

# Master IELTS Writing Task 2

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## IELTS Writing Task 2

**Formal writing for IELTS essays**



**FORMER IELTS EXAMINERS**

Prepare for {**IELTS**}

Avoid **And** at the beginning of a sentence

**This is weak:** Air travel is incredibly popular because of its convenience. **And** the relatively low cost of plane tickets attracts customers.

**This is stronger:** Air travel is incredibly popular because of its convenience. **In addition/Furthermore**, the relatively low cost of plane tickets attracts customers.

**This is stronger:** Air travel is incredibly popular because of its convenience. **Another point worth making is that** the relatively low cost of plane tickets attracts customers.

Avoid **But** at the beginning of a sentence

**This is weak:** Most of us strive for success. **But** some individuals are willing to do immoral or illegal things to become successful.

**This is stronger:** Most of us strive for success. **However,** some individuals are willing to do immoral or illegal things to become successful.

**This is stronger:** Most of us strive for success. **Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that** some individuals are willing to do immoral or illegal things to become successful.

**This is stronger:** Most of us strive for success. **Yet it is worth noting that** some individuals are willing to do immoral or illegal things to become successful.

## Avoid contractions

**This is weak:** Most parents **wouldn't** go to a holiday resort if they **couldn't** take their children. However, childless couples or unattached adults often **don't** want to visit a holiday destination without a guarantee that there **won't** be screaming children everywhere.

**This is stronger:** Most parents **would not** go to a holiday resort if they **could not/were unable to** take their children. However, childless couples or unattached adults often **do not** want to visit a holiday destination without a guarantee that there **will not** be screaming children everywhere.

**Avoid  
question  
marks and  
exclamation  
marks**

**This is weak:** In the remainder of this essay, I will ask:  
‘Why do so many people want to have a pet?’

**This is stronger:** In the remainder of this essay I **will ask**  
**why** so many people are so keen to have a pet.

**This is stronger:** In the remainder of this essay I **intend to**  
**discuss the issue of** pet ownership **and attempt to analyse**  
**the arguments for** keeping domestic pets such as cats and  
dogs.

**This is weak:** This argument is really strong!

**This is stronger:** This argument is **powerful and**  
**persuasive.**

**This is stronger:** This is **a powerful and persuasive point**  
**which opponents struggle to argue against.**

Avoid **phrasal verbs** (most of the time)

**This is weak:** Those living in flats and poor-quality housing often have to **put up with** noisy neighbours. Obviously, this can lead to them **falling out**. It is usually difficult to **come up with** a solution.

**This is stronger:** Those living in flats and poor-quality housing often have to **tolerate** noisy neighbours. Obviously, this can lead to them **quarrelling or getting involved in heated disputes and disagreements**. It is usually difficult to **reach** a mutually-acceptable solution or compromise in such cases.

Avoid **phrasal verbs** (most of the time)

**This is weak:** When students **turn up** late for classes on a regular basis, they might get **kicked out** of school by the head-teacher.

**This is stronger:** When students **arrive** late for classes on a regular basis, they might **be expelled** by the headteacher.

**Avoid  
idiomatic  
expressions**

**This is weak:** In this essay, I will **get to the bottom** of this issue. It is necessary to mention that **there are two sides to every coin** but, **at the end of the day**, you've got to decide **which side your bread is buttered on**.

**This is stronger:** This essay will **attempt to discuss this issue in depth**. Whilst it should be recognised that **this controversy, like all others, can be viewed from a number of perspectives, in the final analysis**, it is vital for everyone to determine **what is in both our individual interest and that of society in general**.



**Avoid  
conversational  
language**

**This is weak:** This issue is, **as you can imagine**, of great relevance to all students. So **of course** I am going to look at it in some depth. **It won't surprise you to hear** that my conclusion will be that formal exams should be banned. **That's right, isn't it?**

**This is stronger:** **Without doubt**, this issue is of great relevance. **Naturally**, in the paragraphs which follow it will be dealt with in detail, and evidence will be providing in support of the notion that formal examinations should be banned.

Avoid too  
many  
**personal  
pronouns**

**This is weak:** I, along with lots of **my** friends, think **you** should never borrow money. **We** believe it can lead to **you** getting into debt, and that can cause **you** lots of difficulties in the long-run.

**This is stronger:** A great many people are of the opinion that borrowing money is generally unadvisable. It is widely understood that taking out loans can lead individuals into crippling debt, which can cause serious long-term difficulties.

**Avoid  
informal  
intensifiers**

**This is weak:** It is **a tiny bit** worrying that so much of the rainforest has been cut down. **Loads of** environmentalists are **really** concerned that we might have reached a tipping point with regard to the planet's ecology, and that there may be nothing which can be done now to save The Earth.

**This is stronger:** It is **somewhat** worrying that so much of the rainforest has been cut down. **A large/significant number of** environmentalists are **hugely/extraordinarily/extremely** concerned that we might have reached a tipping point with regard to the planet's ecology, and that there may be nothing which can be done now to save The Earth.

**Avoid  
informal  
words**

**This is weak:** Loads of **kids** these days think it is **OK** to post images of their **mates** on social media without **getting** their permission. They need to realise that the internet can definitely be a bit **dodgy** and that you can't just go spreading other people's personal **info** around.

**This is stronger:** A significant number of **teenagers and adolescents** consider it to be **acceptable** behaviour to put images of **close friends, schoolmates or other acquaintances** online without first **seeking** the permission of the individual concerned. It would be advisable for these youngsters to take into account the fact that the internet **may often be used by unscrupulous and untrustworthy individuals**. It is necessary to appreciate the importance of others' personal **information**.

## Avoid imperatives

**This is weak:** There are so many things we can do to save the planet. **Turn off** the lights and **don't use** the air conditioning or heating unless you have to. **Use** as little plastic as possible and **don't throw** anything away that can be re-used. Above all, **cut down** on your use of cars and planes.

**This is stronger:** Those wishing to act in an environmentally-friendly way have numerous options, including **attempting not to use** lighting, air conditioning and heating excessively, as well as **reducing** the use of plastic and **disposing** of fewer household items. **Trying** to avoid travelling unnecessarily by car or plane is likely to have a significant impact.

## Use passives

**This is weak:** Lots of countries **make** and **export** motor vehicles. They usually **produce** these cars in massive factories. They **ship** them to key export markets and hope to **make** significant profits.

**This is stronger:** Motor vehicles **are manufactured** and **exported** by a large number of countries. These cars **are usually produced** in massive factories. The vehicles **are shipped** to key export markets and significant profits **can be made**.

Use **passives**

**This is weak:** People **have to pay** taxes to the government. Otherwise, the government **cannot provide** services such as healthcare, social care and education.

**This is stronger:** Taxes **have to be paid**. Otherwise, services such as healthcare, social care and education **cannot be provided**.

Use formal  
phrases

**This is weak:** I believe that, in reality, you cannot stop students cheating in tests.

**This is stronger:** I am of the opinion that, to all intents and purposes, it is practically impossible to prevent students from cheating in an academic context.



Use **complex sentences**  
(some of the time)

**This is weak:** Most people are not capable of making decisions. They would like to be able to make decisions quickly. Very few people actually enjoy making important decisions on their own. They prefer to get advice from friends.

**This is stronger:** The ability to make a quick decision is a highly-prized skill which, unfortunately, most of us do not possess. The vast majority of individuals intensely dislike having to reach a decision on an important matter alone, preferring instead to consult with friends and acquaintances before making a choice.

Use  
**nominalisation**

**This is weak:** When people go on a plane or bus, it is often late and this can be problematic. They often complain but nothing usually gets done.

**This is stronger:** Delays on public transport lead to difficulties for passengers. Complaints are made, but action is generally not taken.

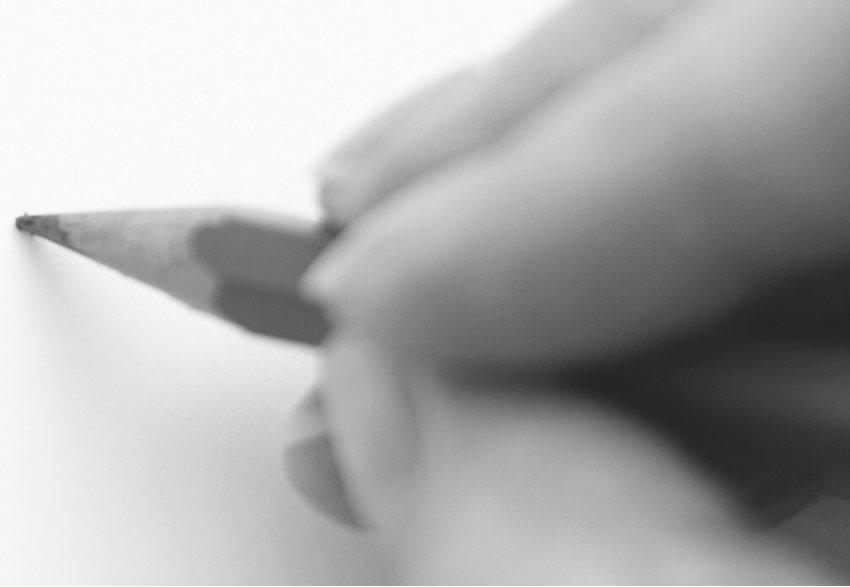
**This is weak:** People who live in cities often feel anxious and depressed.

**This is stronger:** City-dwellers report feelings of anxiety and depression.

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Thanks for watching!



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