UNIT 2: HEALTH

WRITING

Exercise 1: In this unit you will focus on a Writing Part 2 Advantages and Disadvantages essay on the question of having a free public healthcare service compared to a private system. Read the arguments below. Which ones explain benefits of government-provided healthcare and which are drawbacks? Choose B for benefits or D for drawbacks.

For any IELTS essay, planning is very important. One of the first stages of planning is to think about the question and make a list of possible arguments you could include. In this case, the list should include potential advantages and disadvantages of having a free health service. Because you will need to explain and develop the ideas you choose, you probably will not be able to include all of the ideas in your final essay. However, making a list like this helps you decide which points / arguments are most relevant to your answer and therefore could help you improve your Task Achievement score.

	B	D
1 Any healthcare costs are already paid for through general taxation, meaning that people do not need to find money for treatment if they get sick suddenly and are not covered by health insurance.	○	○
2 With a publically funded health service, patients usually have limited healthcare provision and do not have the option of choosing how they will be treated.	○	○
3 Waiting lists for treatment are often longer in public hospitals than in private ones.	○	○
4 Universal free healthcare means the authorities in a specific country can offer a consistent approach to treatment to all and this often prevents diseases from becoming more prevalent in society.	○	○
5 If healthcare is publically funded, some people will overuse healthcare facilities, simply because they are free. This costs taxpayer money which could be spent on other public projects.	○	○
6 Healthcare standards for a free service are dependent on the money provided by the government. If it does not invest enough money, standards of treatment can decline.	○	○
7 Private health care systems tend to cost patients a lot more per person than a publically funded one.	○	○

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Exercise 2: Read the advice below. Decide if the following extracts from students' answers would be relevant to include in an essay about the advantages and disadvantages of public healthcare. Choose Yes or No.

Part 2 essay questions always ask you to "Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your knowledge or experience". The key word here is relevant. Make sure the reasons or examples that you give correspond to the question you have been asked, not just the topic of the question.

1 My grandmother stayed in a hospital when she was ill a few years ago. She said the doctors were very friendly and the service was excellent.

○ Yes ○ No

2 It was recently reported that some private hospitals they will only treat you after they get your payment details. In other words, these health companies place profits above human lives.

○ Yes ○ No

3 Generally speaking, private hospitals tend to attract better doctors and nurses who provide a higher standard of care, because they tend to pay better than public hospitals.

○ Yes ○ No

4 Historically, before government-provided healthcare, diseases were much more commonplace in society.

○ Yes ○ No

5 In my experience, nurses in public hospitals are much friendlier than those in private ones.

○ Yes ○ No

6 There used to be a free public hospital near where I live but now it is in the centre of my city, so I need to drive there.

○ Yes ○ No

7 A friend of mine is seriously ill and needs continuous long term treatment, something which his family would not be able to afford if they had to pay for private healthcare.

○ Yes ○ No

8 I have a friend who is a nurse for a private hospital and she tells me that her job is very demanding.

○ Yes ○ No

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Exercise 3: Read the tip box and then look at the sentences. Choose the best synonyms or paraphrases for the underlined words.

To score highly for lexical resource (LR), you need to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary. One way to do this is to express ideas that are mentioned repeatedly in your essay using synonyms and paraphrase (different words or expressions that express the same idea). For example, instead of using the word *advantage* again and again, try using alternatives words and expressions, such as *benefit, positive aspect, on the plus side*, etc. Instead of repeating the phrase *free public healthcare* you could say *a national health service, nationalised health provision*, or *state-funded medical coverage*. Another way you can boost your LR score is by including more complex or idiomatic expressions. For example, instead of saying that *treatment in public hospitals are not as good as private ones*, you could say *public hospitals cannot deliver the same levels of service and treatment.*

1 There are many arguments in favour of providing free health care for citizens.
- ◯ It is easy to argue against
- ◯ There is a strong case that supports

2 Having an effective free health service is very expensive for a country.
- ◯ puts a lot of strain on public finances.
- ◯ is only possible in rich countries.

3 On the whole, there are more advantages than disadvantages to having a free healthcare system.
- ◯ the benefits of free healthcare outweigh the drawbacks.
- ◯ the drawbacks to having a national health service exceed the benefits

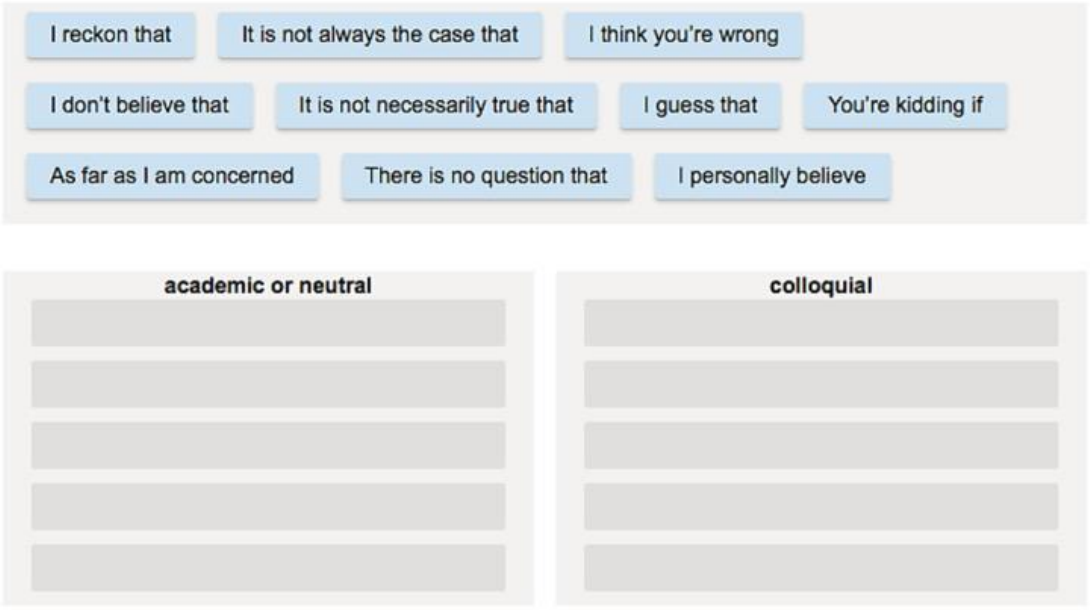
4 Private healthcare is too expensive for most citizens in my country.
- ◯ something that people from my country find very affordable.
- ◯ beyond the means of much of the population of my country.

5 The standard of treatment in public health services is generally much lower than that in the private sector.
- ◯ just as good as.
- ◯ not up to the same level as.

6 In many countries, people have no option and have to buy private healthcare provision.
- ◯ must pay for health insurance out of their pockets.
- ◯ do not have any healthcare access at all.

Exercise 4: In IELTS Writing Task 2, you are asked to write in an academic or neutral style. Read the ten phrases for agreeing and disagreeing in the box. Complete the table with the phrases.

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Exercise 5: Choose the correct phrases to complete the sentences.

1 Government provision of healthcare is valued by poorer people, and *therefore / what's more*, it prevents the elderly worrying about the affordability of treatment.
2 Private healthcare is extremely expensive, but *by the same token / despite this*, public healthcare is not cheap to provide either.
3 Public hospitals can be overcrowded, and *as a consequence / by this I mean*, there can be long waiting times for treatment.
4 Both private and public healthcare workers are trained in the same institutions, and *as such / having said that*, there can't be much difference in their overall knowledge.
5 General taxation is used to fund state healthcare. *In this way / To give a specific example*, we are already paying for public health services as a country.

Exercise 6: Read the information. Then look at the IELTS Writing Task 2 question and read the sentences. Do the sentences work as topic sentences? Choose Yes or No.

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A *topic sentence* expresses the essential idea of a paragraph or section. It emphasises the key concepts of the essay and allows the reader to understand the main points quickly. In addition, it helps the writer to develop further points coherently.

In the IELTS test, the topic sentence is normally the first sentence in each paragraph. It is a short statement of what the paragraph is about.

1 As far as I am concerned, government funding for public healthcare nationwide improves local residents' quality of life.

◯ Yes ◯ No

2 The introduction of private hospitals in my country has created well-paid employment in the health sector.

◯ Yes ◯ No

3 If the government does not provide health insurance, then there may be more pressure on the emergency services.

◯ Yes ◯ No

4 Lack of government funding for healthcare causes health problems for the public.

◯ Yes ◯ No

5 Government healthcare spending has benefited society in numerous ways.

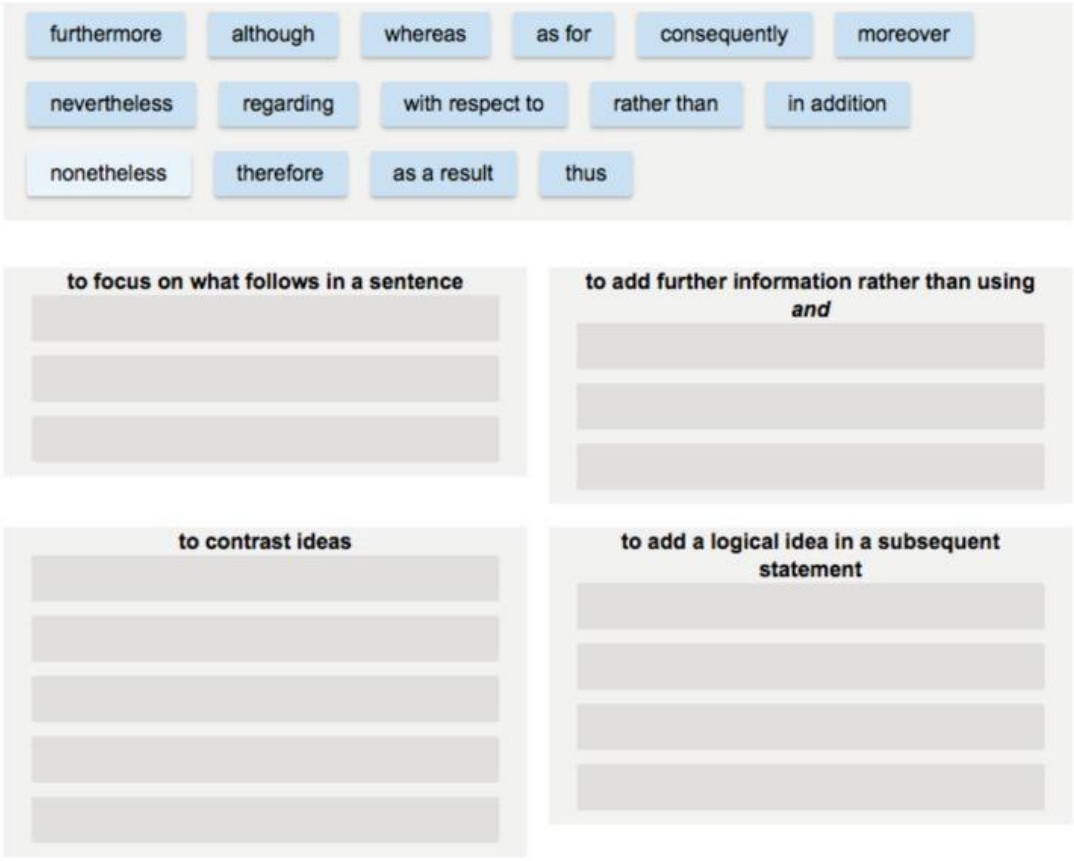
◯ Yes ◯ No

6 When people can choose their own healthcare, it gives them the freedom to decide how they spend their own money.

◯ Yes ◯ No

Exercise 7: What is the function of the discourse markers in the box? Complete the table with the discourse markers.

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Exercise 8: Read the paragraph about the advantages of government-provided healthcare. Choose the correct discourse markers to complete the paragraph.

As for / In addiction / Whereas public healthcare, it is already paid for through general taxation so there is no need for private provision. Everybody, regardless of income, is entitled to healthcare, as it is a basic human right. *Moreover / Nevertheless / Thus*, whether a person lives or dies should not depend on how much money they earn. *Although / As a result / As regards* government provision can use up a lot of the budget available for other public services such as education, providing healthcare can *in addiction / nonetheless / on the other hand* prevent serious diseases from spreading and becoming more prevalent in society. *Consequently / Moreover / Regarding*, it is worthwhile for a government to invest in the health of a nation.

Exercise 9: Read the paragraphs about the disadvantages of government-provided healthcare. Complete the paragraphs with the supporting statements in the box.

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it gives people the freedom | there is not any freedom of choice | there is often overuse of health facilities for minor reasons | using the pharmacy | waiting lists for treatment are often long

On the other hand, _____ regarding the type of healthcare. People are forced to go to the state provider, and as a result, _____ because there is such high demand.

In addition, _____, as many people go to their doctor because it is free at the point of use, rather than _____ and treating themselves at home. Privately provided healthcare may be expensive but, nevertheless, _____ to choose who provides their care and how quickly they are treated.

Exercise 10: WRITING TASK 2
You should spend 40 minutes on this task

In many societies in the world, the population is ageing rapidly and this is leading to an unsustainable increase in the cost of public healthcare.
A nation's population should pay for their healthcare provision in the future.

To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your knowledge or experience.
Write at least 250 words

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