

[Music]

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.

[Music]

Ben: Recent IELTS Task 2 questions for February 2021. Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we're looking at some fresh new questions seen by our students who are going to the exam centers and telling us the questions they saw and also questions we've seen online by other places and other students submitting them.

Right. Let's get going. So, directors of large organizations earn much higher salaries than ordinary employees do. Some people think it is necessary, but others are of the opinion that it is unfair. Discuss both views and give your own opinions.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2 Questions and Answers (February 2021)



We've got the instructions straight in front of us; both views. The problem, the problem as you'll probably be aware of is that there are probably four views here. We've got higher salaries for directors than employees. Is that good or bad? And then we've got some people think that this is necessary. Is that good or bad? And then others think that it's unfair. Is that true or false?

You can see it's so easy to get frustrated and lost and mixed up with this, but don't worry. Benjamin is here. Don't worry. We are here and we're going to work through it. So, the first thing we do is we simplify it and we're just going to say it's necessary. That's my argument here and then I'm going to go with-- the second body paragraph I'm going to say it's unfair because that way I'm addressing the first sentence; the directors of organizations earn higher salaries and then I'm focusing on the second part by saying some say it's necessary other say it's unfair.

It's much easier once you know how to simplify a question. This is a whole module we do in our IELTS course and it's so beneficial for students. When I started preparing students for IELTS

IELTS WRITING

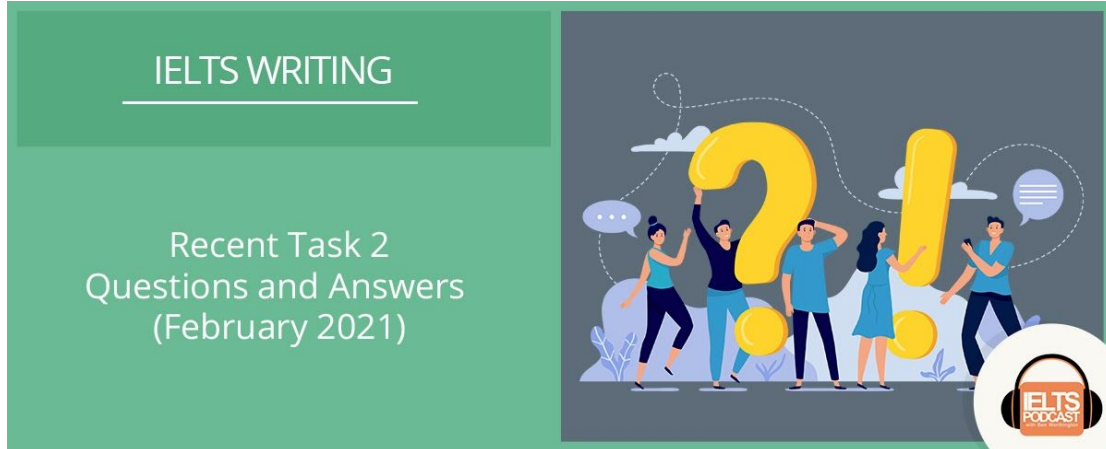
Recent Task 2 Questions and Answers (February 2021)



Writing Task 2 in Spain years ago, I got so frustrated and it wasn't until I'd written loads and loads of essays that I finally realized that the key is simplifying the question, but sometimes I realize and I still do it to this day because it's quite tricky. I will simplify it, but I won't really hit full points for task response because I missed a chunk.

So, this is why on the course we have this exact exercise on how to simplify, but we also offer feedback on the answers the students have given us and we'll say okay, that's excellent, Sabina. Well done. Or no, question 14 you needed to-- you missed this point.

Anyway, let's go into it. Body paragraph 1: we think it's necessary. Body paragraph 2: we think it's unfair. Do I personally believe this? Well, to some extent. Does it really matter? No, because I'm just going for a simple idea that can be easily communicated rather than an intelligent idea that's going to trip me up and be difficult to explain.



I'll just give you an example. Like when I was younger a friend used to say yes, it's completely fair that the bosses and directors in charities earn £100,000 a year if they bring in up to 100,000 or 3 million. Then more people benefit and I was like hey, but it's not fair. They're working for a charity. They should earn less. They shouldn't be out there money grabbing.

And my friend said well, if you're an owner of a charity and your goal is to help 200 million people, you're going to want the director who can bring in 3 million to your charity and pay them 100,000 for it otherwise, that director is going to go somewhere else and you're not going to be able to help those 200 million people or whatever. And that's a logical argument. However, that's incredibly complex to explain in an essay. So, I'm not going to take that route, all right? I'm going to just go for the simple arguments.

So, back to the essay. It's completely necessary because they have often invested in their skills. They sometimes work more and they have sacrificed more. They have risked more in the case of

IELTS WRITING

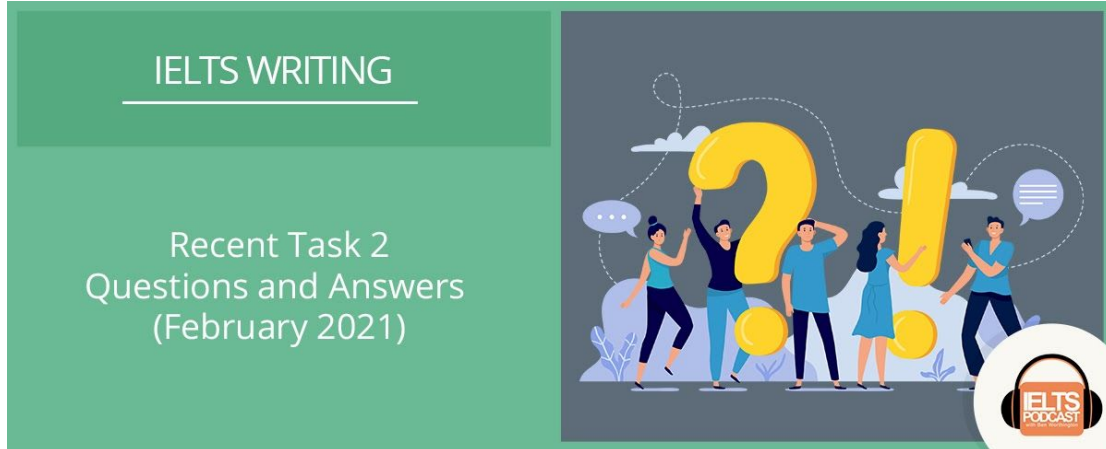
Recent Task 2
Questions and Answers
(February 2021)



entrepreneurs. Oftentimes, it's results based. So, if they don't improve the share price of the company they don't get their bonuses and I'm going to finish with an example of Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos. These are the richest people in the world, but their bonuses are all based on share price. So, if the value of the shares go up, their bonuses go up and so does their wealth and this seems fair.

So, I would probably have to reorganize that as well so I finish with they work more and sacrifice more and then I can talk a little bit about Elon Musk working 70 hours a week or whatever he's supposed to be working and then I can also talk about the options-- the share options, the bonuses, and whatnot.

Do I agree with it? Probably not in this case. The wealth they have is ridiculous, but I don't want to get emotional about this. I just want to pass IELTS. This is the mindset you need to have. I'm



not going to get emotionally involved in this argument. I just want to get my 7 and get out of here and that's the best way to approach it.

Body paragraph 2. It is completely unfair. The workers are on a minimum wage. There is a big disparity. This is a word that I definitely would have included. Disparity. There is a humongous disparity between the top and the bottom, between the blue-collar workers and the white-collar directors if I really want to get into my lexical resource-- into boosting my lexical resource score.

Furthermore-- an additional argument-- it's unfair for society. Those at the top get the best resources, the best access to business schools and this engenders-- it kind of builds into the society generational wealth and it's completely unnecessary.

So, again probably I'd reorganize those ideas so it all links and I could finish with an example. Maybe I could say something like Elon Musk had a privileged background when he was

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2 Questions and Answers (February 2021)



younger. Actually, I know that to be not true. I think he got beat up quite a lot and he was bullied.

There's a sad story actually where his bullies called his best friend, told his best friend to shout Elon's name to come out so Elon would come out of his hiding place and Elon came out of his hiding place and he got beat up by his bullies. Again, I'm not going to include that in my IELTS essay. I kind of went a little bit off topic.

But what I'm saying is that when you've brainstormed your ideas, double-check that your paragraph idea or your main paragraph idea responds to task response and then start organizing your ideas into a paragraph structure that's going to help you score for cohesion and coherence. As I've said before, we have basically a framework for you to do this and it becomes automatic and easy especially the more times you do it.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2 Questions and Answers (February 2021)



The conclusion. It is unfair. At the billionaire stage, action needs to be taken by governments. So, what I'm saying here is that it is unfair at the billionaire stage. Once a person becomes a billionaire then taxes need to increase and so on and so forth.

I don't know if I personally agree with that. I need to think it through. I need to see all the arguments, but this isn't a podcast about how to run a society. It's a podcast on how to pass IELTS. So, this is my straightforward answer. It seems equitable. It seems fair. It seems logical and it's easy to explain. Job done. I passed IELTS.

All right. Next question. Some people say that TV advertisements are helpful for viewers while others disagree. What is your opinion? Now, just the other week we had a question about advertising and the benefits and the drawbacks and whatnot. And this goes to show if we're seeing a lot of-- well, not a lot, but if the topic is being repeated, then this is what's on the examiner's mind.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2
Questions and Answers
(February 2021)



And it's obviously-- it's on their mind because it's in topical events at the moment especially these big monopolies like Facebook and Google and advertising and all of this. So, advertising is a hot topic so to speak as well as climate change and cyber bullying and all of this.

Now, the beauty is because I've answered a similar question just the other week, there's no reason why I cannot use similar ideas. So, I'm going to just copy-paste. I'm going to say advertising is positive. It informs people of the choices. It can inspire people to take action and it can inspire a belief in them. Also, it's a form of education.

Now, in the past example, I used YouTube. I said creators get paid to make videos because they allow adverts on their video. I can't say this. I can't use this argument because in this essay question, I have got asked about TV advertisements. So, I'm going to use the same argument, but apply it to television.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2 Questions and Answers (February 2021)



I'm going to say TV needs advertising to subsidize the cost of production. Now, as I was brainstorming, I was like okay, a good example of this maybe I would include it maybe I wouldn't, but it's still good to know, but I have here in England-- in the United Kingdom we have a television tax and it's quite unpopular. I think it's something ridiculous £200 a year.

Everybody in the UK who has a TV has to buy a TV license and the reason is because this pays for the BBC; the British Broadcasting Corporation and this is why if you watch television in the UK and you're watching the BBC, there are no advertisements. If you're watching BBC in the U.S. or outside of the UK, it has adverts, but in the UK, it gets billions every single year and it produces programming for the United Kingdom and there are no adverts in there.

Now, maybe I would include it maybe I wouldn't, but if I did I would have to emphasize that it was unpopular and that the UK population could save money if they allowed commercials on the BBC. I would have to add that. I couldn't just talk about the TV tax. I'd have to make it relevant.

IELTS WRITING

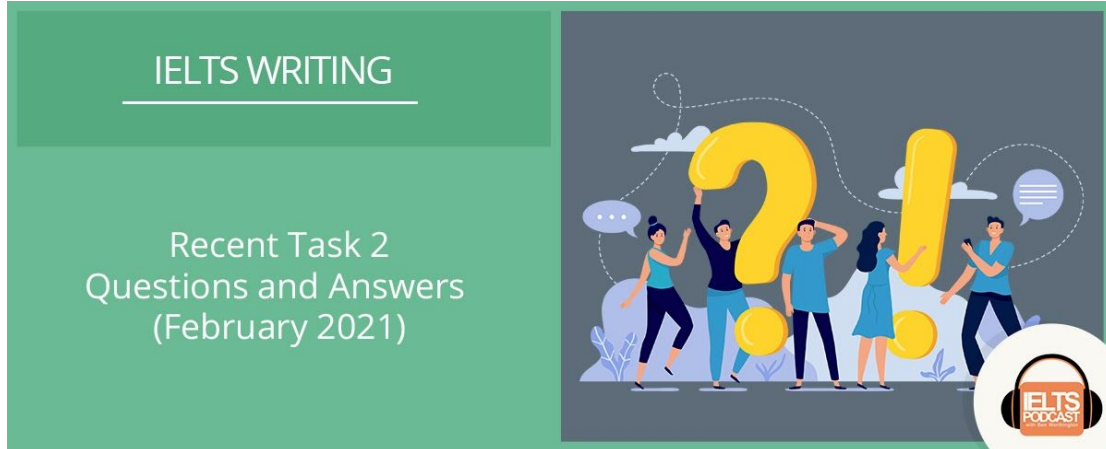
Recent Task 2
Questions and Answers
(February 2021)



I'm still undecided whether I would explain all of that because as you heard it's quite complex and slightly off topic and the original topic is TV adverts are helpful. So, yes. This is why it's good just to review your ideas before you jump in with two feet and start writing.

Again, it also emphasizes my argument that we should go for simple ideas that are easy to explain. Mentioning the tax-- mentioning the BBC is kind of convoluted and it's a long way to argue my point. So, if I didn't come up with any more ideas while I was brainstorming, I'd have to re-engineer that and include it, but if I did come up with a better idea, then I would use that.

Body paragraph 2. TV advertising. I started with advertising. TV advertising is negative. Why? Because it can cause discomfort, body shaming, for example, beauty products and it adds to the cost of the product being sold. This is the same argument I used last time.



Now, I've got to think of more reasons and make it more relevant to TV advertising. So, I'm going to say that it's invasive into a program and then my final argument is that there are more modern alternatives available compared to TV commercials. For example, we could have product placements within the TV show.

The only reason why I wanted to talk about alternatives was to mention product placements. So, instead of the advertisement stopping-- instead of the TV program stopping and we see adverts about Sprite or Coca-Cola, the actress or the actor in the program casually drinks a Coca-Cola or a Sprite.

I'm not going to go into it in much detail. It's quite obvious, but that would be product placements. In the essay, I definitely wouldn't talk about it because most people know what product placements are. The examiners will definitely do.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2
Questions and Answers
(February 2021)



Also, another example could be endorsements of the products by the actors in the program and this could happen in other mediums such as the internet just to get away from this TV advertising issue. So, there we go.

Conclusion. I could probably use the same conclusion as I used before which is yes, I'm in favor of this and I would have to say I strongly am in favor or I strongly agree because in the question it specifically says what is your opinion, Ben?

So, I would say my opinion is or I strongly agree TV advertisements do have a role in society. There are numerous benefits. However, it has to be used in-- what's it called now? It has to be used in balance or it has to be used within limits. There we go. I'd probably mention as well if I did go the BBC argument, I'd say and it can save consumers money also. Right.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2 Questions and Answers (February 2021)



Final argument. Some people argue that holding sporting events is beneficial to a country's development. However, other people hold the opposite opinion. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Body paragraph 1: it's beneficial that a country holds a sporting event. Body paragraph 2: it's a terrible idea that countries host sporting events. Conclusion: if the government is trustworthy, it could be a clear plan to prosperity or it could be a clear benefit for the country.

Now, you may have guessed my positions already or my arguments already with the clue in the conclusion. So, I think it's beneficial because it's good publicity for the country. The country has to build infrastructure which could be used by the population after the event. Also, in most cases, the hosting country-- so this is really good vocabulary. In the question we had holding country. Holding and hosting are similar, but I don't want to use the same words as are in the question. I'm going to use synonyms.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2
Questions and Answers
(February 2021)



So, the hosting country will often invest heavily in their own national teams prior to the event and this benefits the country and builds a positive self-image. For example, in the London Olympics-- in my notes, I've put London 2010? I'm not so sure. I'm not going to get points. This isn't a history exam, so I'm just going to say the London Olympic Games.

And I do specifically remember that Tony Blair-- the prime minister at the time-- got the Olympics for the UK because of the legacy plan that he sold to the judges. He said look, give the Olympic Games to England and we promise to help disadvantaged children afterwards and no other country was saying similar at the time. So, it was an easy decision for the judges. So, this was called the legacy plan if I remember correctly.

Anyway, I'm going to say holding the Olympics or hosting games can help the country afterwards. For example, in the London Olympic Games, the country was awarded the event because of a promise to help disadvantaged children in sports for 10 years after the games.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2 Questions and Answers (February 2021)



I'm not entirely sure it was called the legacy plan. I'm not entirely sure if it was for 10 years or 20 years or 3 years. I have no idea, but it sounded believable. I know there was some kind of scheme involved afterwards. So, this is why it's good just to keep reading newspapers. Keep up to date on the news just to see what's in going on. Fill your head with ideas and then when you do get questions, you can pull examples out of thin air-- you pull examples out of your brain.

Body paragraph 2. It's a terrible idea because there's money laundering opportunities. For example, Hungary a few years ago wanted to host-- the Hungarian government wanted to host some big sporting event, but the locals-- the Hungarian people-- were strongly against it because they thought the government would launder the money and there would be lots of corruption.

Also, the Hungarians wanted other issues sorted out. They wanted the housing issues sorted out. They wanted education improved and hosting big international sporting events would just be a distraction. So, this is why it's a bad idea.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2
Questions and Answers
(February 2021)



Another example. Brazil had-- when they were hosting it after the games and even before the games, there were a few construction scandals. Also, there were walls built around the favelas. So, basically what I'm saying here is that it's a terrible idea for weak governments or for some governments because of corruption and waste of money and a distraction from real events that need solving.

Conclusion. Hosting events is extremely beneficial for a country if... Now, I love these types of conclusions because it's hypothetical. So, we're going to use the conditional and it gives us an opportunity to improve our grammatical range and accuracy score. So, these international games are immensely beneficial-- are tremendously beneficial for a country if there is a strong and trustworthy government involved and there is a clear plan for the use of the facilities and a clear plan to help disadvantaged people afterwards.

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2
Questions and Answers
(February 2021)



There we go. Three recent IELTS Task 2 questions answered. You can see these online. If you're still struggling with IELTS, then come to IELTS Podcast. We've got a special offer at the moment \$5 essay corrections, which is ridiculously low. Lots of students are taking them up. We're only going to do 50. Soon they will run out. Hopefully, before this podcast is published. They haven't ran out, so have a look at ieltspodcast.com and sign up to our email list and we send you recent questions, recent stories by successful students, and lots more tutorials.

So, keep going. You can do this. You've learned your own language. Passing IELTS is a question of improving your English to an academic level for the writing. It's a question of determination and just don't lose sight. Talking with a lot of students I know that they can get obsessed with this. So, don't lose sight. Think of the big picture. Think of Australia, Canada or working in the UK or getting that residency. Eventually, you will get there. You'll only fail if you [unintelligible 00:23:51.10].

IELTS WRITING

Recent Task 2
Questions and Answers
(February 2021)



[Music]

Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com

