

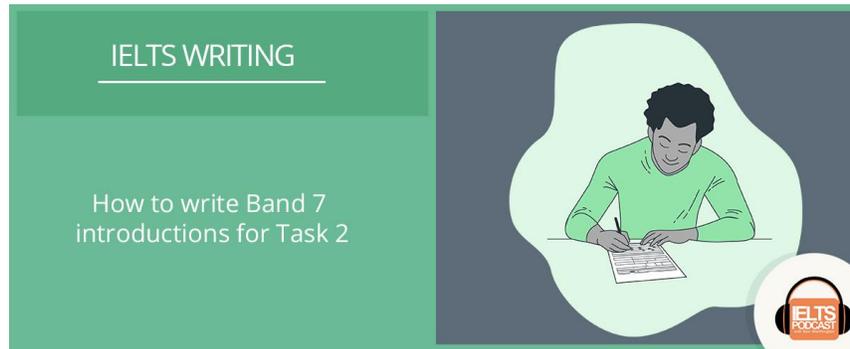


**Female Voice:** You are now listening to the IELTS Podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

**[Music]**

**Ben:** Writing IELTS introductions for your IELTS Writing Task 2. Hello there, IELTS students. My name is Ben Worthington and in this tutorial, we're going to look at introductions; how to write them, why you have to obviously write them. We're going to look at your positions that you have to express. We're going to look at how you rephrase it, how you paraphrase it. We're going to look at some examples as well. This is quite a practical tutorial, so you can grab a pen and get even more value from this by just taking notes and then implementing it-- implementing your notes into the next essay you write.

Before we start, let me just tell you who I am. My name is Ben and I grew up in England and I left England when I was about 21, 20 and I went to Spain as part of my university program and I



started to teach English and I quickly specialized in IELTS. And I got into IELTS because there we can measure the results. We can measure if the teaching is effective.

And to get more effective at teaching, I started interviewing experts and that's how IELTS Podcast got started and I took the knowledge that worked and if it worked, I put it into the online course. If it didn't work, I got rid of it and that's how IELTS Podcast got started. I wanted to improve my own teaching abilities because at first I struggled.

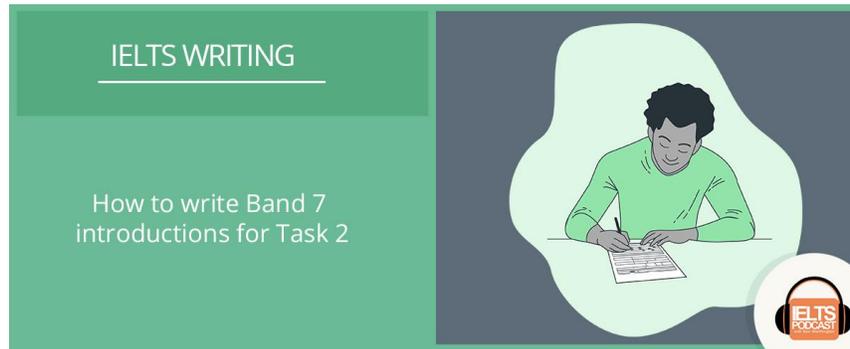
I distinctly remember trying to prepare a student for Task 2 and I just had an explosion of ideas and I couldn't organize them and then I found that some sentences were contradicting other paragraphs and I was like wow! This is extremely difficult. And you know the crazy thing was-- the crazy thing was that I'm a native English speaker and I was like how can I be a native English speaker and struggle with an English test?



And then eventually, I realized there's two sets of skills you need. You need the exam skills and you need the language skills. Obviously, I had the language skills already, but I just needed to perfect and implement the exam skills and that's what this tutorial is about today. It's all about the exam skills and we're going very specific. We're looking at Task 2. We're looking at introductions and conclusions.

Now, many students struggle to write anything at all and it's a very misunderstood area. These are probably the most misunderstood paragraphs in the essay writing procedure. Now, a lot of students tend to overthink these especially the introduction and often try to write the most impressive grammar and vocabulary they know. It's not a bad approach, but I think it could be made a lot easier and this is what we're going to focus on today.

So, we all know that the introductions are necessary for Writing Task 2, but a lot of students don't know why it's so necessary or what the introduction should include. Without an



introduction by the way, you are not going to get any higher than a band 5 in coherence and cohesion.

And I've seen essays before students who just sent me a one paragraph essay and if it is well written, I don't mind that much because I'm like okay, this is going to be a student whose grade I can improve very easily. We just teach them the exam skills. Whereas if it's poorly written and it's just one paragraph essay, I'm like okay, we have a lot to go.

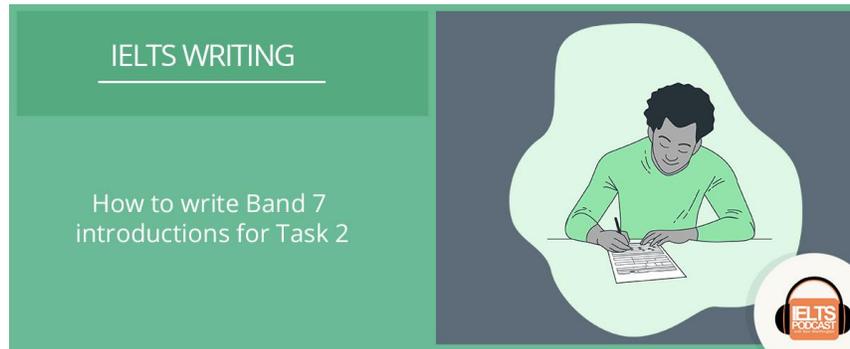
Anyway, for the purpose of IELTS, your introduction is the examiner's first impression of your writing. This will allow your examiner-- your introduction will allow the examiner to approximate where your band score might be. So, upon reading your introduction, the examiner might think okay, this is a 6 or 7 or it's a 5 or 6 or it's a 7 or 8, but just bear in mind you're not only going to be scored on your introduction of course, but it is important to write a strong one



that is accurate, concise, and probably I would say most important uses solid grammar and vocabulary.

And the grammar is essential here because without clear grammar, it's very difficult to understand what you might be wanting to communicate and in that case, not only are we going to jeopardize task response, grammatical range and accuracy, but it could also hinder the other areas because the examiners just don't know what is going on.

Anyway, let's have a look at what the IELTS essay introduction must include. The essentials-- probably less than you think-- the two essentials are rephrasing of the prompt and your position. Now, when you rephrase your prompt, it not only shows to the examiner that you've understood the question, but it also shows the examiner that you can use novel vocabulary, that you've got an expansive vocabulary. And if we just refer back to the criteria again, this is lexical resource. So,



you're showing the examiner that you have got a deep resource of vocabulary and lexical resources.

Now, what you should never miss is your position. Now, your position will be derived-- your position will come from the prompt or the command. And in IELTS Writing Task 2, that is going to be discuss both views and give your opinion, to what extent you agree or disagree, discuss the advantages and disadvantages. Those are usually the three most common prompts.

Now, a lot of students kind of mix it all up and they're saying oh, should I give my opinion in every single introduction? If you've got the question discuss both views and give your opinion, then yes. Okay? But it's best just to follow the prompt.

So, what is your position? Your position is a direct response to any of those commands. So, your response needs to be clear, it needs to be direct, and you need to directly answer-- well basically, you need to directly answer the question in the introduction. Why do you have to do this? Well,



if you're aiming for a band 7, if we look at task achievement, we see presents a clear position throughout the response.

Now, the key word is throughout. Presents a clear position throughout the response. Throughout means from beginning to end. So, it's essential you make your position clear as early as your introduction if you hope to score band 7 in task achievement and this can be done when you answer the question in the introduction.

So, how do we rephrase the task? This is the second part. We use synonyms and different sentence structures to probably convey a similar meaning, but obviously using different words, different vocabulary, different grammar.

Now, you do not have to rephrase every word. If we go down that route, it can quickly get awkward. I mean some words just do not have a substitute. Some words just cannot be rephrased. There's not an alternative available. And when students try and over sort of like over

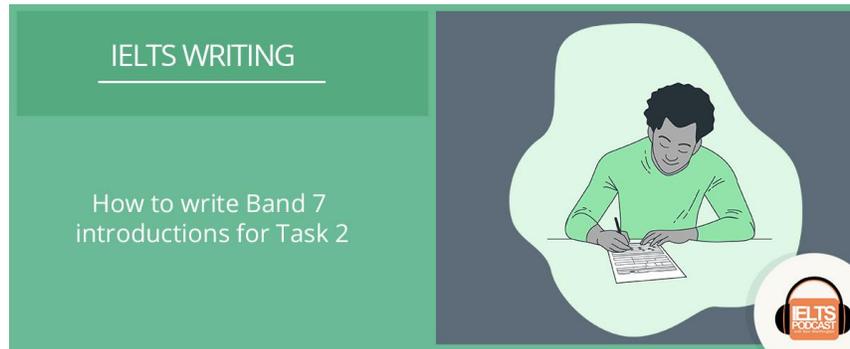


rephrase or over think this, it can lead to sound a little unnatural. However, also we want to avoid copying chunks or like entire fragments.

So, this is why building your vocabulary is very important and we have tutorials about this on the site and especially in the online course because building your vocabulary is quite a direct, it's quite an effective and efficient way especially if you're pushed for time to boost your score.

Let's have a look at an example question. Communication through text messaging and other forms of instant online communication are short and basic. Some people think this will be the death of grammar and spelling. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Now, a sample introduction could sound like this. Nowadays across the world, most people use text messages to communicate quickly and effectively. The speed of this communication however carries with it all the risk of losing basic writing skills. In my opinion, this is a valid

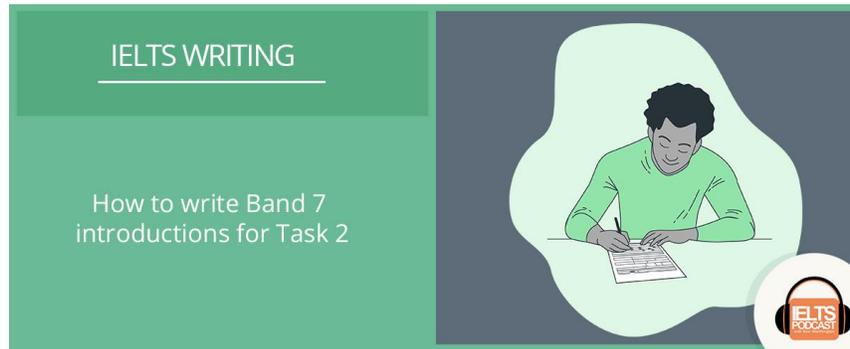


concern given the minimal opportunity we have for proper writing these days yet correct language usage will continue.

Can you see how the prompt is rephrased? Let's go back to the original question. Communication through text messaging and other forms of instant online communication are short and basic. Our rephrasing of the question is nowadays across the world-- you could probably use that in any essay that you write. Nowadays across the world, most people use text messages to communicate quickly and effectively.

So, we've changed text messages-- in the question we have instant online communication short and basic or text messaging sorry. And we've just changed text messaging to text messages. So, we've got essentially the same word just a different form and this is rephrasing.

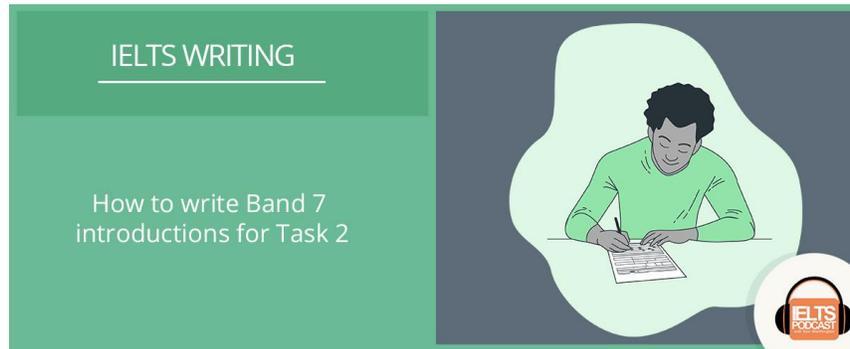
Moving on. Some people think this will be the death of grammar and spelling. That's in the original question and we've rephrased that to the speed of this communication however carries



with it the risk of losing basic writing skills. So, we've exchanged basically the death of grammar and spelling with the risk of losing basic writing skills. Can you see or can you hear how we are reorganizing the words, reorganizing the sentences, and substituting the vocabulary rephrasing? And this is how we write an effective introduction.

Now, let's just analyze the position. The writer's position shows a partial agreement and very briefly explains why. We're not going into detail. We do not put our argument here. In my opinion, this is a valid concern given the minimal opportunity we have for proper writing these days yet correct language usage will continue. See? So, we've got that conjunction there yet, so we'll probably pick up some points there, but we've given an indication of where we are going.

Also, just take note that not every word is rephrased. We've still got communication. We've got text messages instead of text messaging. So, we've got different variations, but the important



thing is that we haven't copy-pasted. We haven't copy-pasted entire chunks of the question and used them in our introduction.

I remember the first few months I started teaching IELTS and I used to tell students to use the questions directly in your answer because it's perfect grammar and it's perfect vocabulary then I later realized that you don't get points. The examiner can't give you points for this because you've obviously just read it from the paper. So, you don't have to go overboard and totally change it, but you do have to pay attention and try and use different phrases, different vocabulary.

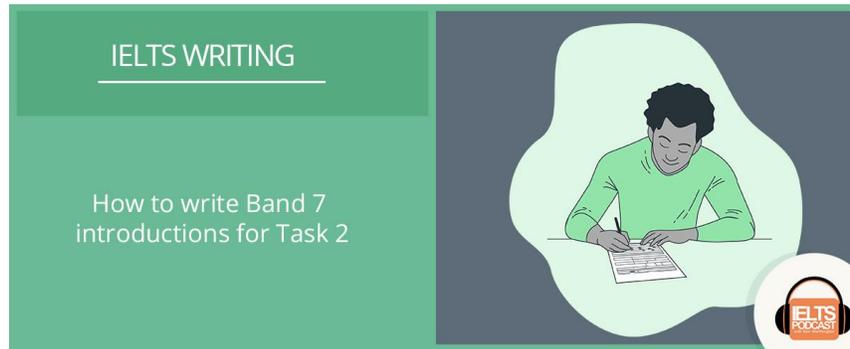
Now, be careful. Sometimes you can write something like this essay will address this issue using examples and evidence to support my opinion. That is what we call an empty sentence because it's kind of memorized and we can use this in any essay about any topic. What you have to do--



those sentences they're okay, but do not overly rely on these sentences. You have to adapt them and you have to make them your own, okay?

So, this essay will address the concerns regarding communication using examples from Scottish teenagers and evidence from recent studies to support my opinion. Okay? And we just modify it and we make it unique to the essay.

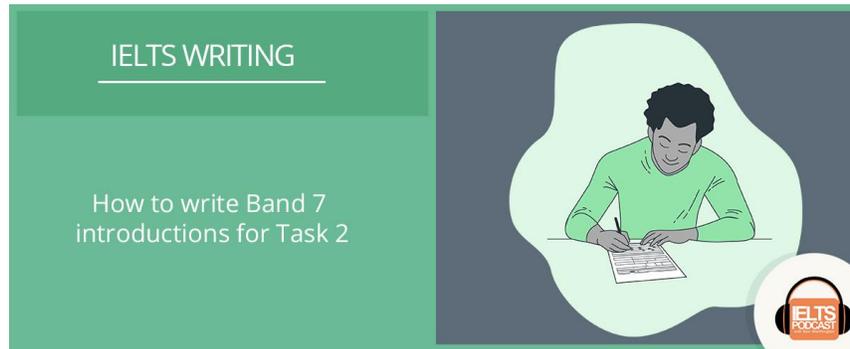
In a second, we're going to look at a poor introduction. We're going to look at a poor example and we'll break that down as well, but while we're on the topic of kind of like standardized or memorized sentences, let me just mention what we do with the online course. We give you a structure. We give you a framework. Now, that does not mean you just memorize those sentences. We give you the structure, the grammatical structures you need for most of the sentences, and then you fill it in according to the question.



So, if you have a question or you're writing an essay about pollution, then you've got to change the vocabulary. Switch out the standard vocabulary and put in topic-specific vocabulary about pollution or about the topic that your essay is covering otherwise you're not going to score.

We stress this quite clearly in the course and also because we've got tutors giving you feedback helping you improve, it just makes it so much easier because some students they really do struggle with these introductions and having an ex-IELTS examiner, having our tutors review your work--

For example, you write your essay and you've watched the tutorials about a basic essay structure. We start off with writing a basic essay. We get the structure complete. We learn this structure and then once we've got that you send it to us. We correct it. We review it. We check if you are following the guidelines, if you've actually understood and implemented it.



And we can tell you like hey no, this sounds memorized or actually, this sounds excellent. Let's move on to the next question, but pay attention to [unintelligible 00:17:03.03] or pay attention to your use of irregular verbs or use of articles. We'll give you this feedback and then you write down on your error correction sheet where your IELTS Podcast tutor told you to pay attention to and then the next essay you write, you're going to check your essay for those mistakes that you made previously.

And this just makes it so much more easier to improve and this is why we promise get band 7 or it's free. We can push you to improve because we're giving you feedback and if you're implementing the feedback, you're following the tutorials, it's not as difficult as it may seem.

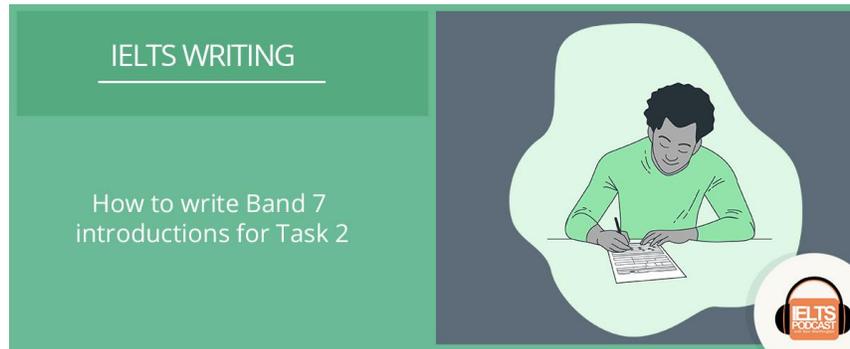
So, if you are getting frustrated, then come and join us at [ieltpodcast.com](http://ieltpodcast.com). Sign up and then you'll get a special offer for the essay correction and that's going to increase in price soon. So, I



would start moving with that as are the rest of the courses. They'll probably be increasing in price soon as well. So, if you are interested, I would move fast.

And also just remember that it's not as difficult as you think to get the band score you want. We do it day in day out. We enjoy doing this. This is what we're set up for doing and we would be more than happy to help you, but it does take action. It does take work. We're not going to sugarcoat it. You do have to put in the work; write the essays, watch the tutorials, but if you're a proactive and smart and dedicated student, we can get there. We can get there together. We do it every single week.

Right then. Let's go back to the introductions. We'll have a look at a poor introduction and how they can go wrong. So, let's have a look at this task below. The internet provides us with information about life and cultures of different countries and some people say it is not necessary



to visit these countries to learn about them. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give your opinion and relevant examples.

So, here's a sample introduction. See if you can identify what the problem is before I dissect it. With the internet so prevalent today, some people believe it is no longer necessary to visit countries to learn about them. The internet provides us with information about different countries. I agree completely with this statement. In this essay, I will explain my viewpoint discussing the negatives of travel.

What's the problem with this? First of all, chunks of language are copied directly from the prompt. Be careful. It's copy-paste which you definitely do not want to do in your IELTS essay. Second problem: the language is choppy. The sentences are not really linked together fluently.

A while back-- I think it was about a year or two-- I did a detailed tutorial about cohesion and coherence; about each sentence kind of leading on to the next one and this writer did not pay any



attention. Now, this introduction is a good example of how not to write cohesively. One sentence that stuck out like a sore thumb for me was the internet provides us with information about different countries. I agree completely with this statement.

What! It's not even like a strong statement you know. A statement is usually like a declaration of intent. It's usually something quite strong. This is very bland. It's just like more of an observation. So, to agree completely with an observation sounds very incoherent.

Finally, in this essay, I will explain my viewpoint discussing the negatives of travel. That again it doesn't really kind of-- it's not very cohesive. It doesn't gel together with the previous sentence. I agree completely. I agree completely with this statement. So, we have to rewind again.

So, one final point is that in the question, it does not ask you to discuss the negatives of travel. It wants to know-- the question asks if the internet has made it unnecessary to visit other countries, okay, whereas the writer here-- the student has totally misunderstood it and has said I agree



completely with this statement, whatever. In this essay, I'll explain my viewpoint discussing the negatives of travel.

The negatives of travel? The question prompt said the internet provides us with information about life and cultures of different countries and some people say it's not necessary to visit these countries to learn about them. Now, the big danger here-- and I see this day in day out when I'm correcting essays. The big danger here is that now if you write your next body paragraph according to what you wrote in your introduction, in this case the negatives of travel, you are going further down the off-topic path.

You see? Your introduction just got you slightly off topic. Well not slightly, got you quite off topic and now in your body paragraphs when you're developing your argument and your reason, your position, you're going further off topic. So, it's really important.



This is why one of the first things we teach in our online course is the plan. Get your plan crystal clear and follow your plan. Don't follow your introduction, okay? That's a whole new tutorial and it's quite effective. It's quite easy to learn. It's one of those like oh, that's how we do it and so many students say it's become so much easier once they get like a system to follow to quickly and automatically write strong cohesive essays. It's a game changer.

So that's a really important point there with your introduction. This is why it's so important to get your plan. Get it on paper first and then write following your plan. Do not write from your introduction.

Now, just to summarize before we finish, the introduction is a vital component of your IELTS essay. So, they should be concise and obviously, you can dedicate more time to your body paragraphs. That's where your bulk of the points are going to come from, but it's like a map. It's like a route or a journey. If you take the wrong path at the beginning of your journey, you're



going to end up in a completely different destination. So, this is why it's so important just to keep referring to the map while you're on that journey.

And in our case, the map would be the plan that we've written before we get started and then I guess the map as well would also be the tutors who keep showing you the right path, who keep giving you the correct feedback so that you are-- actually, the tutors would be the GPS; the GPS application that keeps on saying oops. No, that's wrong. Get back onto this path. And eventually with a good GPS, with decent tutors, you will reach your destination which could be band 7, 8, or 9.

My name is Ben Worthington. Thank you very much for listening and remember you can sign up and get special access to our tutorials and special access to special offers for essay correction and it's just the fastest way to improve. So, good luck with your IELTS exam and I wish you all the best.



[Music]

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