depth the final point. There's no point developing the first point in depth and then adding a few additional points. It just



doesn't read right. I'm going to give you a few reasons and then with my final reason, I'll develop it fully and give you an example.

So, that's what I would write for the first body paragraph and then in the negative-- sorry. In the second body paragraph, I'm going to focus on the negative sides because the question has specifically asked me is this a positive or a negative development. Now, I could easily say another paragraph about it being a positive development, but I think it's easier if I just give the negative side because then I'm looking at both sides. Also, I find it easier to argue especially for this one.

So, I could say it is a negative development because it reduces family ties. It is costly and unnecessary because many family homes have spare rooms and also because they have to leave the village or their home location to go to a city for a job, this may cause a mental illness. Recent studies show young adults in a large metropolitan city are three times more likely to develop a mental illness than those living in rural environments.



Now, that example was particularly good because we had the comparative structure which is also useful for Academic Task 1, but if we can include a grammatical structure like that with a comparison in there, we're on the right track. It just improves our grammatical range and accuracy.

Anyway, I did exactly the same as I did in the first body paragraph. I gave you a few points, a few reasons why it's a negative development and then I fully developed my final point with a scientific study from the University of Kutaisi in Georgia, for example and as I said before, when you're giving these examples it's usually good to just use a recent university and it's not essential, but it just makes it more believable. You really want to be focusing on your ideas, the development of those ideas, and of course, your grammar and vocabulary use.

By the way, when you finish brainstorming these you can always go and look online and just check. In fact, in the online course, we have a tutorial all about how to get ideas and in the



process, improve your vocabulary. So, I'd strongly recommend having a look at that if you are struggling with idea generation or if you think your vocabulary is below par.

What's my conclusion? I'll just probably pick a side. The positive developments far outweigh the negative developments because staying at home is ultimately delaying the inevitable. That's a very accurate phrase because in most countries, if you're a 40-year-old man still living with your parents, something is wrong. So, we all know in practically every society that the children eventually leave their parents homes. In some societies, it's later than others, but practically all societies have this pattern and it's obvious it's seen as weird if they don't follow this pattern.

So, yes, even though there are advantages and disadvantages as you've just heard, but generally speaking, inevitably people will leave their parents' home sooner or later because otherwise it's just weird. You can't write that in your conclusion, but you can say something similar. Denying the inevitable is the phrase that would definitely help you here. It's a collocation. It's what native



English speakers use and it would definitely boost your score because it's accurately used as well.

Second question: these days, more fathers stay at home and take care of their children while mothers go out to work. What could be the reasons for this? Is it a positive or negative development? So, let's see. This is actually is a positive or negative development because we've got those-- sorry. It is a positive or negative development style question because obviously, we've got those words in the question, but also we've got that what could be the reasons for this and we cannot ignore that direct question.

So, body paragraph 1 we're going to dedicate to the reasons why more fathers are staying at home. Body paragraph 2; what are we going to do? Are you going to talk about positive or negative ones? Well, just for the sake of simplicity, I'm going to say it's a positive development. I'm going to give my reasons why. I'm going to develop it and that's that. I'm not going to look at the negative side because I've got 40 minutes. If I'm wanting to get a high score, I'm looking



at 300-350 words. I don't really want to mix both sides in one paragraph. I'm going to go for simplicity. It's easier to read. It's easier to write and this is it. It's a language exam. It's not an intelligence exam. So, I'm just going to go for one side.

Anyway, let's jump into this. Again, get my position crystal clear. More fathers stay at home to take care of their children because... Now, I need to think of reasons because of why, develop the answer. The reasons for a father staying at home is because sometimes the mother earns more. Topic-specific vocabulary coming up. She is the bread winner. The bread winner. She wins the bread for the family, but the bread winner means the highest earner in the family.

So, the reasons why fathers may stay at home is because the mother earns more. She can focus on her career development. For example, a recent survey by [monster.co.uk](https://www.monster.co.uk), an English careers website, showed that the women who spent 10 years in continuous employment vastly outperformed those who took a break to raise a family, for example.



So, that's a logical real world example. Is it true? I don't know. It's definitely believable. It's realistic, so I'm going to stick it in there. So, here I had my idea. I developed it and I backed it up with a survey; a fictitious-- I made-up a small lie of a survey by monster.co.uk which is a careers website in Britain.

Next one: more socially acceptable nowadays. This is my second reason why fathers stay at home. Because it's more socially acceptable. Maybe 20 years ago it was seen as ridiculous, but now it's more socially acceptable. More high-scoring vocabulary. A recent study by Manchester Metropolitan University shows that-- let's see. So, I want a study that basically says it's more socially acceptable, so let me think. A recent study by Manchester Metropolitan University shows that opinions of stay-at-home fathers has shifted from ridiculous to positive in the last 15 years.

Maybe ridiculous would be a bit strong there. That shifted from strange to widely accepted and often encouraged in the last 10 years. So, I've got two reasons backed up with two pieces of



evidence and there we go. Job done. That's body paragraph 1. Look at the question again. Direct question: what could be the reasons for this? I've given two possible reasons. Both are believable.

Let's move on to body paragraph 2. Is it a positive or negative development? Well, I'm going to say it's a positive development. Personally, I'm kind of neutral. I don't really mind. It doesn't really impact me in the slightest. If my girlfriend earned more, I'd happily stay at home. I'd happily stay at home and play on the PlayStation, catch up with my friends. I'd happily do that. I don't really care, but for the sake of the question, I'm going to pick a side because it's just easier than saying I don't really care. You can't put that in your body paragraph for obvious reasons.

So, this is a positive development because reason one: children often have a stronger connection with their mothers. Now, it possibly becomes balanced in that the child has an equally strong connection with both their mother and father. This can only be positive. I could even back this up with a study. Recent studies by the University of Sydney showed...



Anyway, I'm just going to carry on with another reason. Furthermore, traditional gender roles are being challenged. The child will not be learning to hunt and chop wood. Actually, in the end I decided to ditch this idea because I'd have to use more sentences to try and explain it. It wasn't crystal clear and I was going down a rabbit hole so to speak and I was like let's get out of here. I'm not even going to do it.

So, I'm going to ditch that idea. It was just way too complicated. Traditional gender roles have been challenged. The child will not be learning to hunt and chop. Nowadays-- yes, I was just like no, reverse. Get out of that. Get out of that one. So, maybe I'd have to think of another idea. I don't think it would be too difficult. As I said, we've got a module all about generating ideas. It's quite straightforward.

So, to finish off that paragraph, I would say overall, it could produce a better upbringing for the child and more financial resources for the family. Actually, that's probably more likely for the conclusion. For the conclusion, I would say there are multiple reasons why a father may stay at



home. These range from career development and changes in society's perception of the house husband-- vocabulary. Overall, it could produce a better upbringing for the child and provide more financial resources for the household, therefore there are numerous positives to improve the life quality of the child. So, I am strongly in favor of this new development.

Something nice like that at the end. It's positive. So, that would be my rough sample ideas for this essay and now that I've got those ideas, it really is a walk in the park. What does a walk in the park mean? It means it's easy-peasy lemon squeezy as we say in the UK. It's easy-peasy now to organize those ideas because I'll just drop them in the C2 template and away we go.

Final question, ladies and gentlemen. More and more companies are allowing employees to work at home. Do you think this is a positive or a negative development? Now, obviously and I hope you had the same thought. As soon as you start developing ideas for this question, you have to, you absolutely have to mention corona. You cannot write this essay in 2020 without mentioning corona. Please. This is the kind of awareness the examiners want to see. So, more and more



companies are allowing employees to work at home. Do you think this is a positive or negative development?

Positive. Body paragraph 1: it is positive because it prevents workers with families infecting their children with corona. Reason no. 2: I could develop it, for example or a hypothetical one. I'm just brainstorming now. Reason no. 2: it gives employees partial ownership over their timetable. This can later be optimized. Now, this one I definitely do need an example because it might not be crystal clear first time round.

So, here is my example. For example, if the employee is a night owl, they could perform their work in the evening and in theory, get it done to a better quality than having to work through morning brain fog. So, there is some beautiful vocabulary there. A night owl is a person who prefers to study or work in the evening. This is when their brain switches on. Apparently, it's about 40% of the population.



I personally I'm an early bird which means I like to get up at six or seven in the morning and annoy my girlfriend by making noises in the kitchen, but I prefer to wake up early in the morning and start my day and that's when I'm the brightest. In the evening, I'm brain dead and I get brain fog, but if you force a night owl to work in the morning, they have a lot of brain fog which means it takes a tremendous amount of mental energy just to think things through whereas in the evening, they're more alert. Their brains are woken up so to speak.

So, anyway. Also, I would improve the vocabulary of that sentence. Instead of saying get it done to a better quality, I could say complete tasks to a superior standard-- you see-- rather than having to work through morning brain fog. So, yes. I strategically chose that idea to be developed into an example because I don't think it's crystal clear in the first sentence. So, by the time the examiner has read the second sentence of that idea i.e. I've developed it further, I've given an example, now he's like okay, now I understand.



Another point which I'd probably put-- actually no. I'd probably just carry on here. Another point, hypothetical example. Furthermore, if an employee has a family, work could be managed through KPIs. Actually, no. I'd probably delete that because it's nothing related to a family.

So, I could just say furthermore, another reason it's a positive development is that the employee could be managed through KPIs rather than hours which is common practice in a standard office. This means that they are given goals to fulfill rather than a chronological timetable which is vaguely linked to productivity. A recent study by the office of statistics shows...

So, what I'm saying here is that the employee could be given goals to achieve rather than hours to complete and I was originally going to link this to families, but then I was like it's not that much related. It's more a productivity argument rather than family argument. Yes, the employee would possibly have more time to spend with their family, but it's kind of distant. So, I'm just going to focus on productivity or maybe add it as a thought afterwards, but for the time being I've got enough reasons there.



Body paragraph 2: it is a negative idea. It's a terrible idea because the employee could be lost without over-the-shoulder guidance. More vocabulary. When the employee becomes lost they could become unproductive because they simply just do not know what needs to be done. Secondly, it is a security risk because if a student has to log into the company IT network from home, the home laptop could be ill-prepared and a potential risk factor. Hackers are a real threat. Just look at the U.S. elections.

That was probably a bit direct, but I could say hackers have become a real threat in 2020 as experienced by the U.S. with the recent election debacle. Debacle; that's a nice word to put in there. Debacle means messy situation which hopefully you're aware of i.e. the U.S. elections being allegedly tampered with by outside hackers.

Anyway, let's jump-- so there. That's a security risk. It's also a negative reason because or probably better to say other reasons why it is negative include that it could be potentially expensive for the employer especially if a securely prepared laptop has to be deployed. Also, the



employer may have to invest in expensive work-from-home security training. Reasons to this show and then I would dream up, I would invent a realistically sounding university or governmental or company-sponsored study that proved my point.

So, I've got all my different reasons there and I've backed them all up with solid real-world examples. Now, I just need to do the conclusion. Easy. The conclusion is that working from home is a perfect solution for certain employees especially those with families. However, some workers need and want guidance and social interaction. Therefore, the best solution is to go on a case-by-case basis.

And that would be sufficient. Obviously, I would write it in a little bit more of an eloquent academic style and improve the vocabulary, but that's the gist of my conclusion. Those are my notes. Now, that I've got all my notes clear and I know the direction I will go for both body paragraphs and I know what I will write more or less for my conclusion, I can start writing my introduction.



Just follow the structure in the Sentence Guide then I drop my ideas into the template, write them all up using the structures, the sentence structures. It's really straightforward and then I drop my final ideas and position of my conclusion into the structure given for the conclusion and hey presto! I've got an essay.

And the first time you do it, it won't take 40 minutes. It'll probably take you maybe an hour, an hour and ten, but the more you do it, the faster it gets and it quickly becomes automatic and this frees up so much time and that time can be used to think of better quality ideas, to think of more ideas, or just to organize those ideas and it just becomes so much easier. I won't say it becomes a walk in the park, but it definitely becomes easier and I hope you've remembered what a walk in the park means.

Anyway, that's enough for today. Thank you very much for listening and the first step in improving your essays is getting feedback. So, when you sign up to our updates, leave your email. Sign up and you'll get a special offer for an essay correction. It's ridiculously priced and



we're going to have to increase the price soon especially with the dollar falling. Anyway, we're going to have to increase the price soon. So, I'd take advantage of that while you can.

What you do is you sign up and then you get a very low priced offer and we priced it ridiculously low around about four times cheaper than it should be just to get students started because once you get started, it's so much easier and we'll give you some feedback on your essays. We'll tell you where you're going right, where you're going wrong, where you're picking up points, where you're losing points, and we will help you. And we want you to continue improving, so have a look at that.

CONCLUSION

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transcript if you're having difficulty understanding my ex-northern accent, but there you can get everything that you need and you get some offers as well.

So, have a fantastic day. Keep moving forward. Thank you very much for listening and all the best with your IELTS preparation.

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