



Ben: Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we have another podcast about coherence with our friend our ex-IELTS examiner Mr. Robert Buckinghamshire. How are we doing today, Robert?

Robert: Pretty good. Pretty good, Ben. How are you feeling?

Ben: Not too bad, not too bad. Still with the COVID, but I think we have to count our blessings really because fortunately, we've got the vaccine. It's only a mild COVID. So, although I do have it and I'm coughing and I have a sore throat, headache, all the rest of it, I still think I'm lucky compared to some people who maybe don't have the vaccine.

Robert: That's true. That's true. Wherever you are listening to this I hope you're all well. Here we've been lucky. I've had three vaccines now. I've been pretty lucky. It's amazing. If you work online you don't meet too many people, so it's still more difficult to get it.



Ben: Yeah I think I was overconfident. I hit the cafes again to do my work and to meet people, but anyway as I said, it could be much worse. It could be much worse.

Robert: All you people out there keep healthy.

Ben: Yes, definitely. Definitely. And remember if you're struggling with COVID, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry, but hopefully we are through the worst of this and hopefully everyone's vaccinated and safe.

If you're struggling with the IELTS that I can help you with and there's nothing about that-- nothing more that we like to do than help students pass the IELTS, get the success, get to Australia, to Canada, to the UK, wherever it is, wherever your ambition is, we can help you reach your destination. That's why we set up IELTS Podcast.

So, if you are struggling with that IELTS writing task, please get in contact. We can help you improve faster by giving you some feedback on your essay or you can just sign up to our



newsletter. We get lots of tips out on that newsletter and just remember we've got the online course as well Jump to Band 7 or It's Free.

So, I'm going to take a back seat again on this one because my throat won't be able to do a full podcast, still a bit cranky. So, I'm just going to hand over to Rob and he's going to tell us about essay types and cohesion and coherence.

Robert: Thanks Ben. Thanks Ben. And you just relax, take care yourself, take care of that cough you've got and you'll be fine in a few days I'm sure.

Ben: Will do it. Cheers.

Robert: Great. So, yeah I think it's important that that all of us we spend probably when we're preparing for IELTS I'm pretty sure of talking to people and teaching IELTS myself I know that the bit that worries all of you more than anything else it's the writing and it's particularly that



Task 2, isn't it? I know the other parts speaking, listening, and reading have their little things as well, but I know it's the writing in fact that frightens most people. It's normal, isn't it?

And I've been thinking about this quite a bit. That's why I want to spend maybe a few-- I don't know how many, not that many but a few podcasts on the Task 2 in particular. Let's think first about how many types of questions there are just to go over that with you again. I've counted up five types, five types of questions that you may get in the exam. Am I right? Am I wrong? It came into my head the other day and I haven't worked it out.

Yeah, I'm into this at the moment and at first I thought yes, and now I'm thinking no and I'm still not sure. You help me with this. What do you think? I was thinking maybe one or two of those five types of questions are more difficult, trickier than the others because the overall structure of the essay may not be so obvious or evident. I don't know. So, let's start today thinking about whether this is true. I'm not really too sure yet. We won't have an answer to that



question yet. Maybe you already have an answer to it and I don't, but we'll get there in the end I think.

What I'm trying to say is this, IELTS essay Task 2 usually these essays fall easily into that four-paragraph structure, that four-paragraph scheme where once we have that overall paragraph pattern kind of fixed in our heads, then the planning and the writing stages are just that little bit easier.

We're trying to make life easy here, aren't we? It's an exam. It's not real life. It's a very important exam, but in 40 minutes you've got to produce an essay of over 250 words that's well written, makes sense, answers the question, is in good English, and you're showing that you know your vocabulary too. Not easy.

And if we've got a fixed idea or I'm going to write four paragraphs even before I walk into that exam room, I know my first one is the introduction. Then I'm going to have two paragraphs



getting into details. We can call it the body paragraphs if you like. And finally, summarize everything, sum it up in a concluding paragraph, a short paragraph at the end. Great.

And that will give me already before I even start coherence to my essay. It points us in a logical direction and of course the ways, the various ways we make all those parts join up depends on our knowledge and skill at using cohesive devices, coherence, English knowledge of the world, all so many many many factors, but if you're ready to take this exam, if it's the moment then you and the people helping you on ieltspodcast.com have said to you take it now, now you've got your best chance better than ever getting that at least a 7 let's hope an 8. Then you will be ready. You will think yes, I know where I'm going. I've got it all down. I've been through all those steps and here I am ready for that test.

Okay. Now, what I'm saying then is something quite simple. Let me say it again. I am saying that these types of Task 2 questions almost write themselves if we stick to this familiar and successful four-paragraph pattern. So, when we talk about coherence and cohesion as well as task



achievement, it is absolutely essential that you have a very clear idea of the connection between the organization of your essay divided into four paragraphs and the type of question it is which will then determine the content and direction of each paragraph in particular of course the two paragraphs in the middle, the body paragraphs where you have the real content, where you're really saying something.

Okay. Let's get down to those five types. I've identified-- I'm sure I'm right about this. Help me if I'm not-- five types of questions. Number one: agree or disagree where we get a statement followed by a question. To what extent do you agree with this? Okay type number two: discuss both sides. The statement includes two views on the topic and you are asked to discuss both views and give your opinion. A bit more complicated that. We won't look at that one today. I hope next time.

Type number three: advantages and disadvantages. You are given a statement and asked to discuss the advantages and disadvantages involved. What are the advantages? What are the



disadvantages? Type number four: you get a statement followed by two related questions. The two questions are often related to something like explaining why the information in the statement is true and then discussing an alternative to that statement. We'll look at that another time too.

And type number five: it's very similar to number four, but with a little difference. A statement followed by questions asking for causes and solutions or problems and solutions if you like. It's similar to type four, but the two questions are always related to the problems caused by and possible solutions to those problems implied by the information in the statement.

Now, it's much easier, but I'm not doing that today to give you an example of each and I think it would be great if we looked at all five of these types. In a short podcast right now, it's too much information for me and I think too much for you. So, I'm going to look at one. I think it's easier just look at one type.



I'm going for type one. It's a very common Task 2 question. To what extent do you agree or disagree, that type of thing. To what extent do you agree or disagree. And never forget the reminder in all these tests, in all Task 2 exams to include examples from personal knowledge and/or your experience which will be included in all of them. It's a green light if you like. It's almost telling you how to structure your essay.

So for example, here we could have the first introductory paragraph, a quite short one rephrasing the statement and stating your position, your point of view for or against the statement or the proposition and then two main body paragraphs could be used to outline your point of view with examples in two paragraphs because it's very advisable to list in the planning stage at least three at least three or more points.

Don't just do one point and repeat it and repeat it. The examiner doesn't want that. He wants to see two or three to show that you really have thought this out and achieved the task when we're thinking of task achievement. A clear full answer to the question.



Okay. Let's go back to this type of question then. Hey, remember in that podcast I gave you a while back about some examples of cohesion and coherence? The essay was about whether we agreed or not with the statement that people should be obliged to retire at the prescribed age, retirement age and not continue working and my view, my standpoint was that I did not agree with that.

And going on now because I think I gave you just the introductory paragraph, just two sentences. I want to get into the main body of that essay because I only shared with you the introduction before.

In my second paragraph, my main arguments in favor of my point of view and I've got them here in terms of-- well, I've got three of them beginning with what I consider the strongest point and I've tried to add some examples. The examples are very important, where I can, not all the time. I've given some examples.



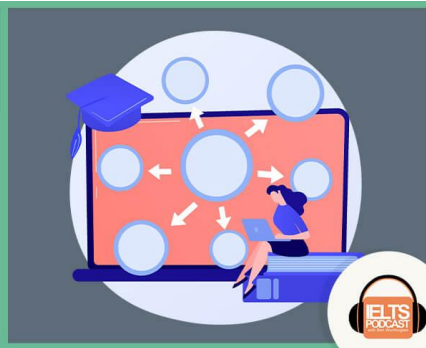
This is what I thought of making my notes. So, these notes are very extensive. Of course, in the real exam I wouldn't really have time to make so many notes, to write so much, but I'm doing this to help us out to see how my mind was working thinking of all the information I could put in my body paragraphs.

This is for my second paragraph; three points. 1) In many professions, older people are more qualified. They have more insights. They have more experience of work and life and therefore-- notice I'm already wondering which cohesive devices I could use-- may provide invaluable input in teamwork, training, and so on.

Examples-- best example: teaching. You get some old teachers like me. Luckily lots of young teachers too and I guess most types of what we call white collar office work: accounting, legal departments, maybe even in computers although that's a young person's job often. Lots of new technology coming along. Okay, but we know that an older person in the workplace can be very valuable. So, why retire? Why not stay working?

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Okay. Second point connected to that first point. If some people continue working, those willing to continue working would not be any problem, would not be a burden on the state. They wouldn't worry the social security office or the pension office collecting pension money because they could continue working. They continue to be productive and that's good for many reasons: for the country, for the individual because it's good for their own mental and physical and social well-being and good for their friends and good for their families. It keeps them happy. Why worry then? If you're happy, keep working.

Point number three and I think it's a very important point as well I want to include in my second paragraph. In demographic terms-- notice how I'm throwing a word there which will get me high points for knowing a lot of vocabulary. In terms of demography, that the population growth. In demographic terms, many countries particularly in Europe, for example face a reality of an aging workforce where there are not enough young people to replace older workers.



Examples-- maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong, but I was thinking in the medical profession. Doctors and nurses. Ben mentioned COVID. Look about the situation that is desperate in many countries. Where are the doctors? Where are the nurses? We need more nurses. It's a very controversial issue sometimes. We need to train more nurses. And what about if we ask teachers, doctors, nurses, and maybe other professions to carry on working a bit to help us out during a crisis?

So, those are my three points that I'd like to include in paragraph two. In my third paragraph, remember in my original idea in the other podcast I said I didn't entirely agree. There are some points I can see in favor of making people retire. I'm not 100% in favor of let people work until they feel like it. No. I'm saying you've got to have certain conditions.

So, in my third paragraph, I've got one or two comments about this and what I want to show is how this topic is complex and that although I disagree with the mandatory requirement, there are

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limits and circumstances we need to take into consideration. I've got two or three points to include.

One, in general, a society does need to constantly create work for young people, but if the population is not growing-- that connects with my other point in the previous paragraph-- then immigration of young qualified personnel should be a priority. Yes. Let's get people from other countries to immigrate to our countries and help us work there. It's very important. It makes a country alive again I think. Immigration I'm all in favor of it.

Point number two: technology. One problem with technology is that it advances at such a speed that some older workers may feel obsolete and not all of them can keep up with technological change. Okay. Let's not over generalize here, but it is true, isn't it?

Some people say oh, no. I've seen examples as a teacher once working in a-- going to give classes in a company and there was this lady who was getting on a bit in years. She'd been there



about 30 years. She was working in the accounting department in finance and she was always asking younger workers to do the work for her. Why? Because she didn't really understand how to use the software they were using. She was lost. The real solution was hey, come on. Do you want to take a course on this? She was trying to hide it poor thing. Oh, could you help me with this when the real solution would be either take a course, learn it or I don't know, give up. I'm sorry.

Okay. Last point. Obviously, a lot may depend on the types of jobs we're talking about. Heavy work, manual work, lifting things, carrying things may not be a good idea for older workers and also in areas, for example pilots, air traffic controllers that require perfect eyesight and very quick reaction times. Obviously, at the same time you can give people regular medical tests which make me say all right, you're in retirement age, but you're in perfect conditions.

Think of a simple one: taxi drivers. That's a heavy job. I've known taxi drivers who when they get really old they get problems in their legs because they're sitting driving a taxi all day. It's a



heavy job although you don't really think about that very much. So, maybe it is best if you can retire when you can. Don't carry on driving a taxi until you're 80. It could be dangerous.

So, those are my points and of course in my concluding paragraph four, I'm going to review those and reinforce my point of view.

Now okay, on purpose I've chosen today not to give you a model essay, to write the whole essay for you, but leave that to you if you like, I'm leaving you with my notes as an example of how we need to include as much depth as possible in our essays. We've got to be wide and we've got to be deep.

I always look personally at least for two or better three points in favor of or against any point of view and I also try to think of good examples to support my points. As a writer and as an ex-examiner that's what I always look for. I looked at the exam question before I started checking the students' answers and then I worked out my answer and I did a kind of checklist.



Your answers as test takers didn't have to be my ideas. Of course not, but I was really counting the points they were making. If they agreed with me, fine. If they made points I hadn't thought of myself even better, but if they only mention one thing or two things that well, in terms of task achievement, I can't really give more than a 6 simply because the answer was not complete. They hadn't gone into the task deeply enough.

Okay. So, doing all these notes at the beginning three or four minutes, perhaps five minutes as a maximum helps me so much with my writing of each paragraph and I already have the basic vocabulary and even those vital cohesive devices are kind of lining up to be included by however, although and I had a therefore there as well. However, although, but, then are already there and I'm sure others like besides, furthermore will be useful when I want to add more information to my points and I haven't forgotten of course for example for my example.

So, to sum up today where are we? Where are we exactly? Listen to this. Coherence and cohesion are elements we can work on from the moment we read that Task 2 exam question. The



words we choose, their variety and connections, the ways those connections reflect our point of view, the ways the paragraphs we create fit the purpose and are perfect for the type of question we're answering. That's what coherence and cohesion means.

And it also means for you as IELTS test takers time. Time. The time you must spend looking over, reviewing, and studying ways to link parts of sentences or sentences themselves using effective cohesive devices. The time you need also to make sure you can handle referencing well; the use of pronouns and synonyms to avoid repetition and make your sentences, paragraphs, and essays reach the high standards you're aiming at and that you are also undoubtedly used to in your own languages.

So, that's all for me now. I'd like to bring you back to the idea of getting into studying it, thinking about it, taking your time, worrying about how your essays are being assessed by the IELTS Podcast team, looking at the ways that they help you, taking notice of the mistakes you make and the ways that they suggest for you to improve.



Looking at what Ben has talked about, those little parts on the website where you can get advice and looking for models and new examples, studying that. It'll pay dividends. It will be of great benefit to you because you're getting that writing test, doing it well. It's going to be an amazing relief.

I know most people take the written test and after that they have the speaking and you can see those people from memory and when I was an examiner coming into the speaking test looking really relaxed knowing they'd done a good job in the other parts of the test whereas those people who came in looking really nervous said oh my God. They look a bit sad. Did something go wrong? You can't ask them the question of course, but make sure that that doesn't happen to you.

Good luck to you all and I'll speak to you again soon, okay? So, for the time take care. Bye-bye.

Ben: Thank you, Robert. Thank you very much. Another great podcast there and yeah, I totally understand what you mean. I've had students-- I've seen them after the writing exam and you



can instantly tell those who've had some solid decent preparation. They come out beaming and they know. They know inside that they've nailed it.

And other students they come out and unfortunately maybe they didn't have the right preparation, maybe they didn't have the right feedback and you can tell that. Oh gosh as soon as they spend more money, more time, more resources and going through the whole rigmarole again. It's so sad. It's so sad because a lot of the times they're competent. It's just they didn't have the right exam skills and maybe they just lacked a little bit of some of the language skills, but yeah. It's tough. It's not fun.

Yeah. If you do want to be one of those students who walks out of the exam with a beaming smile and knowing that you've nailed it, knowing that you're on your way to Australia, on your way to the UK or your stay in Canada, wherever your mission is, please get in contact. We can help you and that's what we love doing is getting success for our students.

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So, a massive thank you and yeah, if you don't want to get in contact, you could just go to ieltspodcast.com/online-IELTS-course with a dash in between each word and we can help you there as well. So, thank you very much for listening and have a great day.

[Music]

Female Speaker: Thanks for listening to ieltspodcast.com