

IELTS Writing Task 2 Band Descriptors

Master English Australia | Simplified study guide, not official descriptors | Bands 5–9

Band	TASK RESPONSE Did you answer and explain the question?	COHERENCE AND COHESION Is your essay easy to follow?	LEXICAL RESOURCE Do you use enough words correctly?	GRAMMATICAL RANGE AND ACCURACY Can you use different sentences correctly?
9	- You answer the question fully and in depth. - Your opinion or main position is completely clear. - Your ideas directly answer the question. - You explain and support your ideas fully with clear reasons or examples.	- Your answer is extremely easy to follow. - Your ideas are in the best order. - Your paragraphs work very well. - You connect ideas naturally.	- You use a very wide range of words naturally and correctly. - You choose words that express exactly what you mean. - Very rare small vocabulary or spelling mistakes may occur.	- You use many different sentence structures naturally and correctly. - Your grammar and punctuation are excellent. - Very rare small mistakes may occur.
8	- You answer all parts of the question very well. - Your opinion or main position is clear and well explained. - Your ideas are relevant, well explained and well supported. - Only occasional points may need more detail.	- Your answer is very easy to follow. - Your ideas are in a clear, logical order. - Your paragraphs work well. - You connect ideas very well, with only occasional problems.	- You use a wide range of words correctly and naturally. - You can use more specific or advanced words well. - Occasional mistakes in word choice, natural word combinations or spelling may occur.	- You use a wide range of sentence structures. - Most sentences have no grammar errors. - Only occasional grammar or punctuation mistakes occur.
7	- You answer the main parts of the question. - Your opinion or main position is clear throughout. - Your main ideas are relevant and supported. - Some explanations or examples may be too general or need more detail.	- Your answer is easy to follow. - Your ideas are in a clear order. - Your paragraphs generally work well. - You use different linking words and words such as this, these, it and they to connect ideas.	- You have enough vocabulary to express your ideas clearly. - You can use some more specific or advanced words correctly. - You usually choose words that naturally go together. - A few word-choice or spelling mistakes may occur.	- You use different types of complex sentences. - Many sentences have no grammar errors. - A few mistakes occur, but your meaning remains clear.
6	- You answer the question, but some parts are stronger than others. - Your opinion or main position is relevant, but may sometimes become unclear or repetitive. - Your main ideas are relevant. - Some ideas need more explanation or support.	- Your answer is generally easy to follow. - There is a clear overall order. - You use linking words, but sometimes they sound mechanical or are used incorrectly. - You may repeat words or ideas when the connection is unclear.	- You have enough vocabulary to communicate your meaning. - You try some more specific or advanced words, but not always correctly. - Some word-choice or spelling mistakes occur. - The reader can still understand your meaning.	- You use both simple and complex sentences. - Your complex sentences are less accurate than your simple sentences. - Grammar and punctuation mistakes occur. - These mistakes rarely stop the reader understanding you.
5	- You answer the question only partly. - Your opinion or main position is present but may not always be clear. - Your main ideas are limited or not explained enough. - Some details may be irrelevant or unclear.	- Your answer has some organisation, but the order is not always clear. - Some ideas do not connect smoothly. - You may repeat or incorrectly use linking words. - You may repeat words or ideas too often.	- Your vocabulary is limited but enough for basic meaning. - You may repeat the same words because you cannot find alternatives. - Some words are used incorrectly. - Spelling or word-form mistakes can sometimes make your meaning difficult to understand.	- You use a limited range of sentence structures. - You try complex sentences, but they often contain mistakes. - Grammar and punctuation mistakes are frequent. - Some mistakes make your meaning difficult to understand.

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What do these words mean?

IELTS term	What it means for you
Position	Your main opinion or answer to the question. It should be clear and consistent.
Develop an idea	Say more about the idea: explain why, explain how, give a reason, add a detail or give an example.
Support an idea	Give reasons, explanations or examples that show why your idea makes sense.
Relevant idea	An idea that directly helps answer the essay question.
In depth	Fully explained, not just mentioned in one short sentence.
Linking words	Words and phrases that connect ideas, such as and, but, because, so, however, for example, also and on the other hand.
Complex sentence	A sentence that joins a main idea to another clause, often using words such as because, although, if, when, which or who.
Word choice	Choosing the word that gives the meaning you want.
Words that naturally go together	Common word combinations. For example, we say make a decision, not do a decision.
Relevant	Directly connected to the question or task. Do not include information that does not help answer it.

Band 9: This does not mean perfect English. Very rare small mistakes can still happen. Below the lowest band shown: The question is answered less fully, ideas are less developed and language problems increasingly affect meaning.

An examiner assesses your complete performance across all four criteria. This guide cannot guarantee a score.

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