

IELTS Writing Task 2

By Sam McCarter

Aim

To help students to prepare for the essay writing in Task 2 of the academic component of IELTS.

Objectives

Help students to:

- develop writing skills
- develop planning skills
- develop confidence in writing
- develop editing skills
- help students add information to a skeleton text

Level of the exercises

The exercises may be used with different levels depending how much help you want to give your students.

Materials

The materials (all PDFs) consist of:

- teacher's notes
- exercises
- a Key

Methodology

The exercises are all variations of a sample text written by a student under exam conditions. The text was then modified slightly. You may want to do several of the exercises with one group or several as homework preparation or follow-up.

You may also want to adapt other texts in the same way using a computer or writing the text out by hand.

Exercise 1

- Put the students into groups. And give them Exercise 1a. Tell them the text stands on its own and that they are going to practise adding additional information to expand the piece of writing.
- Ask them to decide how they could add information to the text in their own words. Allow them as much freedom as possible. For lower level students, you may want to give them some phrases as examples from the list in Exercise 1b or give your own phrases.
- Ask the students to write their answers on a sheet of paper and when they have finished give them to another group to check or comment on. If the students have not written them in order, the second group can try to put their colleagues' answers into the appropriate spaces.
- When the students have finished check their answers.
- Keep a copy of the students' answers so that you can use them for another class.
- And/or give the students Exercise 1b and ask them in pairs to complete the blank spaces using the items in the list. If the students have done Exercise 1a, then ask them to compare their answers with those in Exercise 1b.
- Point out to the students how the additional information is organised:

a) unlike any other tool b) with the ... c) both at d) to keep e) in offices f) with photographs and	g) The same efficiency applies to h) anywhere in the world i) than they ... j) via the Internet k) complex, l) who as well as employing ... m) Instead of ..
---	---
- Note particularly the use of *the infinitive* and the use of *with*.

Exercise 2

- For Exercise 2, repeat the process, as the previous exercise. This time you can ask the students to cover the items or ask them to do it without any preparation.
- When they have done both parts of the essay ask them to work out the title. You may want to ask them to do this before you let them look at the alternatives given in the second part of Exercise 2.
- For homework, you may want to give the students another essay from the list in part (ii). Ask them to adapt the information they have to write the essay.

Exercise 3

- Give the exercise to students after they have done the other exercises to reinforce spelling. Limit the time according to the level of the class. For a high level group give them 2 minutes and be strict with the timing. When they have finished ask them to compare with a partner.
- With a low level class, ask them to do it in pairs.
- A technique to teach the students to search for spelling mistakes is to ask them to go through the text backwards. This will enable them to see the word picture rather than looking at the meaning of the word as they read, which is distracting. This requires training.
- As you correct the mistakes, try to get the students to work out why the mistakes were made.
- Encourage students to leave about two minutes to do checking when they write an essay for homework or in class.

Exercise 4

- In this exercise, there are two versions. Put the students into pairs/groups or allow the students to do it on their own and then compare.
- Stop-watch the exercise so that you can limit the time. Even if the students do not finish an exercise it is still good practice for exam conditions.
- You can give the unmarked version to higher level students.
- You can vary the exercise by giving a class the marked version and then a few days later asking them to do the unmarked.
- As you correct the mistakes, try to get the students to work out why the mistakes were made.

Exercise 5

- This is gap-fill with some help. Put the students into pairs and then ask them to complete the missing words.
- Limit the time or let the students do it at their leisure.
- When you check, ask them to try to supply other words as well to complete the blanks.
- If you have an advanced class, limit the time according to the level to make it more challenging.

Exercise 6

- Follow the procedure as in the Exercise 3 and 4.
- Students frequently make mistakes with adding or leaving off 's'.
- When you are training to check for mistakes, it is a good idea to ask them to check in waves, i.e. to look for only one type of mistake at a time. As they become more efficient the students can then combine looking for all types at one time.
- It is very difficult to look for grammar, meaning, spelling, punctuation, connections simultaneously.

Exercise 7

- Like any of the other exercises, you can do this one on its own.
- Or you can do it after or before any of the exercises. By doing it before, the students will be able to compare what they have written with the model/sample text in the other exercises.
- Give the students the exercise to do in pairs or groups. Ask them to complete the blank spaces with their own words.
- Remind them to be conscious of the grammar when completing the blank spaces.
- Depending on the time available you can divide the exercise up with one group doing the first two paragraphs and another doing the last two.
- When the students have finished, ask the groups that did the same parts to compare their texts.
- Or photocopy the exercise on A3 so that it is poster size. Ask the students in groups to write the answers to fill the blanks on strips of paper.
- When each group has finished ask them to give their strips of paper to another group to insert into the appropriate blank spaces.
- Allow the students as much freedom as you can, while guiding them. Ask them about a problem rather than telling them: *What type of word do you need here? Do you need a noun or a verb etc?* rather than *That's wrong, you need ...*

Exercise 8

- Give the students the exercise to do in pairs/groups/individually.
- You may wish to set a time limit.
- You may want to give the students a few examples, depending on the level of the class.
- When the students have finished, give them a copy of the Key and ask them to compare their findings. This will help their editing skills and also subliminally reinforce the grammar in the text.
- Or divide the students into groups of say four and give three of them a copy of the exercise. Give the fourth student a copy of the Key. Ask

the fourth student to read the text several times and then take it away from him/her.

- Ask the students to find the extra words with the fourth student acting as monitor for each group.
- Or with weaker students, you can give them a copy of the Key to study and then take it away from them and then give them a copy of the exercise to find the extra words. Then let them look at the Key to find the words.
- When they have finished any of the above, check the answers with the class as a whole.

Exercise 9

- Give the students the exercise to do in pairs/groups/individually.
- Time limit the exercise if you are practising speed in editing.
- This will depend on the level of the class.
- You may also wish to break up the exercises and do it at different speeds.
- You may wish to do the monitor activity that was described with Exercise 8 above.

Exercise 10

- You can do the exercise in two parts or just do one.
- How much help you give will depend on the level of the class.
- Ask the students to work in pairs and groups and give each pair the first two paragraphs of the text in note form.
- Point out that the notes each box contains a sentence in note form and they have to add the 'small words' to link them together.
- You may want to limit the exercise to one or two sentences depending on the level of the class.
- Ask them to explore different ways making sentences in each case.
- When they have finished ask the students to compare their answers with the Key.
- Then check the answers with the whole class.
- Or follow the above procedure, but do not allow the students to write anything down. Tell them they can look words up but no writing. You will have to monitor this carefully, because they will all want to write.
- Ask them to hold the text in their heads.
- When they have finished and you have finished checking, ask the students to write down the sentences.
- Allow variations on what was decided and ask them to help each other.
- Repeat the same procedure for the rest of the exercise.

Exercises 11

- Repeat the same procedure as in Exercise 10.