

from TED-IELTS

50 SAMPLE ESSAYS

TASK 1 & 2



For IELTS Academic

by David Wills

Introduction

This collection of sample answers is intended to help you understand what is necessary in order to write a great essay. All of these answers have been written by a native speaker who is also a professional writer and IELTS trainer with more than ten years of experience.

It is important to note before we begin that these answers are not the only way to score band 9. Whether you study English, Korean, Arabic, Spanish, or any other language, it is important to note that there is more than one way to express yourself. If we gather 1,000 professional writers, they would produce 1,000 different IELTS essays.

The fifty answers in this book have been written in order to guide IELTS candidates to the most effective means of composing an essay. They show how to fulfil the requirements of the marking rubric without using overly complex language.

In fact, that is one of the most important things that you should remember. **Accuracy and range are more important than using “difficult” language.** The best way to approach IELTS writing is through common sense. You could broadly categorise any good approach to an IELTS essay like this:

- 1) Analyse the question
- 2) Structure your answer
- 3) Write your essay
- 4) Check your writing

Obviously, the hardest part is #3 because there is so much to consider. However, it is important to note that you do not need to achieve perfection in your essay. You just have to make it very good.

When it comes to structure, I always tell people to **keep it simple**. Do not try to reinvent the wheel. Every task 2 essay requires an introduction and conclusion, as well as two or three body paragraphs. Your structure should look like this:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Body paragraph 1
- 3) Body paragraph 2
- 4) Conclusion

The contents of your body paragraphs will be determined by the requirements of the question. If it is “discuss both views” question, then your essay will devote one paragraph to one side of the argument and one paragraph to the other. This is also a great way to add balance to your essay – but remember that balance is not necessary. It is also acceptable to offer a strong argument.

For task 1, you have a little more freedom. You should write an introduction but what follows may be one or two or three paragraphs. It completely depends upon the information that you are presented with. However, you should note that a conclusion is not necessary.

The sample answers in this book should help you to understand the construction and execution of a very good IELTS essay. Do not think that these are the only ways to do it. They are intended as models to help you but ultimately the process of planning and writing an essay comes down to one person – **you**.

David S. Wills

Founder, TED-IELTS

Task 1

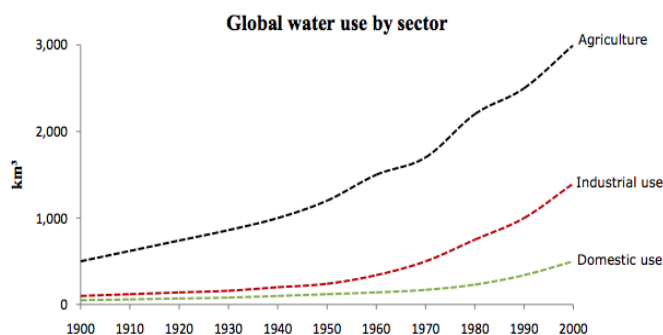
The twenty essays in this section are all based upon task 1 of the IELTS writing test. They offer descriptions of the data in a selected graph, chart, map, or diagram. The information that I have chosen to describe is based upon **my** own interpretation. You should choose what **you** think is the most interesting or important data.

As for structure, I have mostly written essays with three paragraphs. This allows me to write an introduction that contains an overview, and then split the data into two groups. Sometimes, however, this is not possible. Sometimes you need to split it into three groups, but try to avoid writing too many paragraphs. This can cause you to lack sufficient development of your ideas.

Paragraph	Purpose/Contents
Introduction	Overview of the data (explain what the chart is) Highlight a main trend
Body paragraph 1	First set of data Start with most important information
Body paragraph 2	Second set of data Start with most important information

Try to include some logical flow in your descriptions. If you start with the highest number, then move on to the second highest and then the third. Do not jump about from first to third to second. This would be confusing for your reader.

Question



Water consumption in Brazil and Congo in 2000

Country	Population	Irrigated land	Water consumption per person
Brazil	176 million	26,500 km ²	359 m ³
Democratic Republic of Congo	5.2 million	100 km ²	8 m ³

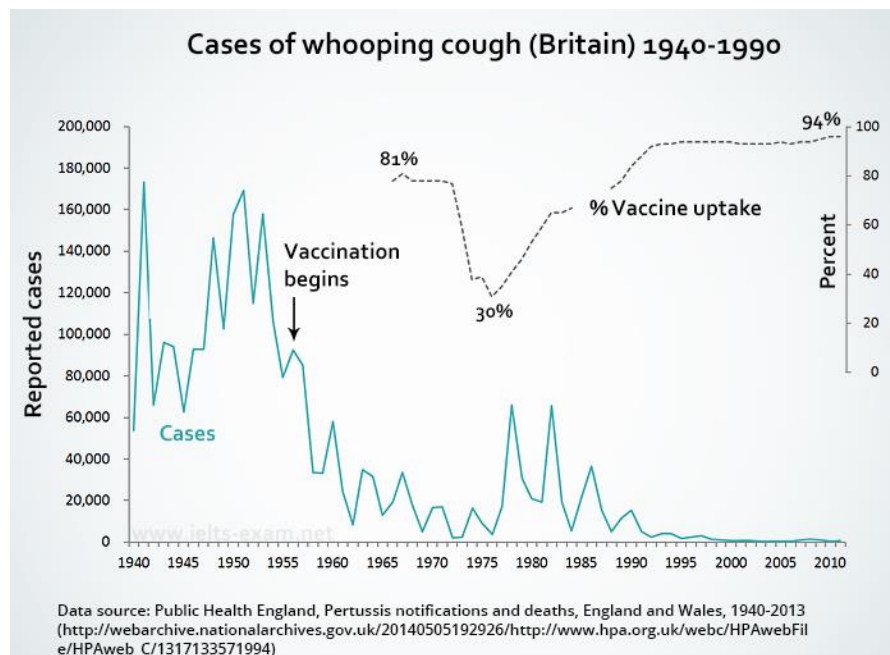
Answer

The line graph shows changes in water use for the whole world over a one hundred year period, split between three different sectors, while the table looks at just two countries – Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo – for the year 2000.

Over the one-hundred-year period, it is obvious that all three types of water use increased significantly, although none of them changed positions. Throughout the whole period, agricultural purposes required more water than any other, beginning at about 500km³ and soaring to more than 3,000km³ a century later. Industrial use was much lower, at about 100km³ in the year 1900, but also soared, finishing the period at about 1,500km³. Domestic use required slightly less water than industrial use at the beginning of the period, but grew to use around 500km³ by the millennium.

In the year 2000, Brazil had a population and area of irrigated land vastly larger than that of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Similarly, the amount of water used per person was more than forty times greater than that of the D.R. Congo.

Question



Answer

The line graph displays information about a disease called “whooping cough” in the United Kingdom over a fifty-year period, beginning in 1940. It charts the number of reported cases against the prevalence of vaccination programmes. It can be determined that instances of whooping cough declined after vaccination was introduced, rose again when it stopped, and then virtually disappeared when vaccination rates covered almost all of the population.

Prior to the introduction of whooping cough vaccinations in the United Kingdom, the number of cases fluctuated wildly between sixty thousand and a hundred and seventy thousand cases per year. From the first year of vaccination onwards, this number fell rapidly until whooping cough was nearly eradicated in the sixties and seventies. At this point, with the disease nearly vanquished, vaccination rates dropped to just thirty percent, causing a spike in the number of cases. As the vaccination programme restarted, whooping cough continued to be a problem until vaccinations covered almost all of the population, at which point the disease virtually disappeared. By the twenty-first century, there was only a negligible number of cases.

Note

This task was extremely complex and required an unusually long introduction. Because of that, I did not want to group my later descriptions into two paragraphs. I felt this would not leave enough room for a thorough and accurate description. As such, this is a rare case of a two-paragraph IELTS essay.

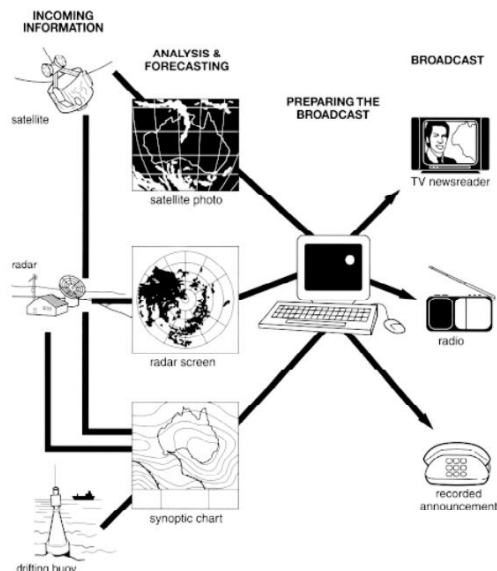
Question

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The diagram below shows how the Australian Bureau of Meteorology collects up-to-the-minute information on the weather in order to produce reliable forecasts.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information shown below.

You should write at least 150 words.



Answer

The process diagram presents information about how the Australian Bureau of Meteorology gathers, processes, and distributes information pertaining to the weather. There are three sources of data and three methods of forecasting information about the weather.

Initially, meteorological data is gathered from a network of satellites, radar stations, and drifting buoys. The satellites provide photos of the Earth from space, while information from the radar system and the satellites together produce a radar screen image. Finally, these two sources of information combine with the drifting buoys to produce a synoptic chart.

Each of these three types of data is then analysed in order to provide a weather forecast. Once the forecast has been decided upon by the meteorologists, the broadcast is prepared using a computer system. This is then delivered to the general public via three methods: TV newsreaders, radio broadcasts, and recorded announcements sent out over the phone system.

Question

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The plans below show a public park when it first opened in 1920 and the same park today.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.

GRANGE PARK (1920)

ARNOLD AVENUE

Seats, Rose garden, Entrance, Rose garden, Pond for water plants, Stage for musicians, Fountain, Glasshouse, ELDON STREET

GRANGE PARK (today)

ARNOLD AVENUE

Entrance, Café, Children's play area, Water feature, Entrance underground car park, ELDON STREET

94

Answer

The two maps show images of a park approximately one hundred years apart. The park has changed almost entirely since it was first opened in 1920.

In 1920, the park had a fountain in the centre, and to the west of that was a stage for musicians. There were rose gardens in the north-west and south-west corners, as well as one in the north-east, next to a pond for water plants. In the south-east of the park there was a glasshouse. There were also seats located around the edges of the park.

Today, there is little that remains of the original features, except for the two entrances and one of the rose gardens. The fountain has been replaced by a central rose garden, which is surrounded by seats, and to the west there is now an amphitheatre. The water pond has made way for a children's play park, and the nearby rose garden has been turned into a café.

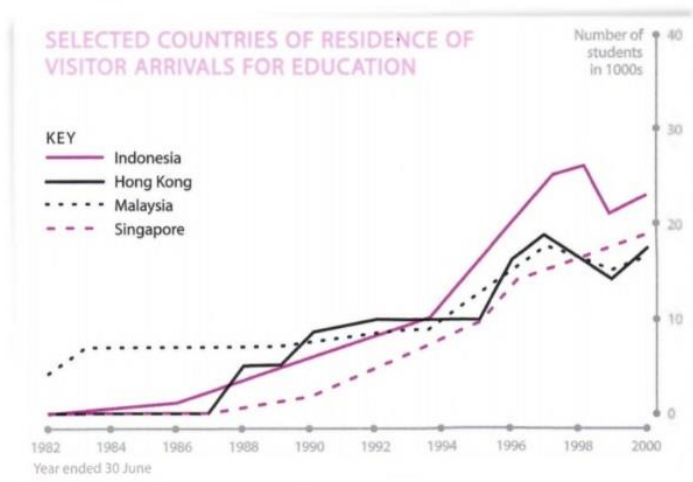
Question

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The graph below shows four countries of residence of overseas students in Australia.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Answer

The line graph shows the number of students arriving in Australia from four different Asian countries. The number of students from each of these countries increased during the almost two-decade-long period, but at different rates.

In the first year listed on the graph, there was a higher number of students from Malaysia than the other three countries, with about five thousand Malaysian students visiting Australia. For approximately the first five years, this figure was far higher than that of the other three countries. While there were just under ten thousand Malaysian students, the other nations sent only about one thousand. From about 1986 onwards, however, the other countries began sending more students and these numbers rose faster than that of Malaysian students. By 2000, the final year on the graph, Malaysia sent fewer students than the other nations listed, despite having quadrupled from about five thousand to just shy of twenty thousand.

In contrast, the number of students from Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Singapore began to rise quickly in the mid- to late-eighties. Hong Kong rose suddenly, then levelled off, and then increased fitfully after that, while Indonesia sent more students at a steadily increasing rate until about 1998, when numbers dropped. Singapore followed a similar trend but without the sudden drop near the end.

Question

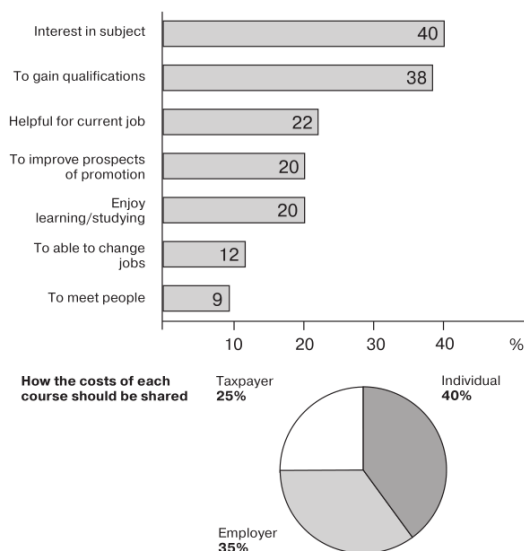
WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The charts below show the results of a survey of adult education. The first chart shows the reasons why adults decide to study. The pie chart shows how people think the costs of adult education should be shared.

Write a report for a university lecturer, describing the information shown below.

You should write at least 150 words.



Answer

There is a bar chart and a pie chart containing information taken from a survey on adult education. The bar chart describes why adults go into education and the pie chart shows who the respondents think should pay for it. People mostly go into education out of interest, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, it is believed that they should pay for it themselves.

According to the data, forty percent of adults go into education due to some sort of interest in a particular subject, while thirty-eight percent do it to gain qualifications. These are far and away the most common reasons, as the next most frequently cited reason was almost half this value. Several reasons were picked by about twenty percent of people, including the fact that it may help them earn a promotion at work. The least frequently stated answer was that adult education is a good way to meet new people.

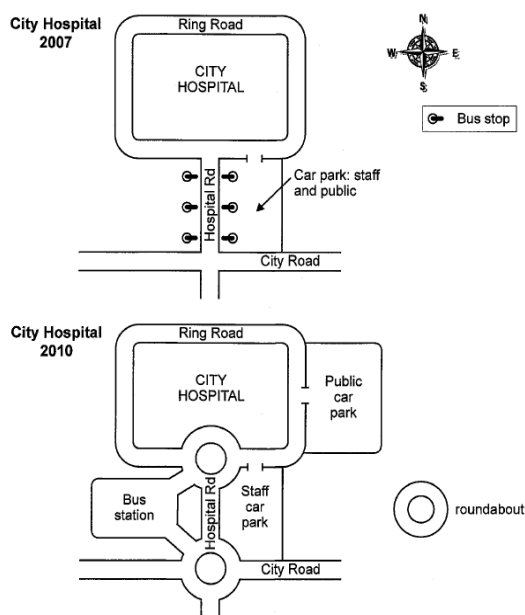
The survey results showed forty percent of people believe the individual should pay the costs of a course. This matches quite well with the previous data, as the same percentage of people did these courses purely out of interest.

Question

The two maps below show road access to a city hospital in 2007 and in 2010.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Answer

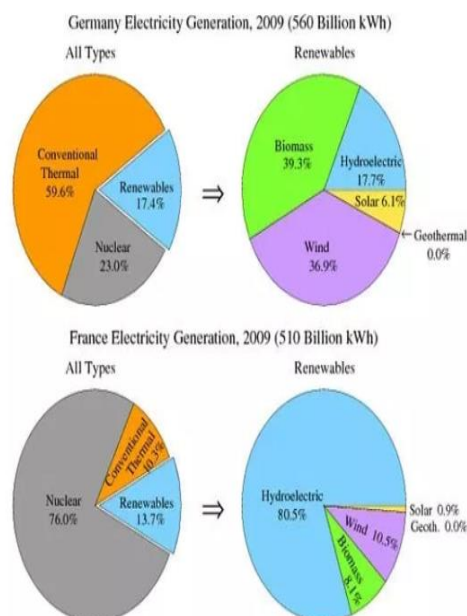
The two maps depict the transportation facilities surrounding a city hospital in the years 2007 and 2010. Several changes took place during the intervening years.

In 2007, the hospital was accessible from the City Road via the Hospital Road, and this continued to loop around the hospital as the ring road. There were several bus stops alongside the Hospital Road, and a joint staff and public car park sat on the east side of road, with its access point just off the ring road.

By 2010, much had changed. The junction from the City Road to the Hospital Road had been converted to a roundabout, as had the junction connecting the Hospital Road with the ring road. The bus stops had been replaced by a bus station on the west side of the Hospital Road, while the joint staff and public car park had become a devoted staff car park. On the east side of the ring road, a new public car park had been built.

Question

The charts below give information about the electricity generation in two countries in 2009.



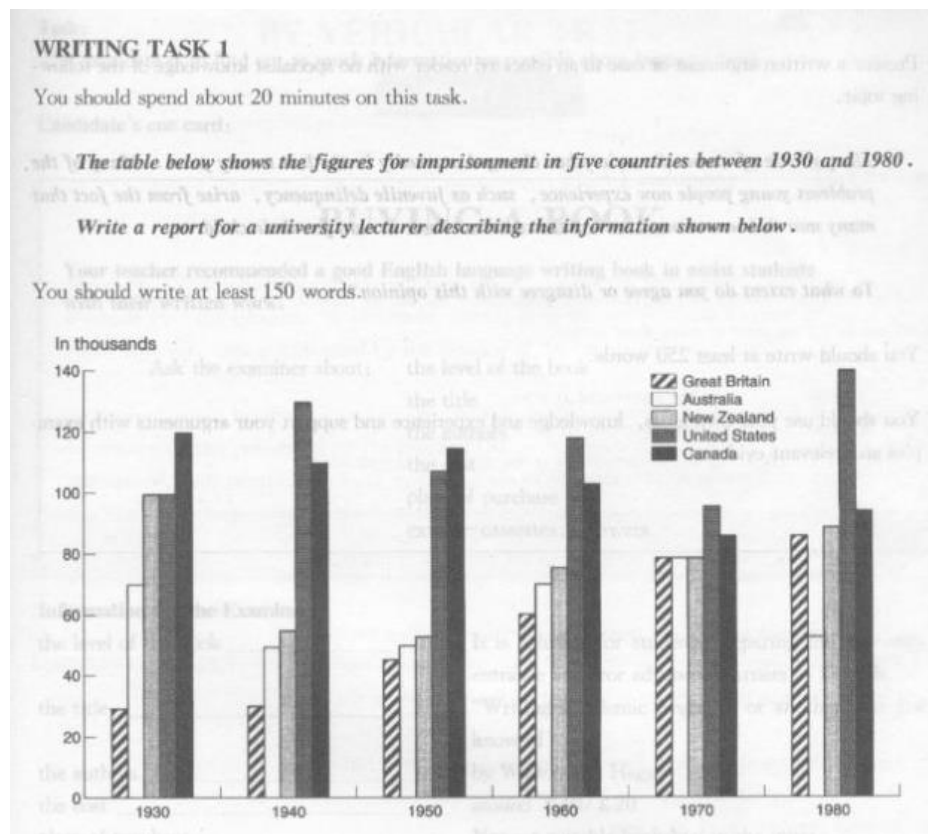
Answer

There are four pie charts that give information about the generation of electricity in France and Germany in the year 2009. One set of charts looks at the total generation of electricity, while the other looks at how renewable forms of energy were produced. The two countries had roughly similar amounts of renewable energy, but these came from totally different sources.

Almost six tenths of Germany electricity came from conventional thermal sources, with almost a quarter coming from nuclear power. In France, however, about three quarters came from nuclear power and just a tenth came from conventional thermal. Both countries had similar figures for renewable sources – 17.4% for Germany and 13.7% for France.

In terms of different renewable energy sources, Germany relied primarily upon biomass, with forty percent of its renewable energy from that source, compared to less than a tenth for France. More than eighty percent of French renewables came from hydropower, compared to less than a fifth in Germany. About a third of German renewable energy came from wind, while the figure was just a tenth in France, and both countries produced very little solar power.

Question



Answer

The bar chart gives information about the number of prisoners in five different countries over a period of fifty years, beginning in 1930. In each of the six different years recorded from this period, the United States and Canada had either the highest or second highest number of prisoners.

In more than half of the years recorded, the United States had the highest number of prisoners of these five countries, fluctuating between 100,000 and 140,000 inmates. During those two years when the United States did not have the highest numbers, Canada surpassed them. In 1930 and 1940, Canada had roughly 120,000 prisoners and the United States was second or joint-second with closer to 100,000 or 110,000 inmates.

The other countries tended to have far fewer people incarcerated, except New Zealand in the first year, when they had 100,000 people in prison, giving it the same number as the United States. After that, New Zealand's figures fell in 1940, but rose continually until the end of the period. Australia followed the same pattern, reducing the number of prisoners between 1930 and 1940, but increasing it after that. The United Kingdom was similar but had a much lower total in 1930. Overall, the British prison population grew more than any other nation and leapfrogged Australia in the final year.

Question

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The first chart below shows the results of a survey which sampled a cross-section of 100,000 people asking if they travelled abroad and why they travelled for the period 1994 – 98. The second chart shows their destinations over the same period.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information shown below.

You should write at least 150 words.

VISITS ABROAD BY UK RESIDENTS BY PURPOSE OF VISIT (1994 – 98)					
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Holiday	15,246	14,898	17,896	19,703	20,700
Business	3,155	3,188	3,249	3,639	3,957
Visits to friends and relatives	2,689	2,628	2,774	3,051	3,181
Other reasons	982	896	1,030	1,054	990
TOTAL	22,072	21,610	24,949	27,447	28,828

DESTINATIONS OF VISITS ABROAD BY UK RESIDENTS BY MAIN REGION (1994 – 98)				
	Western Europe	North America	Other areas	Total
1994	19,371	919	1,782	22,072
1995	18,944	914	1,752	21,610
1996	21,877	1,167	1,905	24,949
1997	23,661	1,559	2,227	27,447
1998	24,519	1,823	2,486	28,828

Answer

The first table contains information about why British people travelled abroad between 1994 and 1998, and the second shows where they went. It can be seen that people mostly went abroad on holiday, and that Western Europe was the predominant travel destination for Brits during these years.

In 1994, a little over 22,000 of the British people surveyed said that they travelled abroad, with about three quarters of those travelling for a holiday. The following year, the overall number of travellers dropped, but in each of the subsequent years the number grew so that in 1998 there were nearly 29,000 people travelling abroad. Once again, the vast majority of these people were going for their holidays, with slight growth in the number travelling for business, to visit friends or family, and other reasons.

In each of the years recorded, most people went to Western Europe. Nearly 20,000 people went to Western Europe in 1994, growing to nearly 25,000 in the final year of graph. No more than 2,500 people ever went to North America or any other area during those five years.

Question

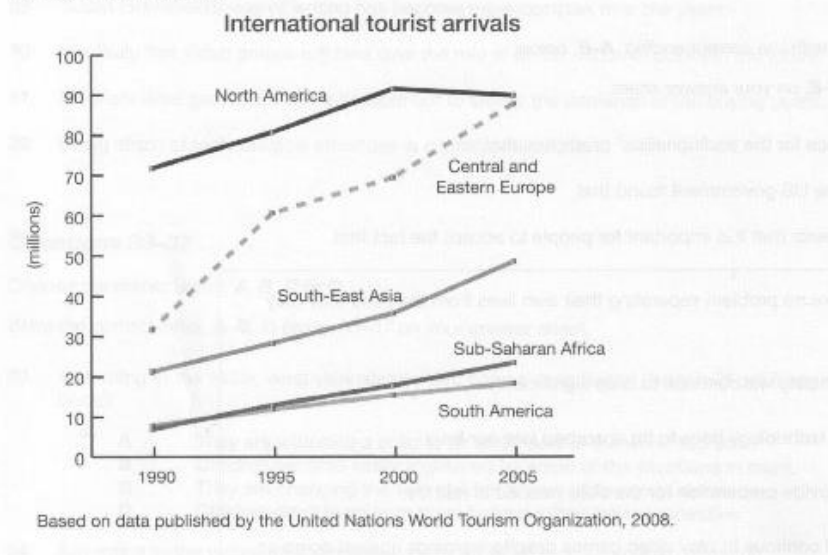
Writing Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The graph below gives information about international tourist arrivals in different parts of the world.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Answer

The line graph shows the number of international tourists arriving in five different regions. The chart records data from 1990 to 2005 and, in each of those years, North America received the highest number of tourists. However, in the final year it was a close tie between North America and Central and Eastern Europe, which had risen quite rapidly since the millennium.

In 1990, there were more than twice as many arrivals in North America as in the next most popular tourist destination, which was Central and Eastern Europe. The figures for North America continued to grow steadily until the turn of the century, after which they pulled back slightly. During the final five-year period, the number of arrivals was approximately 90 million. From 30 million in 1990, the number of arrivals to Central and Eastern Europe rapidly increased and ended the period at almost 90 million as well.

The figures for the other three regions were similar to those of Central and Eastern Europe in that they constantly increased, but they did so at a much less rapid rate. Southeast Asia saw a somewhat steady rise from 20 million to about 50 million, while Sub-Saharan Africa and South America followed a very similar trend to one another. They both grew from less than 10 million to very roughly 20 million.

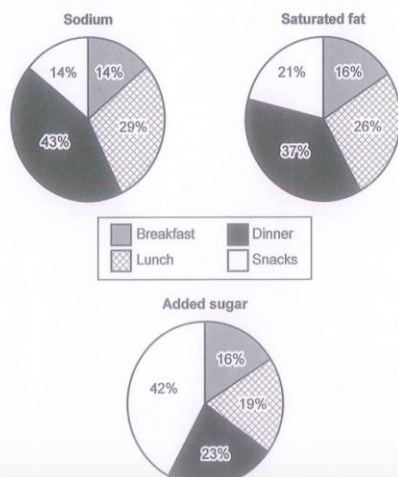
Question

The charts below show the average percentages in typical meals of three types of nutrients, all of which may be unhealthy if eaten too much.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.

Average percentages of sodium, saturated fats and added sugars in typical meals consumed in the USA



Answer

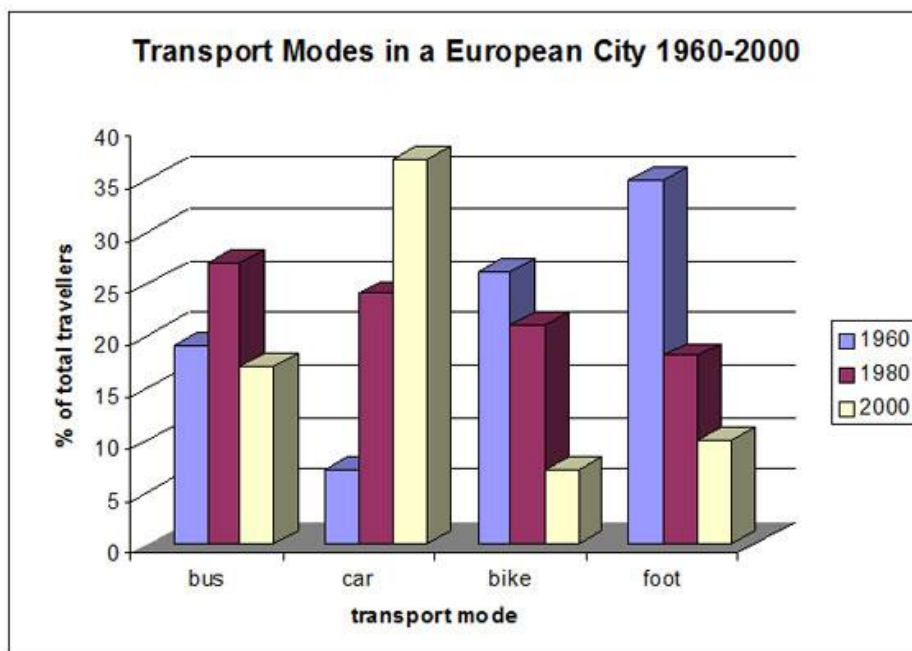
The three pie charts show information about three different kinds of nutrients and their prevalence in typical American meals. There are four kinds of meal mentioned, including snacks. The figures for sodium and saturated fat are loosely similar, but for added sugar they are quite different.

Sodium and saturated fat are both extremely common in typical American dinners. According to the pie charts, 43% of sodium is consumed at dinner time as well as 37% saturated fat, but just 23% of added sugar is found in American dinners. An American lunch is made up of almost a third sodium, more than a quarter saturated fat, and about a fifth added sugar. Breakfasts contain the least amount of these potentially unhealthy ingredients, at 14% sodium and 16% for both saturated fat and added sugar.

The figures for snacks look quite different. These are overwhelmingly comprised of added sugar, at a staggering 42%. These foods also contain 14% sodium and 21% saturated fat.

Question

The following bar chart shows the different modes of transport used to travel to and from work in one European city in 1960, 1980 and 2000.



Answer

The bar chart compares modes of transportation for people commuting to work in a European city. It looks at data from a forty-year period, beginning in 1960 and ending in 2000. There were significant changes during this time.

In 1960, the most popular means of getting to work was by walking, with nearly 35% of people choosing to go on foot. Similarly, a quarter of people chose to cycle to work. These methods were far more popular than taking a car, which only about 5% of people did.

These data saw a complete reversal over the next forty years, with walking and cycling falling in popularity, while driving skyrocketed to become the most common method of commuting. By 2000, the figures for these three methods had nearly inverted.

Buses, on the other hand, started and ended the period at around the same level, although they spiked in popularity in 1980, briefly being the chosen type of transport for about a quarter of people.

Question

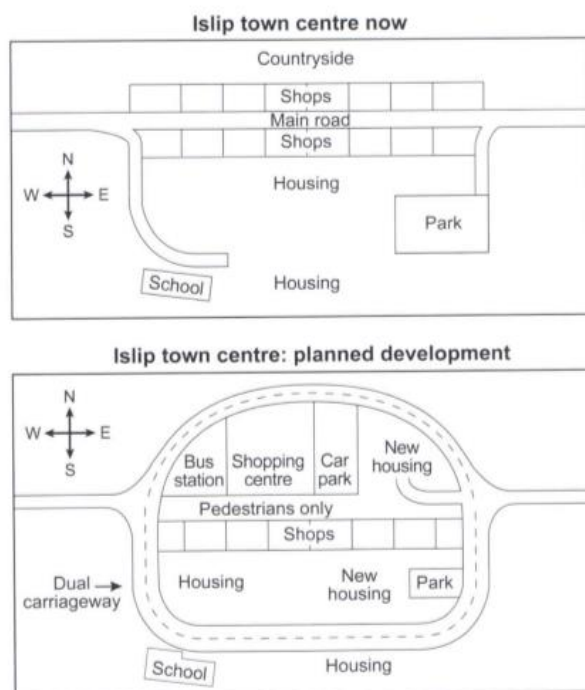
WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The maps below show the centre of a small town called Islip as it is now, and plans for its development.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Answer

There are two maps, one of which shows Islip town centre at present and one which shows plans for its redevelopment. A great many changes are anticipated to take place.

Currently, Islip town centre is comprised of a main road that has shops along either side. There is housing behind the shops, and on the western edge of the main road there is a small side road leading to a school. To the east, another side road leads to a park.

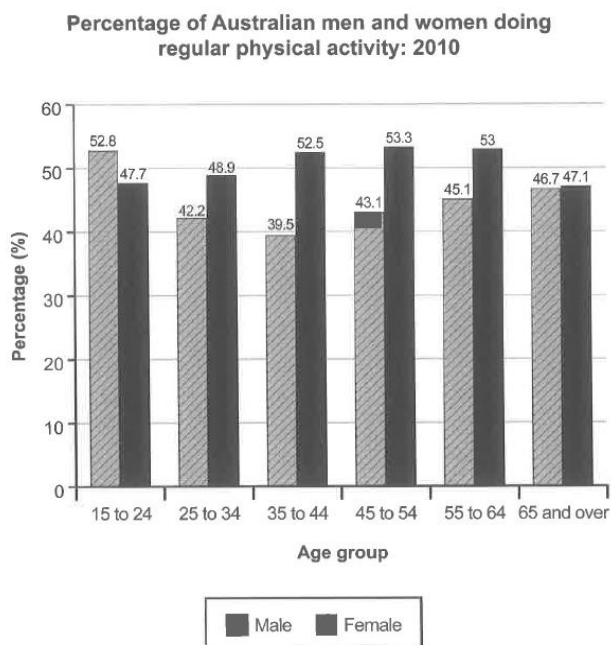
The proposed changes completely reshape the landscape of Islip. Only half of the shops will remain, and the main road will be turned into a pedestrian walkway. On the northern side of what was once the main road, there will be a bus station, a shopping centre, a car park, and some new housing. The park in the east will be reduced in size and more new housing added, whilst perhaps the most notable change of all will be a large dual carriageway that will encircle the whole town.

Question

The bar chart below shows the percentage of Australian men and women in different age groups who did regular physical activity in 2010.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Answer

The bar chart shows data about exercise done by Australians in 2010. The information is categorized by age and gender, and it is clear that women do more physical activity than men in each age group except for the youngest.

In the youngest group, which shows data about people aged fifteen to twenty-four, the males are recorded as doing more exercise than the females, with 52.8% compared to 47.7% saying that they do regular physical activity. In the next age bracket, however, the percentage of men who exercise drops significantly to 42.2%, while the number of women rises slightly. The same trend takes place during the next age group as well, with the number of men exercising continuing to decline, and the number for women rising.

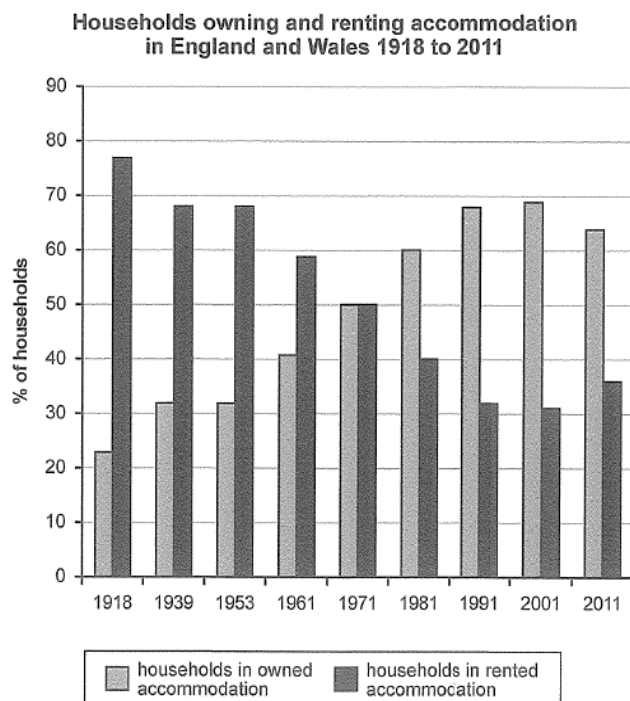
From the age of thirty-five onwards, the number of women exercising stays fairly steady, while the figures for men improve, until the final groups of men and women aged sixty-five and over. In this category, both men and women do far less physical activity, and their figures are very close, at 46.7% and 47.1% respectively.

Question

The chart below shows the percentage of households in owned and rented accommodation in England and Wales between 1918 and 2011.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Answer

The bar chart shows the percentage of people in England and Wales who owned or rented their property over a period of nearly one hundred years, beginning in 1918 and ending in 2011. The data is inversely correlated, meaning that as the number owners increased, the number of renters decreased.

In 1918, accommodations were overwhelmingly rented, with nearly 80% of people renting their homes rather than owning them. Twenty years later, this figure had dropped to less than 70% of people, and there was no change over the next decade and a half.

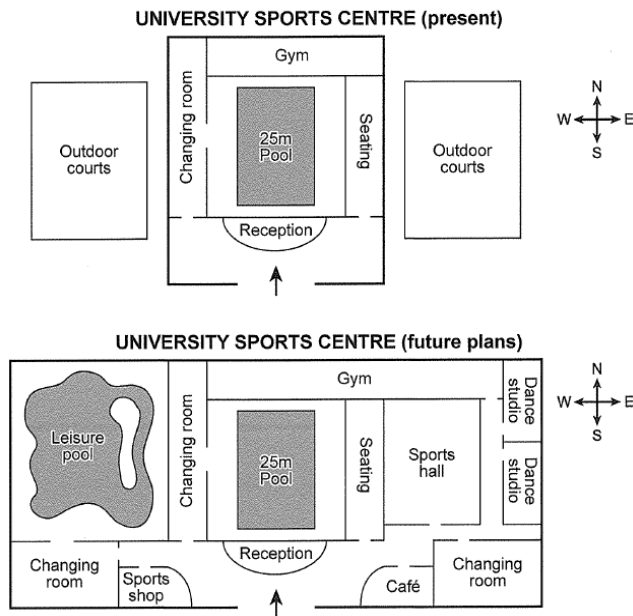
From 1961 onwards, the percentage of people owning a home exploded, while the number of renters went into free fall. For thirty years this trend continued, until around the millennium it slowed down, and finally began to reverse in 2011. Between 2001 and 2011, the percentage of homeowners decreased for the first time in more than a half century.

Question

The plans below show the layout of a university's sports centre now, and how it will look after redevelopment.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Answer

There are two maps depicting a university sports centre before and after a period of redevelopment. There are some parts that will remain the same and others that will be completely altered, and the total area of the sports centre will be increased significantly.

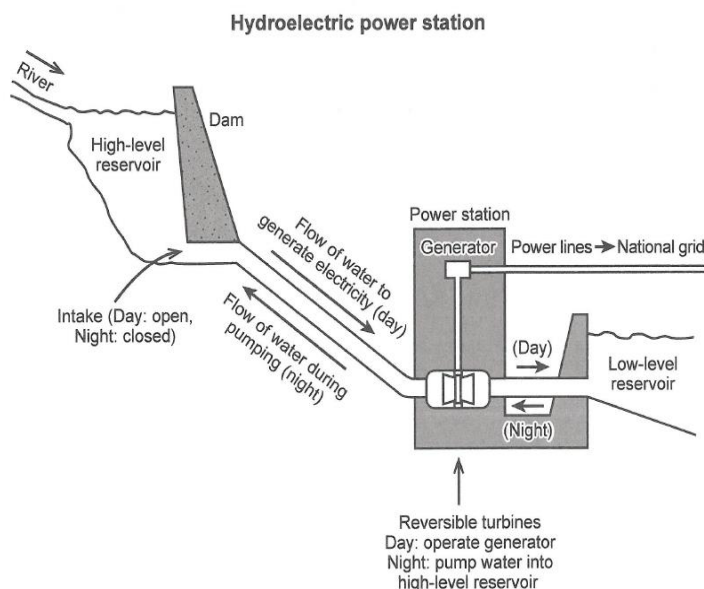
At the centre of the sports centre is a 25-metre swimming pool, surrounded by a seating area and a changing room, with a reception desk between it and the entrance. These features have not changed between the first map and the second. However, the gym, which sits behind the swimming pool, has been substantially expanded, and in the second map it is approximately twice the size it originally was. To the east of the gym, two dance studios have been added in the second map, and to the west there is now a large leisure pool. At the front of the building, near the reception, there are two additional changing rooms, as well as a sports shop and café.

Question

The diagram below shows how electricity is generated in a hydroelectric power station.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Answer

The diagram depicts a hydroelectric power station, and shows how electricity is generated by the flow of water through a dam and other component parts. Ultimately, water flows from one reservoir to another, producing electricity that is sent to the national grid.

Firstly, water enters a reservoir from a river. The water is held back from its natural course by a dam, underneath which there is an intake pipe that is open during the day and closed at night. During the daytime, water flows down, via gravity, to the power station, which is housed below the dam. In the power station, the flowing water spins a generator, which produces an electrical current that is then distributed via power lines to the national grid.

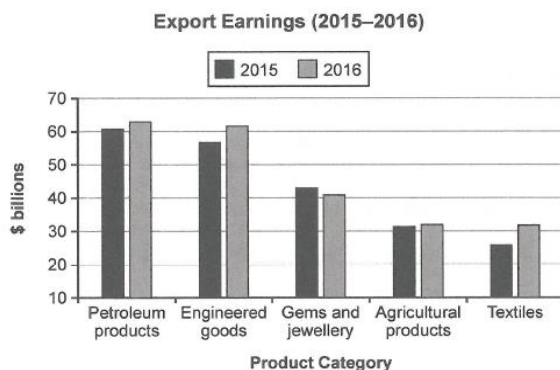
Once the water has generated this electricity, it flows into a lower reservoir, but at night it is pumped back up through the system to the upper reservoir, ready to begin the process again the following day.

Question

The chart below shows the value of one country's exports in various categories during 2015 and 2016. The table shows the percentage change in each category of exports in 2016 compared with 2015.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Percentage change in values (2015–2016)	
Petroleum products	↑ 3%
Engineered goods	↑ 8.5%
Gems and jewellery	↓ 5.18%
Agricultural products	↑ 0.81%
Textiles	↑ 15.24%

Answer

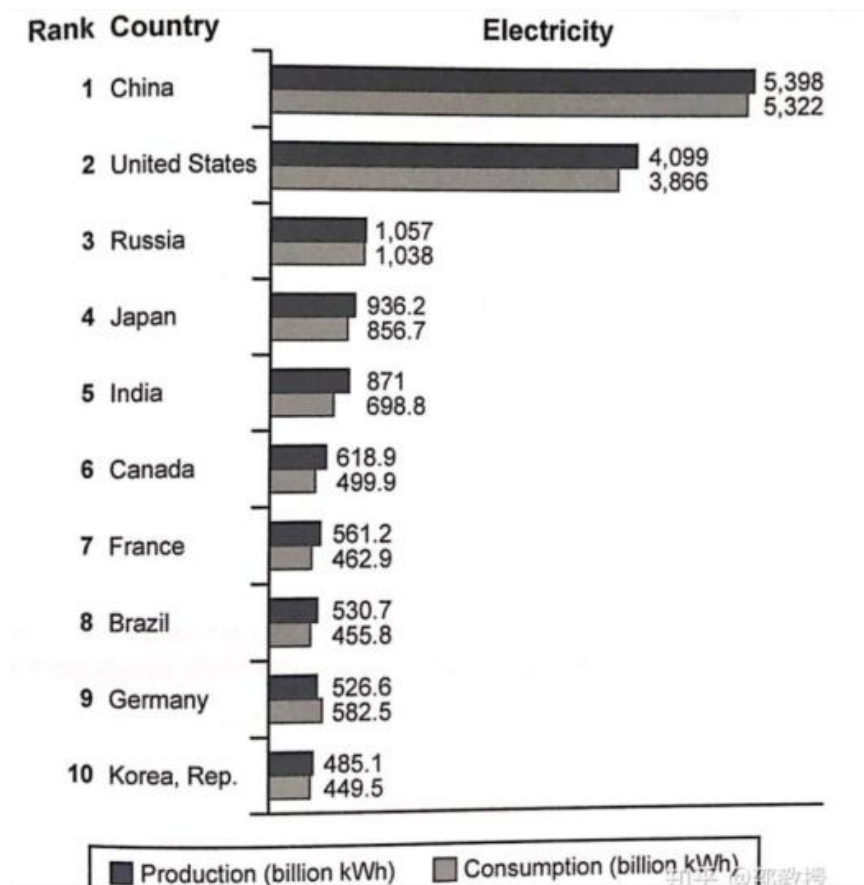
The chart and table give information about exports in five different categories during two years. The chart shows the total earnings from exports, while the table shows the changes in terms of percentage from one year to the next.

This country's main export was petroleum products, which were valued at a little over \$60 billion in 2015, and rose 3% over the next year. The next most valuable export was engineered goods, which were worth about \$57 billion in 2015, and more than \$60 billion by the following year. Their growth between 2015 and 2016 was 8.5%.

The next three categories of exports were worth far less. Gems and jewellery were worth almost \$45 billion in 2015, but actually fell 5.18% by the next year. It was the only type of export to drop during these two years. Agricultural products grew from one year to the next, but only 0.81%, while lowest valued export, textiles, saw the biggest jump – 15.24% between 2015 and 2016.

Question

The diagram illustrates the volume of electricity produced and consumed in ten countries in 2014.



Answer

The bar chart shows the amount of electricity that was produced and used in ten different countries in 2014. It is clear that China both produced and consumed the most electricity, while South Korea produced and consumed the least.

Of the ten countries, two were runaway leaders in the production and consumption of electricity. First was China, which surpassed five trillion kWh in both categories, and next was the United States, which produced a little over four trillion and used a little less than four trillion kWh. This was about four times the amounts registered by the next country on the list, Russia, which was at about one trillion for production and consumption. Every other country on the list generated and used less than one trillion kWh of electricity.

Every country on the list produced more electricity than they used except for Germany, which used slightly more. They consumed 582.5 billion kWh of electricity, and only generated 526.6 kWh.

Task 2

In this section, we will look at the second task from the IELTS writing test. Here, you are required to write at least 250 words in response to a question. There are five different types of essay that you might encounter in writing task 2:

- opinion essays
- discussion essays
- problem and solution essays
- advantages and disadvantages essays
- two-part question tasks

These require slightly different answers, but basically they can be approached with the same four or five paragraph structure. It is essential that you include an introduction and a conclusion here, and that your essay stays consistent in its viewpoint and focus.

Some people think that it is necessary to include balance in these essays but you can give a strong, opinionated answer if you want. Sometimes it is easier to write a good opinionated essay, but other times it is easier to write an excellent balanced one. Ultimately, it is your choice.

The essays in this section largely follow a similar pattern:

Paragraph	Purpose/ Content
Introduction	Introduce the topic Focus the topic on a specific aspect State your viewpoint and/or outline the essay
Body paragraph 1	First main idea Explain Example Either add more evidence or refute this idea
Body paragraph 2	Second main idea Explain Example Make a convincing argument
Conclusion	Summarise the main points and refer to your key ideas

Obviously, it completely depends upon the question that you are given. A problem/solution essay would require a different answer to a “discuss both views” essay, which would in turn be different from an agree/disagree or advantages/disadvantages. However, the key point is that you can use this basic, four-paragraph structure to answer almost anything.

One final point: In this part of the exam, aim to write about 260-280 words. If you write less than that, you may not have fully developed your ideas, and if you write more then you might not have time to finish or proofread your essay.

Question

It is becoming increasingly popular to have a year off between finishing school and going to university.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?

Answer

These days, in many western countries, students choose to take a “gap year” between finishing high school and enrolling at university. There are both advantages and disadvantages to this phenomenon; however, this essay will argue that the advantages completely outweigh the disadvantages.

To begin with, students who choose to take a gap year experience many benefits over those who go straight into higher education. For one thing, they have a chance to see the world and mature somewhat. Many high school students lead sheltered lives and simply are not ready to deal with university, but taking a year to work or travel can help them to grow up and prepare for the challenges that lie ahead. In addition, they may be able to earn some money by working for a year. University can be extremely expensive, and having earned a year’s salary might help to mitigate the worries that come with such a financial burden.

The disadvantages are few and comparatively minor. Those who disagree with the concept of a gap year argue that it is a waste of time as students should go to university first in order to complete their education. However, this is based upon a misunderstanding of the benefits that can come from a well-spent year between school and university. As explained in the previous paragraph, students may develop certain useful skills that can actually benefit them at university, such as maturity or financial security.

In conclusion, the advantages of students taking a year-off prior to starting higher education significantly outweigh the disadvantages. It can allow them to develop important skills that may give them benefits not shared by their peers.

Question

Some people feel that certain workers like nurses, doctors and teachers are undervalued and should be paid more, especially when other people like film actors or company bosses are paid huge sums of money that are out of proportion to the importance of the work that they do.

How far do you agree?

What criteria should be used to decide how much people are paid?

Answer

In today's society, some people are paid much more than others. At one end of the scale, there are low-paid workers, like teachers and nurses, and at the opposite end there are people whose salaries are very high, such as film stars and company bosses. Many people would argue that this is unfair, and I would agree with them.

For a start, it seems that many hard-working people are not adequately rewarded for their efforts. In the United States, the minimum wage for some workers is around \$7 per hour, according to the Department of Labor. Although the people who do this work spend all their time and energy, they are not fairly rewarded because it is very difficult to survive on such a low wage. There are few opportunities for advancement, and their wage is not dependent upon the work that they do.

In contrast, some people are highly rewarded for their work. People like professional athletes and film stars receive salaries that are disproportionate to the work that they do. While it is undeniable that they are skilled and that their efforts reap large benefits, can we really say that they work harder than a teacher, a nurse, or a cleaner? According to Forbes magazine, Floyd Mayweather – the professional boxer – earned \$105 million for 72 minutes of work this year. It seems that this is unfair when most people struggle to earn enough money to pay rent or buy food, despite working much more.

Because of these obvious differences, we need to consider how to distribute salaries more evenly. For a start, minimum wage should be set at a level that provides a comfortable living. Then, we should cap the salaries of people who are overpaid, because quite frankly no one needs so much money. Last year, the president of a company in the United States reduced his own salary to increase his workers' wages by \$3 per hour. This produces a happier and more successful company.

In conclusion, the current system is unfair because it does not reward effort equally. Some people work hard and receive little, while others are given vast sums of money because their work is popular. We need to consider ways to address this issue because it seems counter-productive.

Note

I have used a five-paragraph structure here in order to show how it can sometimes improve an essay. Certainly, four paragraphs would have been acceptable but I felt that the first question required two paragraphs to adequately discuss, and then the second question clearly needed an additional paragraph.

Question

In many countries, schools have severe problems with student behaviour.

What do you think are the causes of this?

What solutions can you suggest?

Answer

In many parts of the world, student discipline is becoming a major issue that teachers, parents, and school administrators have to deal with. This essay will first look at the reasons why this is happening, and then explore solutions for it.

The primary reason for this increase in bad behaviour is the lack of respect for teachers in western society since the late twentieth century, which is partly due to the emphasis placed upon personal freedoms and individual rights. With massive cultural upheaval, the role of a teacher has diminished, and school pupils can run amok. Nowadays, teachers are powerless to stop their students from misbehaving in the classroom, and what is worse is that they are afraid of the consequences of being firm in their disciplinary procedures. When teachers are deemed to be too strict, parents will complain and it is possible that the teacher could lose their job.

In order to solve this, great changes will need to be made. For a start, a teacher's authority needs to be established, and this means making changes that reduce the likelihood of their position being questioned. From misbehaving pupils to unreasonable parents, there needs to be support for the teacher from above. This sort of institutional help has been missing for decades as education becomes more of a service industry wherein "the customer" is always right. Schools need to implement firm but fair rules that all pupils must abide by and there should be equally firm but fair punishments meted out accordingly.

In conclusion, discipline problems are now common in many schools, and that is because teachers are no longer given the respect they are due. Schools and government authorities need to work to reinforce the importance of respecting teachers.

Question

Some people feel that manufacturers and supermarkets have the responsibility to reduce the amount of packaging of goods. Others argue that customers should avoid buying goods with a lot of packaging.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Answer

The problem of pollution is a major one in the modern era, and in the developed world people have been trying to find solutions for several decades. Currently, one of the biggest debates revolves around whether it should be companies or individual people that bear the majority of the responsibility for this improvement. This essay will look at both arguments and conclude that the responsibility should be shared.

To begin with, some people argue that major corporations are responsible for fixing our environmental problems because they have profited from reprehensible crimes against the environment for decades. If these companies suddenly changed to sustainable, eco-friendly products and packaging, consumers could still continue their normal shopping without having so much of a negative effect on the world. This would take away the individual's choice and thereby ensure that everyone contributes to repairing our planet. However, companies function on profits and generally single-use plastics are cheap, so many of them are reluctant to make the switch.

On the other hand, people can also make a difference. Companies only sell what there is a demand for, and if people start demanding greener products and more responsible corporate actions, then companies will have to comply. If their customers started complaining about or boycotting overly-packaged goods, companies would quickly change to keep the consumer happy. However, sadly not all people care about the environment, and in many parts of the world cost comes first. If we rely entirely upon people to make this choice, there will be no progress. In many parts of the world, people still think it is fine to throw plastic into rivers so they should not be depended upon to make reasonable choices.

In conclusion, both companies and individuals should take an active role in fixing the damage they have done to the world, but neither can be entirely trusted. Everyone should make some positive effort and it would also be helpful for governments to pass laws with serious punishments for offenders who violate environmental regulations.

Question

These days many families move to other countries for work. Some people believe that children in these families benefit from this move. However, others believe that it makes life more difficult for the children.

Discuss both these views and give your opinion.

Answer

It has become increasingly common that people move from one country to another in order to find work. When they do this, they often take their children with them. This has major advantages and disadvantages for them, which this essay will explore. It will argue that it is perhaps slightly more beneficial that children have this experience in their lives.

Moving to another country is a major decision to make because it involves serious upheaval, particularly when you have children. There are countless possible stresses and shocks that are involved in this process, not the least of which is having to learn a new language. For children, this means moving not just to a new country but to a whole new education system, and while it surely offers opportunities, it is also a frightening experience. These kids can quickly become socially ostracised due to not speaking the local language perfectly or even just through racism or xenophobia.

However, it should not be forgotten that there are various benefits to moving abroad and that even though it may be difficult at first, it might be worthwhile in the long run. Children are resilient and adaptable, so they should cope with the shock of the move. After a few months or years, they will have learned a new language, made new friends, adapted to a new culture, and learned new things. As adults, they will probably look back on this as a period of positive change that made them into stronger and more talented people. Although it was difficult at the time, they will no doubt recognise in the future that it was a necessary hardship to endure.

In conclusion, there are two sides to this debate and each of them has strong points to make, but ultimately it would probably be for the best that a family moves to a new country with their children because there is so much potential for personal growth.

Question

In some countries, governments provide payments for unemployed people.

How does this impact people?

Is this a positive or negative development?

Answer

In some countries around the world, there are social security systems in place to ensure that human suffering is minimised. This takes various forms, including the distribution of money to unemployed people. This essay will explore the effects of this sort of system and then argue that it is a positive development.

First of all, a “social safety net,” as some people call these systems, is designed on the humanitarian notion that a government should take steps to ensure that no person is entirely left behind. This means that the country should have free healthcare, free education, and emergency funds in place for disaster relief and unemployment benefits. When countries take this sort of measure, it clearly costs them a great deal of money, but it is the ethical thing to do. It means that the average person does not have to worry about suddenly losing everything because they have encountered some problems in life. For example, if a father loses his job, the government will give him a small amount of money each month in order to support himself and his family. This will stop them from starving or going homeless, thereby allowing the man to find a new job without suffering too much hardship. It also means that he does not have to take a terrible job just to make immediate money and can find something that is suited for him instead. This is an incalculable benefit to society.

Clearly, this is a positive development and it is a hallmark of most developed countries. When people are able to live in this way, they can be more content in their lives and also more productive. People who have to continually worry about sliding into poverty are less likely to feel happy and more likely to take dangerous or destructive risks in order to provide themselves and their family with a bright future.

In conclusion, it is ethically and logically justifiable for countries to support their populations during times of grave difficulty, which includes the provision of an unemployment benefit. This will stop people starving and encourage people to be more productive and creative, ultimately leading to the betterment of society.

Question

Longer life spans and improvements in the health of older people suggest that people over the age of sixty-five can continue to live full and active lives.

In what ways can society benefit from the contribution that older people can make?

Answer

In the modern era, life expectancies around the world are rising and societies are struggling to cope with this monumental demographic shift. This essay will explore some of the positive impacts that elderly people can have on society.

To begin with, old people tend to be more careful and patient than younger people, so there are various applications for this quality. Whilst young people tend to be more impetuous, the elderly are capable of remaining calm and demonstrating tolerance, so these people can be put in positions where such skills are required. For example, older people make excellent leaders. Even though we tend to look for dynamic, young leaders, the elderly are more capable of these undervalued attributes, making them less likely to push countries into war due to making rash decisions.

In addition, we now appreciate cutting-edge knowledge but often forget that other forms of knowledge are also important. In an ever-changing world, there are some things that remain static and so older people, who have picked up skills throughout their lives, are still necessary. They know how to do things that younger people do not care about, such as practical maintenance skills. The world that they grew up in may now be gone, but those ideas are still important and the modern world can definitely benefit from them.

In conclusion, society currently values youth more than age, but there are some qualities that the elderly can bring to modern life that can improve the world. Organisations should be comprised of a mixture of old and young people to reap the benefits of both types of person.

Question

In recent years, many small local shops have closed because customers travel to large shopping centres or malls to do their shopping.

Is this a positive or a negative development?

Answer

During the twentieth century, as populations expanded and more people moved to the city, life changed in many ways, including how we go shopping. While previously people would purchase what they needed at small, local shops, by the end of the century people were primarily shopping at larger malls and superstores. This essay will argue that it is neither a positive nor a negative development; in fact, it is simply a natural change.

The main argument against this sort of change is that smaller shops were run by individuals or families, whereas large malls and supermarkets are operated by huge national or multinational conglomerates. Small business owners are being squeezed out of the market by these huge corporate entities. This also causes a situation where the personal aspect of smaller stores is lost, and the high streets lose their character as shops that have been around for decades or longer suddenly close. Each town begins to look more like the next.

However, it is not all bad. These vast stores offer far more choice and better prices than smaller shops could offer. In addition, they specialize in customer service and so although they may not be entirely personal, the staff are well-trained to deal with a wide variety of situations. These shops can offer a greater level of convenience for customers, and cater to people with disabilities more easily.

In conclusion, it is understandable that many people are upset by the phenomenon of small shops closing, but in reality it is not necessarily a negative development. There are some positives to this situation as well.

Question

The development of tourism has contributed to English becoming the most prominent language in the world. Some people think that this will lead to English becoming the only language to be spoken globally.

What are the advantages and disadvantages to having one language in the world?

Answer

In the last few centuries, English has risen to become the most important and influential language on the planet, and it is possible that it could become the de facto world language at some point in future. This essay will explore the advantages and disadvantages of having a single world language.

In terms of positives, having a single world language clearly makes it easier for people around the world to communicate with each other. For tourism, business, education, and almost anything else, this would be a tremendous boost. For thousands of years, people have been attempting to learn foreign languages in order to carry out trade or diplomacy, but with just one world language there would be no need. People could finally communicate with anyone else on Earth without seeking a translator. This is perhaps the single biggest advantage that could arise from having just one language.

However, there are undoubtedly some negatives that come with having a single world language. First and foremost is the fact that having just one language means that many other languages have died out. This means that hundreds or thousands of years of cultural history has come to a sudden end. Lots of ancient books and inscription will no longer be understood. Beyond that, having a single world language may bring people together but it also starts to erase their differences. All of the myriad cultural quirks that make different societies unique have already begun to erode with globalisation and the internet, and a world language would surely speed up that process.

In conclusion, there are various advantages to having a single world language, such improving the ease of communication between people, but there are also many disadvantages like eroding cultural differences.

Question

Some people say that increasing business and cultural contact between countries brings many positive effects. Others say that it causes the loss of national identities.

Discuss both sides and give your own opinion.

Answer

In the twenty-first century, the world feels like it has become smaller as we can now travel from one country to another in a matter of hours, and people from all walks of life move around the globe to start new lives. However, with all these people moving from place to place, and all the associated business and cultural interchange, it is argued that traditional cultures are dying. This essay will examine both views.

The modern era has brought the people of the earth closer together. There is less violence and more social harmony than ever before, and this is in part due to the fact that the people of the world have been united. Economic relationships and cultural exchange have brought us all closer together and prevent us from falling too far apart. It seems laughable that there could be another world war, for example, because we are now dependent upon each other. So much of our peace and prosperity is due to the close relationships our nations now have.

However, it must also be noted that there are some downsides to the era of globalization. Trade, technology, and culture have brought our countries closer together, but we are not in an equal relationship. It is the culture of the wealthiest nations that spreads around the world, and when this happens, existing cultures are lost. On almost every continent, people listen to American music, watch American movies, and wear American-style clothes. Their own ideas are fast becoming historical relics as the world becomes depressingly homogenous.

In conclusion, there are obvious benefits to the business and cultural exchanges between the countries of the world, but there are also some great losses. On the whole, it is probably the positives that outweigh the negatives, but both need to be considered.

Question

Large businesses have big budgets for marketing and promotion, and as a result, people gravitate towards buying their products.

What problems does this cause?

What are the possible solutions?

Answer

It is quite common to hear people complaining nowadays about giant corporations such as Amazon because they have vast resources and can create virtual monopolies. This essay will look at the problems this causes and suggest two possible solutions.

The problem with large companies dominating the market is that they push out competition. In the beginning, this seems beneficial for customers because they are able to buy a large range of products at a low price, but later they only have one option for their purchases and this provides that company with undue power and influence. Over time, these huge companies squeeze out their competitors, causing other organisations to go bankrupt and leave their employees without jobs. This can devastate local areas by increasing unemployment and reducing services. Altogether, it has a massively negative effect on society.

To stop this from happening, there are really only two options. The first is a series of anti-monopoly laws established by the government. In recent decades, both Microsoft and Google have been stopped from gaining too much power by the use of these laws. However, in many countries it is difficult to enforce such laws due to corruption, and so the other alternative is encouraging people to shop locally. At the moment, this is difficult because people generally want to shop at the place with the biggest selection and lowest prices, but they need to understand that this comes at a serious cost. Saving money now can have a major impact later.

In conclusion, when companies become too powerful, they can squeeze out the competition and gain undue influence. This has a really negative impact upon society, and so there are things the government and people can do to stop this happening.

Question

Creative artists should always be given the freedom to express their own ideas (in words, music, or films) in whichever way they wish. There should be no government restrictions on what they do.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Answer

Different countries around the world have different attitudes towards art and culture, and in some places that means artists are given the freedom to create, while in other countries they are restricted or oppressed. This essay will argue that all countries should extend artistic freedoms to their populations.

To begin with, if we acknowledge that art serves various important personal, cultural, and social functions, then it makes sense that countries should encourage their artists to create new works. Sadly, in some places, governments attempt to stifle artistic ventures because they fear that these will be critical towards the government or society. For this reason, artistic advancement is sometimes hindered by politicians with regressive attitudes. A brief look at modern history clearly shows that countries with open-minded governments and liberal policies create the most significant artwork. A perfect example of a period of artistic accomplishment is the 1960s in the United States, when various court cases overturned obscenity laws and banned censorship. The result was an outpouring of creativity in all artistic fields, whose impact is still felt today in all corners of the globe.

Conversely, it is easy to see what happens when countries have overly strict governments with strong social controls and oppressive attitudes. In such places, almost no artistic advancement is made and people such as musicians and painters can only work in traditional modes, without doing anything new. There are many famous artists who have had to flee from oppressive countries in order to continue their work. These countries are doomed to produce no unique artistic work and therefore to yield little cultural influence in the world. Between their propaganda and censorship, their government ensures that their culture will stagnate or simply rely upon imported art, which they will never fully understand because of the restrictions that have been imposed on their own development.

In conclusion, art is an important part of life and being creative is essential to it. When countries have strong laws about censorship, this stifles artists' creativity and ensures the nation's stagnant and disappointing cultural output.

Question

Happiness is considered very important in life.

Why is it difficult to define?

What factors are important in achieving happiness?

Answer

Happiness is perhaps the single most important thing in life. Whether people realize it or not, they are usually seeking happiness for themselves and for their loved ones. However, little is really understood about happiness. Humans don't generally seem able to define it or say for certain how to achieve it. This essay will explore these issues.

Defining happiness is quite difficult because it is essentially just a feeling, and in particular a temporary one. Everyone experiences happiness sometimes, but not all the time, and it is a deeply personal sensation. Is happiness the same experience for a four-year-old child and a forty-year-old woman? This seems unlikely. It also seems reasonable to assume that happiness is different for each person, and also that happiness will vary from culture to culture. Therefore, it is hard to produce a universally accepted definition of happiness.

Because happiness is different for each person, there is no guaranteed way to achieve happiness. However, there are some commonalities in terms of the factors that may lead to this state of feeling. Success seems to cause happiness in people, as does an unexpected positive outcome. Feelings of closeness to another person typically cause us to feel happiness, and other social or familial factors often contribute as well. Happiness may also be related to self-satisfaction and high self-esteem, and of participating effectively as part of a group.

In conclusion, happiness is notoriously difficult to define because it is a fleeting sensation that is experienced differently by different people all around the world. However, there are numerous possible factors that may contribute to making people happy.

Question

Research indicates that the characteristics we are born with have much more influence on our personality and development than any experiences we may have in our life.

Which do you consider to be the major influence?

Answer

For centuries, people have debated the issue of nature versus nurture, which refers to whether talent and personality are innate or due to environmental factors. This essay will argue that it is a mixture of the two that shapes who we are.

In terms of nature, most human beings seem to be born with certain innate personality traits, such as determining whether we are outgoing or introverted, optimistic or pessimistic, credulous or sceptical. It is believed that these are coded into our DNA and have been a part of us since before birth, so it is quite difficult to change them. However, humans are very malleable during their first two decades on Earth and so it is unclear just how much a person's personality is the result of their genes and how much was picked up in those early years. Also, it is clear that major events and situations can affect that personality development during this crucial time.

The nurture side of the debate is a bit clearer because we can more easily observe how people change over time due to the events in their life. A baby adopted into a new family may change its personality as it grows, for example, and major traumatic events can, of course, cause people to alter their outlook. There are countless examples of optimistic young people going to war or being in a tragic accident and then turning into bitter, cynical, and withdrawn people. Clearly, their personality was changed by external factors, so nature is not necessarily the predominant force.

In conclusion, both viewpoints have their merits but in most cases it is a mixture of the two that creates a person's personality. It is hard to know the extent to which either of these really is responsible, but we can be sure that they both have an important effect on it.

Question

Many people believe that the high levels of violence in the media and online are causing serious social problems.

What are these problems and how could they be reduced?

Answer

In recent decades, it has become common to hear people complaining about the violent content in the media or online. This essay will look at how it affects people and suggest some ways that it can be tackled.

First of all, it is believed by some experts that people can be influenced by the violent things that they see in the media. Although it is not conclusively proven, it is suggested that this sort of experience can either desensitise them to violence or even encourage violent behaviour. For example, it is believed that movies and TV shows that depict violence casually cause people to think about real violence as a trivial issue. The movie, *Reservoir Dogs*, has often been cited as encouraging and glamorising violence against others, and has been suspected as an influence in several crimes committed by young adults.

If it is proven that the media is truly causing people to turn to violence, then there are some possible steps that could be taken. The first and most important thing is to talk seriously with children about these complex issues. Parents should sit down and explain to their kids why they may see these sorts of things in the media and why, in most cases, the violence is stylised and not real. This will stop people from growing up with unrealistic or dangerous views about violence. There can also be a system put in place to prevent children from seeing things that they are too young to view. In the UK, there have been such procedures for many years, prohibiting children from seeing inappropriate content in movies, online, on TV, and in video games.

In conclusion, some people believe that violence in movies can be dangerous. This is possible and if it does happen, then it may desensitise people or encourage them to commit violent acts. This can be mitigated by educating people from a young age and stopping children from seeing such things.

Question

These days, in some countries, an increasing number of young adults are choosing to spend their whole weekend inside their own house.

Why do you think this is happening?

Is this a positive or negative development?

Answer

Nowadays, it is quite common for young adults to stay at home rather than go out and socialise or do other activities. This essay will look at reasons why that has happened, such as technological innovations, and argue that it is definitely a negative development.

Over the past few decades, technology has moved forward at an astounding rate. Most people can now afford some sort of mobile phone, and these give us access to entire worlds of information, including addictive videos and games. Because of this, it is now quite easy to spend twenty-four hours a day at home without becoming bored. People develop dependencies upon their devices and, at the same time, the real world starts to seem dull and frightening by comparison. As such, it is now more desirable to stay in one's home and go online than to go outside and pursue hobbies, sports, and a social life.

This definitely seems like a negative trend. For a start, it is clearly a sign of mass addiction, which is alarming. People do not have control over their reliance upon devices and it is negatively affecting their health and social life. When people cannot control their actions, this is clearly an indication that change is needed or else a severe price might be paid. Additionally, staying indoors is simply bad for a person. Humans evolved outdoors and we need the fresh air, sunlight, and stimulation in order to maintain our physical and mental health. It is not possible to live a completely healthy life when most of that time is spent locked indoors.

In conclusion, people now spend much of their time indoors and this is probably due to their mobile phone addictions. This is a negative development because it shows people are losing control of their lives and the effects on their health can be devastating.

Question

Despite the growing number of gyms and fitness centres, more and more people are leading a sedentary lifestyle in the modern society.

What problems are associated with this? What solutions can you suggest?

Answer

In the twenty-first century, an unprecedented number of people are living sedentary lifestyles due to changes in our work and social habits. This is a seriously dangerous phenomenon and greatly threatens our health and happiness. This essay will look at the problems and solutions.

The problems stemming from a sedentary lifestyle are numerous, but mostly they relate to health. The human body has evolved over millions of years to be active, and this sudden change in our behaviour is unnatural. Our bones, ligaments, and muscles all suffer greatly from spending long periods of time sitting down. It is common now for people to suffer from neck pain, for example, due to being hunched over our computers. Moreover, by not moving about enough we face the problem of burning insufficient calories. This means that we tend to become overweight and suffer from an array of obesity-related illnesses.

Solving this problem will not be easy because people don't want to return to the days of hard work and long-distance walking. Education at a young level is of course of paramount importance. Once we teach our children to be active, it will encourage them to continue this pattern of behaviour in later life. Beyond that, we need to transition away from sedentary workplace environments and a reliance upon cars as a primary mode of transportation. It is simply too easy for people to avoid activity when they are confined to a desk or car seat for most of their day.

In conclusion, the modern trend towards inactivity is worrying because of the host of health problems which stem from it. Solving this problem will be a major challenge, but there are some things that can be done.

Question

Popular events like the football World Cup and other international sporting occasions are essential in easing international tensions and releasing patriotic emotions in a safe way.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Answer

It has been suggested that major international sporting events serve the purpose of easing international tensions and allowing people to release their patriotic fervour in a safe and positive way. This essay will partially agree with that statement.

It is true that large sporting events are generally good for the population because they allow people to release their emotions and engage in a primitive sort of bonding that is not common in most of society today. When people support their country, they participate in a tribal event that engages thousands or millions of other people, gathering them together and allowing them to express feelings that normally become repressed. As most people live unfulfilling, stressful lives, it could be argued that this sort of outlet is important and can help the average person to “let off steam” in a way that is socially acceptable and also mentally healthy.

However, while that is a reasonable assumption, it seems that the other claim is less credible. It is hard to see how an international sporting event would heal tensions between nations in any real sense. There are probably examples of this happening occasionally throughout history when minor squabbles have been put aside, but for the most part it is likely to contribute to further tensions between nations with acrimonious histories. When events such as the World Cup occur, police are required to keep fans apart in order to avoid violent skirmishes, proving that this just inflames tensions. While this is true at an individual level, it is also true at a government level. Sports can bridge some small divides but major problems will remain.

In conclusion, international sporting events are important and do have positive effects, but it is unlikely that they could solve diplomatic problems or heal tensions between nations.

Question

Some people believe that technology has made man more sociable while others believe it has made us less sociable.

Discuss both sides and give your opinion.

Answer

There has been a lot of debate over the past fifteen years about whether social media is really making people more sociable, or whether the name is in fact ironic. This debate could well be expanded to include any number of other technologies, as they seem to pose the same problems. This essay will argue that technology is indeed making us less sociable.

Those who say that technology makes us more sociable have some strong arguments to support their view. For a start, devices like mobile phones certainly make it easier for people to get in touch with one another, and applications like Facebook and WhatsApp allow people from all parts of the world to communicate with each other, making new friends or staying in touch with old ones. Whilst these points are undoubtedly true, one must ask whether that is genuinely being sociable, or if it is just a more convenient way of doing something we otherwise would have done. Prior to social media, we sent letters. Those letters were probably more thoughtful and detailed.

Moreover, technology tends to make people less aware of their surroundings, and less apt to engage with others. Just look at any café, bus, or waiting room. People barely look up from their phones now, and many of them have their headphones in. People are more reluctant to engage with each other on a human level, and prefer sending messages or tweeting. Millions of young people are addicted to their phones or computers, and withdraw from society, reluctant to form real human bonds with their peers. So even if technology makes it easier to connect, we are certainly losing true personal connections.

In conclusion, it appears as though modern technology is attempting to make people more sociable, but in fact the result is the very opposite of that intention.

Question

In some countries, the average weight of people is increasing and their levels of health and fitness are decreasing.

What do you think are the causes of these problems? What measures can be taken to solve them?

Answer

Around the world, it can be observed that people are becoming increasingly overweight, and at the same time their fitness levels are dropping. There are many different reasons for this, and many possible solutions. This essay will look at a few of these.

The reasons for people's weight gain and loss of fitness are hard to pinpoint and too numerous to explain in detail. However, the biggest contributing factor is likely to be the lifestyle changes that have come about in the last one hundred years or so. As people no longer have to forage for food or even do manual labor, they are burning fewer and fewer calories. Recently, the developed world has seen people working from offices and spending all their time at computer screens. In addition, supermarkets and fast food restaurants now provide copious amounts of high calorie food for people to consume. These two factors have combined to create the obesity epidemic that plagues the world today.

Finding solutions to these problems is obviously very difficult because these new ways of living are already deeply ingrained in our culture. However, the best solution is probably to start educating people from a younger age to eat healthily and get more exercise. Children are very open to these ideas, and if they learn about the importance of nutrition and exercise from a young age, they will adapt well and stand a better chance of living healthily in future. By making these classes mandatory for all children, a trend will be created leading to the improvement of overall public health.

In conclusion, the current problems of obesity and unfitness are caused by many problems, which generally stem from global trends in lifestyle. Solutions are hard to implement, but may be successful if children are educated from a young age.

Question

Even though doctors advise old people to get more exercise, many old people do not get enough.

What are the reasons for this?

What are some possible solutions for this?

Answer

It seems that old people do not get as much exercise as they should, which causes them to suffer from some physical and mental health issues. This essay will look into the reasons for this problem and also explore some potential solutions.

Old people do not get much exercise largely because it is difficult, tiring, and even painful for them to do so. In their youth, they might have enjoyed playing football or rugby, but as senior citizens, it is much harder to engage in sports or other activities. As such, elderly people are restricted to light exercise such as walking and other forms of gentle cardiovascular activity. However, this may be boring for them as there is not the same sort of excitement as there is in regular sports. At the same time, even walking could be exhausting and painful for some elderly people, encouraging them to instead sit in their chair and stay sedentary.

The solution is to make exercise appealing to elderly people. This can be done by making it into a social activity for them, just like they did in their youth. When care homes and senior centres arrange group activities, it can provide valuable physical and mental stimulation for these elderly people, which will make them much more inclined to participate. By bringing in some friendly people to guide them, the elderly can get some much needed exercise and ideally they will be able to do it under the supervision of trained professionals that can make sure no one gets hurt.

In conclusion, the problem of elderly people lacking exercise is partly due to the difficulty of doing exercise at that age. Solving this problem requires careful planning to make exercise both fun and safe for these people.

Question

When a country develops its technology, the traditional skills and ways of life die out. It is pointless to try and keep them alive.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Answer

Throughout human history, technological innovations have caused a loss of traditional skills and ways of life. This may seem like a cultural decline, but in fact it is just part of the natural evolution of humanity. It is therefore not worth the effort of keeping them alive when there is no longer any need for them.

People often feel sad when a new technology supplants an old one and a previous way of life or particular skill is lost. Nowadays, computers are replacing almost everything, and it is speculated that self-driving vehicles will replace taxis and trucks on the road. These occupations will be lost, and those drivers will need to find new jobs. It seems unfair but it is part of the natural process. In one hundred years, people will not look back at the loss of these things, but instead will be grateful of the advancements that were made.

It is easier to look at these things with the objectivity that comes through the passage of time. Nowadays, no one laments the loss of archaic farming techniques that were incredibly labor-intensive because they were ultimately replaced by a succession of much more efficient devices that have allowed humans to produce vastly more food than ever before. It allowed people to leave the fields and adopt new skills, which in turn has helped our species to advance and created all kinds of modern wonders that have improved our lives.

In conclusion, it is reasonable to feel a sense of loss for old skills and technologies, as well as the ways of life that these supported, but in the grand scheme of things, it is better that humans move forward with further technological innovations.

Question

Too much money is wasted on repairing old buildings that should be used to knock them down and build new ones.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Answer

In some countries, the government and other organisations spend a lot of money on the maintenance of old buildings, but it has been suggested that simply demolishing them and building new ones would be preferable. This essay will argue against that.

It is true that constructing new buildings would probably be cheaper than maintaining old ones and it would also provide more jobs and housing. However, there are many drawbacks to consider. First of all, old buildings are a part of a country's heritage and should be protected in many cases. All over Europe, it is legally difficult to tear down ancient buildings because they are protected as part of the urban landscape. This helps a town or city to keep its character and identity in the modern era. Whilst many aspects of a place may change, it is important that something stays the same in order to preserve and respect the past.

In addition, engaging in continual construction projects is environmentally destructive. Around the world, humans are using massive amounts of materials to build vast apartment buildings, malls, and skyscrapers. To some extent, this is inevitable, but at the same time it is not always necessary to build something new. Rather than sourcing huge amounts of new material and causing lots of environmental damage, it is often preferable to simply maintain or upgrade an existing structure.

In conclusion, it may be tempting to demolish old buildings but at least two things should be kept in mind: firstly, that it may be part of the area's cultural heritage, and secondly that the process of demolition and construction may be environmentally damaging.

Question

In some countries, more and more adults are continuing to live with their parents even after they have completed education and found jobs.

Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

Answer

These days it is quite common for people to live with their parents even after they have graduated from university and found a job. There are various reasons for this situation, as well as some consequences. Overall, it is impossible to say whether it is a good or a bad phenomenon, so this essay will explore both the advantages and disadvantages.

On the plus side, people who live with their parents after university may save money which they can then use later in life. This is preferable to paying rent and bills for several years after graduation. Instead of this, young people can live with their parents and then buy a house when they are ready to settle down. In addition, this situation can allow young people to stay closer to their families and maintain traditions. In the modern world, lots of old values have changed or been lost, and this can help continue closer family relationships.

There are also a great many negatives to this. Unfortunately, living at home restricts a young person's freedom, and thus they cannot forge close personal relationships with their peers. It is important for young men and women to live together as young adults so that they can know each other before marriage, and living with parents makes this impossible. More than just impacting social development, living alone or with friends or a partner allows for many other responsibilities, and living with parents also restricts this. For example, it is good for young people to learn about the difficulties of paying bills and doing their own chores rather than relying upon their parents.

In conclusion, it is hard to say whether there are more advantages or disadvantages. It seems there are different cultural perspectives to be taken into consideration. All that can really be concluded is that there are certainly many big differences between living alone and living with your parents.

Question

The tourism industry has grown enormously over the last fifty years, and there are few places which are unaffected by it. However, tourism rarely benefits the countries which tourists visit.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Answer

Tourism has been around for millennia, but in the late twentieth century it exploded in popularity. Nowadays, millions of people take off on holiday during their summer and winter vacations, often to foreign countries. It is generally considered a positive phenomenon, bringing the people of the world closer together and boosting the economies of developing countries. However, there are some drawbacks.

The benefits of tourism are obvious. For a start, it is a boon to the economy of the destination receiving the tourists. Generally speaking, when tourists visit a region, they spend money that can go into the pockets of the local people, improving their livelihoods. Tourism also brings cultures together by fostering interactions between people from opposite sides of the globe, and this in turn brings educational opportunities.

However, international tourism comes with some major drawbacks. For one thing, there are always unknown factors that may limit the amount of money tourists spend, like natural disasters or terrorist attacks. This means that having a tourism-based economy offers an unreliable and unstable future. In addition, tourism is not always equitable, and money spent in the local economy doesn't necessarily benefit the country equally. For example, tourists visit North Korea but the money they spend goes directly to corrupt government officials rather than the hard-working people who are providing services to the tourists. Finally, tourism tends to cause environmental problems that may negatively impact the lives of people (and wildlife) in the destination country.

In conclusion, tourism has many positive attributes and can certainly help bring people from different cultures together; however, it also poses some problems, and for the places which receive the tourists, there can be some disadvantages.

Question

There seems to be an increasing trend towards assessing students through exams rather than continuous assessment.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of exams as a form of assessment?

Answer

There is a lot of debate over how to conduct student assessments in various educational facilities. The traditional method is with examinations, but these days there is a lot of resistance to this, and many teachers prefer less stressful and more representative modes of assessment. This essay will look at the advantages and disadvantages of exams.

The advantages of exams are few and mainly focused on the institutions rather than the students. Exams can be organized quite easily and conducted in a short period of time, as hundreds of students can sit together in a room to do the test. These exams can then be marked conveniently, sometimes even by a computer, without the hassle of many months of continual observation by teachers.

However, traditional examinations are not the best means of assessing students in the majority of subjects. They require a student's total knowledge of a subject to be assessed over a single event, which is itself an artificial construct, and requires enormous amounts of stress. The student needs to study for a long time to go into an exam hall and demonstrate a year's worth of knowledge. This is unlikely to give a true representation of their expertise. Factors like anxiety can reduce their performance, as well as bad luck, sickness, and so on. It is far better to test a student's knowledge over a longer period of time, in various ways, to get a more representative idea of their actual ability in that subject. This form of continuous assessment could give a far more reliable impression of what the student actually knows, rather than relying upon one single exam.

In conclusion, traditional examinations are not the best way of assessing students, and they should be replaced by continuous assessment as this is more effective and reliable.

Question

Human activity has had a negative impact on plants and animals around the world. Some people think that this cannot be changed, while others believe actions can be taken to bring about a change.

Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Answer

With the massive population growth that occurred during the twentieth century, humans began to devastate the planet like never before. Now, in the twenty-first century, it is abundantly clear that we have brought our world to the brink, and some say that there may be no going back. This essay will look at that viewpoint, as well as the alternative, which argues that we may be able to make positive changes.

It should be clear to any intelligent person that the world is in a state of crisis. Plants and animals are going extinct every single day, and whole ecosystems are collapsing. The forests that give our planet the air it needs are being chopped down and the seas are dying, too. It is simply too late to fix many of these problems, and the ones that could still be fixed are unlikely to be given the attention they deserve. Around the world, people are fixated upon their own existence, and they continue to use too much power, too many plastic bags, and give no real thought to the rest of the world. Our politicians care about the short-term future that will get them re-elected, and companies only care about their profits. There is no reason to be positive for the future of our planet.

There are, however, theoretical changes that could be made. If people acted now in unison to change the world, success could be seen. This would require banning fossil fuels, giving up cattle farming, limiting population growth, doing away with plastics, and countless other changes that people simply aren't willing to make. Governments would need to work together, but unfortunately that seems unlikely to happen.

In conclusion, the earth is in mortal danger and while there are things that could be done to save it, humans probably will not take the necessary actions.

Question

Some people get into debt buying things they don't need and can't afford.

What are the reasons for this behaviour?

What action can be taken to prevent people having this problem?

Answer

A rising tide of consumerism has swept much of the world in the past century, and as it is easy to get a loan or a credit card, people are finding themselves quickly sliding into debt. There are many reasons for this problem, and some potential solutions to it.

The main reason for the current abundance of debt is that people are living in a very materialistic world, where they are constantly exposed to advertising and even gloating on social media. They feel that they need to buy things because other people have them or because society demands it. From iPhones to fancy cars, there is huge social pressure for people to buy expensive goods. Even when they can't afford it, banks advertise credit cards everywhere and companies offer payday loans with high interest rates. It is very easy for people to borrow this money, and they soon find that their debt piles up.

There is no easy solution to the debt problem, but some important steps need to be taken in order to reduce the severity of the situation. Firstly, as always, education is important. High school students should be educated in school about financial matters, and encouraged not to take out credit cards or loans unless necessary. Governments should also set rules about interest rates and loan advertisements in order to make payments more reasonable. There should also be limits on how easily they can give loans to people, so that people cannot borrow more than they could ever pay back.

In conclusion, debt is a huge problem in society partly because it is so easy to get into debt. Schools and governments can take some steps to help solve this problem.

Question

Nowadays technology is increasingly being used to monitor what people are saying and doing (for example, through cell phone tracking and security cameras). In many cases, the people being monitored are unaware that this is happening.

Do you think the advantages of this development outweigh the disadvantages?

Answer

In the twenty-first century, it is common for people's actions and information to be monitored by others without their knowledge or consent. Opinion is strongly divided over this topic, with some people being adamantly opposed to such invasion of personal privacy, and others believing that it is necessary for our security. This essay will argue that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages, and as such this trend is dangerous for our future.

To begin with, as we move into an increasingly digital world, our personal data is mostly stored online. From dating profiles to photos to bank details, so much of what is important is now stored on computers. Much of this is available to governments and businesses without our knowledge, and it is even common for social media companies to sell our data to third parties in order to make profits. This leads to large organizations knowing more about our lives than we ever wanted them to. Our data should be our personal property, and we should have more say over how it is handled.

In addition, with the ever-present threat of global terrorism, government agencies are constantly monitoring people around the world. They do this by watching us on security cameras and also eavesdropping on our phone and email communication. This is ostensibly a positive thing as it should keep us safer, but in fact it is causing people to lose their privacy. If this is part of the fight against terrorism, then the terrorists have won because we are losing our personal freedoms each day.

In conclusion, although there are doubtless benefits to our lives being monitored by others, the disadvantages are greater because individuals are losing their rights and freedoms in various ways.

Question

In many countries, people can eat a wide variety of food today. As a result, they eat food from other regions instead of local food.

Do you think the advantages of this development outweigh the disadvantages?

Answer

Nowadays, it is common for many people to eat a wide array of foods, including dishes from countries on the other side of the world. It seems obvious that the advantages of this greatly outweigh the disadvantages.

An open mind is a positive thing, and being open-minded involves being willing to try different types of food. In many countries, like the UK, people will happily eat foods from Mexico, Turkey, China, or Thailand. This helps people to become open to other ideas and cultures by slowly helping them grow accustomed to change and difference. When you go to other parts of the world, such as traditional places in Asia, people are extremely close-minded and this is reflected in their diets, which are comprised mostly of local foods.

Beyond just the psychological benefits of eating exotic foods, there are also numerous physical benefits. In the UK, traditionally the food people ate was quite plain and there was little variety. This is because the climate is cold and the land is hard. However, over the centuries, the UK adopted food from places like India, and imported copious amounts of fruit from Latin America and elsewhere. These new foods allowed a wide range of nutrients to enter the British diet, and helped boost the health of the population. This is also true of other places where the local food lacked diversity.

In conclusion, there are various advantages that make a varied diet vastly superior to a plain one. These include both psychological and physical benefits.