Writing
Task 2

Exam information

In Writing Task 2, you write an essay discussing a topic and giving your opinion. You have about 40 minutes for this task.

1 Work in pairs. When you do IELTS Writing tasks, you must answer all parts of the question exactly. Look at this Writing task and decide whether the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

Write about the following topic.

In many parts of the world, families were larger in the past because people had more children.

Do you think there were more advantages or disadvantages to being part of a large family in the past?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

Write at least 250 words.

In this essay, you must:

1 write about the past. T
2 discuss whether families were larger in the past.
3 compare families today with families in the past.
4 write about the advantages and disadvantages of having a lot of people in the family.
5 give your opinion and explain why.
6 write 250 words or more.

2 Work in pairs. Read the sample answer in the next column. Ignore the words in *italics* for now.

1 What advantages and disadvantages does the writer mention?
2 Do you agree with the writer?



Family life in the modern world is not the same experience as in the past, because families are smaller. In the past, there were advantages and disadvantages to being members of a big family.

I believe there were three main benefits. Firstly, children always had other children to play with in the same house, so they learned social skills. **1** *They also / And they* quarrelled, **2** *but / however* when they quarrelled, they learned to defend themselves. Secondly, children helped in the house **3** *and / also* as a consequence they became more responsible. **4** *Also / However,* different generations lived together, so grandparents looked after young children **5** *and / also* younger brothers learned many things from their elder brothers.

I think many of the disadvantages were financial. Firstly, one of the parents could not work, because he or she had to stay at home to look after the children and the grandparents. This meant the family earned less. As a result, parents had less money to pay for their children's education and other activities. **6** *But / However,* in my view, the biggest problem was that parents could not pay so much attention to individual children. As a result, children with problems sometimes suffered.

In my opinion, the advantages of large families were greater than the disadvantages. The family had less money, **7** *but / however* family members formed a stronger relationship and they supported and helped each other when they had problems. **8** *Also, / And* people were always surrounded by their relatives, so they were never lonely.

3 Read the sample answer again and complete this essay plan by writing phrases a–h in gaps 1–8.

Para. 1: Introduction: families smaller, so **1** ..c..

Para. 2: Advantages:

- played, so **2** .....
- **3** ....., so more responsible
- grandparents **4** .....

Para. 3: Disadvantages:

- one parent **5** ..... – less money
- less money for kids' education
- less **6** ..... for each child

Para. 4: My opinion: more advantages because

- family gave **7** .....
- people never **8** .....

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a attention
b didn't work
c ~~different experience~~
d helped in house
e looked after younger kids
f learned social skills
g lonely
h support and help

4 Read the sample answer again and circle the correct words and phrases 1–8 in *italics*.

5 Now answer these questions.

1 Which of these words can be used to begin sentences: *also*, *and*, *but*, *however*?
2 Which words join two sentences?

page 121 also, and, but *and* however

6 Work in pairs.

1 Look at paragraph 1 of the sample answer and answer these questions.
   a How many sentences does it have?
   b Which sentence says how the world has changed?
   c Which sentence says what the writer is going to talk about in the rest of the essay?
   d Does the writer repeat the words from the Writing task in Exercise 1 exactly? Why? / Why not?
   e What word does he use which means *large*?
   f What phrase does he use which means *part of*?
2 Read the sentences which begin paragraphs 2, 3 and 4. What is their function?
3 Find three phrases in the essay which mean *In my opinion*.

7 Work in small groups. Read the Writing task below and:

1 underline the key ideas in the task.
2 make a list of advantages and disadvantages.
3 discuss which is better: living in a large city or a small community?

Write about the following topic.

In the past, most people lived in small villages where everyone knew everyone else. Nowadays, most people live in large cities where they only know a few people in their area.

What do you think were the advantages and disadvantages of living in a small community?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

8 Work in pairs and write a plan for your essay using ideas from Exercise 7.

1 Use the plan in Exercise 3 to help you.
2 Decide how many paragraphs you need and what you will say in each paragraph.

9 Work alone and write your answer to the task in Exercise 7. Write at least 250 words.

When you write:
- start your paragraphs with a short introductory sentence like the ones in the sample answer;
- use *also*, *and*, *but* and *however* to link ideas;
- make your own opinion clear: use *I think*, *I believe*, *In my opinion*, *In my view*.

When you have finished writing, read your answer and check your spelling.

Exam advice *Writing Task 2*

- Read the question carefully first and make sure you know what you must write about.
- Brainstorm ideas before you start and make a plan.
- Write your essay following your plan.

Spelling

Changes when adding *-ed*

1 Write these verbs in the past simple by adding *-ed* and a double letter where necessary. Then check your answers by reading the Language reference (page 121).

1 admit admitted
2 appear
3 carry
4 end
5 open
6 play
7 save
8 stop

page 121 *Spelling changes when adding* -ed *to verbs*

2 IELTS candidates often make mistakes with these words. Work in pairs. Decide which word in each pair is spelled correctly.

1	occured	occurred
2	remembered	rememberred
3	prefered	preferred
4	dropped	droped
5	developed	developped
6	happenned	happened
7	staied	stayed
8	studied	studed
9	destroyed	destroied
10	remained	remainded

LIVEWORKSHEETS