

# IELTS Writing Task 2: Band 5 vs Band 8 Direct Question Type Responses

## Introduction: Understanding Direct Question Type Essays

Direct question type essays in IELTS Writing Task 2 present candidates with a specific question or set of questions that require clear, direct answers. Unlike opinion essays or discussion essays, direct question types explicitly ask "What are the causes?" "What are the solutions?" or "What are the advantages and disadvantages?" These essays test your ability to address specific questions comprehensively while demonstrating advanced writing skills.

The key characteristic of direct question essays is that they require candidates to structure their response around answering the specific questions posed, rather than presenting a general argument or discussion. Success depends on clearly identifying what is being asked and providing detailed, relevant responses to each question.

## Band Score Criteria Overview

Criteria	Band 5 Characteristics	Band 8 Characteristics
Task Achievement	Generally addresses the task but may not fully develop all parts; position may be unclear	Sufficiently addresses all parts of the task with well-developed response; clear position throughout
Coherence & Cohesion	Information organized but not always logically; limited use of cohesive devices	Sequences information logically; wide range of cohesive devices used naturally
Lexical Resource	Limited range of vocabulary; noticeable errors in word choice and spelling	Wide range of vocabulary used naturally; occasional minor errors only
Grammatical Range & Accuracy	Limited range of structures; frequent errors that may impede communication	Wide range of structures used flexibly; majority of sentences are error-free

## Sample Direct Question Prompt

***In many countries, the number of people choosing to live alone is increasing rapidly.***

***What are the reasons for this trend? What are the effects on society?***

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

or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

## Sample Responses

### Band 5 Response

#### **Band 5 Sample Essay (approximately 240 words)**

Nowadays many people live alone in many countries. This is happening more and more. There are some reasons for this and it effects society too.

First reason why people live alone is because they want freedom. When you live alone you can do what you want and don't need to ask anyone. Young people especially like this because they don't want parents telling them what to do. Another reason is work. Sometimes people get jobs in different cities so they have to live alone. Also some people don't get married or they get divorced so they live alone.

Living alone has effects on society. One effect is that people become more lonely. When people live alone they don't talk to family much and they might feel sad. This can cause mental health problems. Another effect is on economy. People living alone need to buy their own things like furniture and food so they spend more money. This is good for shops but bad for people because everything costs more when you live alone.

Also when people live alone they might not have children or have less children. This means the population will decrease and there will be less young people to work and take care of old people in the future.

In conclusion, people live alone because they want freedom and because of work reasons. This makes people lonely but helps the economy. But it also means less children in the future which could be a problem.

### Band 8 Response

#### **Band 8 Sample Essay (approximately 290 words)**

The phenomenon of solo living has become increasingly prevalent across numerous developed nations, reflecting significant shifts in social structures and individual preferences. This trend stems from several interconnected factors and generates profound implications for societal development.

The primary drivers behind this trend are multifaceted. Firstly, enhanced economic prosperity has enabled individuals to afford independent living arrangements, particularly among young professionals who prioritize autonomy over shared accommodations. Career mobility represents another crucial factor, as globalized employment markets frequently require individuals to relocate, often necessitating temporary or permanent separation from family units. Additionally, evolving social attitudes toward marriage and relationships have contributed significantly, with many people choosing to delay marriage or remain single by preference, viewing solo living as a lifestyle choice rather than a temporary circumstance.

The societal ramifications of this trend are considerable and complex. On the positive side, increased demand for smaller housing units has stimulated construction industries and created diverse market opportunities for businesses catering to single-person households. However, more concerning effects include the potential for increased social isolation, particularly among elderly individuals, which can exacerbate mental health issues and reduce community cohesion. Furthermore, this trend contributes to declining birth rates in many developed countries, creating long-term demographic challenges including shrinking workforces and increased pressure on pension systems.

In conclusion, while the increasing prevalence of solo living reflects positive developments such as economic growth and individual empowerment, it simultaneously presents significant challenges for social connectivity and demographic sustainability. Governments and communities must therefore develop strategies to harness the benefits while mitigating the potential negative consequences of this evolving social trend.

Detailed Comparative Analysis

Task Achievement Analysis

Aspect	Band 5 Response	Band 8 Response
Question 1: Reasons	Basic reasons provided (freedom, work, marital status) but underdeveloped with simple explanations	Sophisticated analysis with interconnected factors (economic prosperity, career mobility, social attitudes) fully developed
Question 2: Effects on Society	Limited effects mentioned (loneliness, economic impact, population) with basic development	Comprehensive examination of complex effects (positive and negative) with detailed implications

<b>Examples</b>	Minimal specific examples or evidence provided	Relevant examples integrated naturally throughout (demographic challenges, construction industry)
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## Coherence and Cohesion Analysis

Element	Band 5 Response	Band 8 Response
<b>Organization</b>	Basic paragraph structure but lacks sophisticated organization within paragraphs	Clear logical progression with well-developed paragraphs addressing each question systematically
<b>Cohesive Devices</b>	Limited use (First, Another, Also, In conclusion) with some repetition	Sophisticated range (Firstly, Additionally, Furthermore, However, In conclusion) used naturally
<b>Referencing</b>	Basic pronoun use with some unclear references	Clear and varied referencing throughout

## Lexical Resource Analysis

Feature	Band 5 Response	Band 8 Response
<b>Vocabulary Range</b>	Limited range with basic vocabulary (freedom, lonely, economy)	Wide range with sophisticated terms (phenomenon, prevalent, multifaceted, ramifications)
<b>Word Formation</b>	Basic word forms with some errors (effects vs affects)	Precise word formation with appropriate collocations
<b>Spelling</b>	Generally accurate but limited vocabulary attempted	Accurate spelling of sophisticated vocabulary

## Grammatical Range and Accuracy Analysis

Aspect	Band 5 Response	Band 8 Response
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	Predominantly simple and compound sentences with limited complexity	Wide variety including complex sentences with multiple clauses used effectively
<b>Grammatical Accuracy</b>	Frequent errors in articles, subject-verb agreement, and tense consistency	High level of accuracy with only minor slips that don't impede communication
<b>Punctuation</b>	Basic punctuation with some errors	Accurate and sophisticated punctuation supporting complex structures

## Key Takeaways and Improvement Tips

### **For Band 5 to Band 6 Improvement:**

- Develop ideas more fully with specific examples and detailed explanations
- Improve grammatical accuracy, particularly with articles and verb forms
- Use more varied vocabulary while ensuring accuracy
- Better organize ideas within paragraphs with clear topic sentences

### **For Band 6 to Band 8 Improvement:**

- Demonstrate sophisticated analysis by exploring interconnections between ideas
- Use a wide range of cohesive devices naturally and appropriately
- Incorporate advanced vocabulary with precise meaning and collocation
- Employ complex grammatical structures accurately and purposefully
- Provide nuanced responses that acknowledge multiple perspectives

### **Essential Strategies for Direct Question Essays:**

1. **Identify each question clearly** and ensure you address all parts equally
2. **Plan your response structure** before writing, dedicating appropriate space to each question
3. **Use question-specific language** (causes/reasons, effects/impacts, advantages/disadvantages)
4. **Provide concrete examples** and evidence to support your points
5. **Maintain clear paragraph structure** with each body paragraph focusing on one main aspect
6. **Demonstrate critical thinking** by analyzing rather than simply listing points