

IELTS Academic

Writing task 2:

‘To what extent
questions’

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Website & PDF document

This presentation is available as a pdf document at this website:



IELTS ACADEMIC WRITING TASK 2 : TO WHAT EXTENT

<http://www.thefreeschool.education/ielts-to-what-extent.html>

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Comprehensive official IELTS teacher's notes: sample question (open-access)

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic.

The threat of nuclear weapons maintains world peace.

Nuclear power provides cheap and clean energy.

The benefits of nuclear technology far outweigh the disadvantages.

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.

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/ielts-academic-writing-task-2-activity.pdf>

Introduction

To what extent questions require you to put forward an opinion on a stated topic.

Your discussion must go beyond merely supporting or rejecting an argument.

To what extent questions require you to think critically and weigh up the evidence.

[The School has authored a PowerPoint presentation about academic critical thinking skills.](#)

This entire presentation is useful for preparing for IELTS Academic Writing Task 2.

Pages 27 to 31 that discuss the gravity of an opinion are the most relevant pages.

The benefits of nuclear technology far outweigh the disadvantages.

To what extent do you agree?

1. **I totally agree.**

All evidence supports the statement.

Discuss two or more arguments that support your position.

"I totally agree that the benefits of nuclear technology far outweigh the disadvantages."

2. **I mostly agree.**

Most of the evidence supports the statement.

Weigh up the arguments that support your position.

"I mostly agree that the benefits of nuclear technology far outweigh the disadvantages."

3. **I am neutral.**

You do not favor the 'agree' or 'disagree' positions.

The weight of for and against arguments that you discuss must be equal.

"I argue that the benefits and disadvantages of nuclear technology are of equal weight."

4. **I mostly disagree.**

Most of the evidence contradicts the statement.

Weigh up the arguments that support your position.

"I mostly disagree that the benefits of nuclear technology far outweigh the disadvantages."

5. **I totally disagree.**

All evidence contradicts the statement.

Discuss two or more arguments that support your position.

"I totally disagree that the benefits of nuclear technology far outweigh the disadvantages."

6. **I am unable to form an opinion.**

"I argue that the benefits and disadvantages of nuclear technology cannot be determined."

If you take this stance, you must address the question and explain why this is your position.

To what extent options on a continuum diagram

Totally agree Mostly agree Neutral Mostly disagree Totally disagree

Option 6: Unable to form an opinion

Which position should you argue?

You will not automatically earn a higher or lower band score for adopting a particular position.

When grading the ‘Task Achievement’ component of the band score marking rubric, the examiner will assess the relevance of your argument. They will also evaluate how effectively you use evidence and examples to defend your position.

https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/IELTS_task_2_Writing_band_descriptors.pdf

Selecting a position

The following guidelines may aid you to select a position to argue:

1. Your personal opinion - what you truly believe.
2. The case that you think is easiest to discuss, taking into account:
 - Your vocabulary skills
 - Your knowledge on the subject
 - Your ability to reach the minimum word limit (250 words).
3. An argument that you think will provide the richest, most interesting discussion.

These criteria are not mutually exclusive.

Concluding remarks

Please be sure that your discussion paragraphs match your overall argument. For example, if you argue that you mostly agree with a given statement, the weight of your arguments in favor of the statement must outweigh the weight of opposing arguments.

For the purposes of completing IELTS Academic writing task 2, discussing two supporting arguments and one opposing argument should be sufficient to argue that you mostly agree with a statement in order to meet the 250 word minimum using relevant evidence and examples.

It is normally sufficient to explore a maximum of three arguments to defend any position, so long as you explore the dominant arguments and discuss these in sufficient detail.

If you explore four or more arguments, your discussion may lack the depth required to achieve a high band score. You also may run out of time to complete the task and score a lower mark if your essay is incomplete and does not provide a brief conclusion.

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