

IELTS Writing Task 2: Advantages/Disadvantages Essay

Band 5 vs Band 8 Comprehensive Comparison

This comprehensive guide analyzes the key differences between Band 5 and Band 8 performance in IELTS advantages/disadvantages essays, featuring real examples with detailed examiner feedback and improvement strategies.

Understanding Advantages/Disadvantages Essays

Two Main Types

- Type 1:** "What are the advantages and disadvantages?" - Direct discussion
- Type 2:** "Do advantages outweigh disadvantages?" - Opinion required

Essential Structure

- Introduction:** Background + Thesis (45-55 words)
- Body 1:** Advantages with examples
- Body 2:** Disadvantages with examples
- Conclusion:** Restate main ideas

Band 8 Example Analysis

Essay Question:

"The development of tourism contributed to English becoming the most prominent language in the world. Some people think this will lead to English becoming the only language to be spoken globally. What are the advantages and disadvantages to having one language in the world?"

Band 8 Response

It is thought by some people that English, which is now the most widely spoken language in the world, may one day predominate over all other languages and result in their eventual disappearance. Having one language would certainly aid understanding and economic growth but there will also be some drawbacks.

One evident benefit to having one global language is that it would enable greater understanding between countries. In other words, if everyone spoke one language, there would be complete understanding between not only countries but all people throughout the world which would promote learning, the flow of information and ideas. Another reason that one language would be advantageous is that it would help economic growth. With all people speaking the same language, there would be fewer barriers and therefore trade would flourish between countries, resulting in a healthier world economy.

On the other hand, there are obvious downsides to having only one global language. Firstly, it would mean that all other languages would eventually disappear and, along with them, their cultures. The diversity of cultures is one of the joys this world has to offer. Each culture is unique with its own way of life and own perspectives of the world which would all be lost if there were only one language. Secondly, it would result in the collapse of tourism because there would be no reason to travel for pleasure and interest if all countries had the same language and similar cultures. This would devastate many countries economically that rely on tourism as a source of income.

In conclusion, while there are plus points to having one global language, too much would be lost as a result. Maintaining local languages and cultures should be prioritised to ensure a rich world heritage for future generations.

Task Response: 8

Fully addresses all parts of the task with relevant, well-extended ideas. Clear position throughout.

Coherence & Cohesion: 8

Logical organization with clear progression. Flexible use of linking words and appropriate paragraphing.

Lexical Resource: 8

Wide range of vocabulary with precise meaning. Natural use of less common words.

Grammar: 8

Wide range of accurate complex structures with flexibility and natural usage.

Band 5 Example Analysis

Essay Question:

"Many museums charge for admission while others are free. Do you think the advantages of charging people for admission to museums outweigh the disadvantages?"

Band 5 Response

Nowadays, museums are one of the most attractions across the world where people can conveniently explore in order to expand their knowledge with regard to the history, politics and as well as nations. In this essay, I will paraphrase with reference to the admission fees of museums at length with logical conclusion.

In the past many people claim about the charge of the museums as well as impacts of free museums which government can implement for the public to develop the facilities and increase the demands for this attraction place. Moreover, museums would be beneficial for society specifically for those who have the sedentary lifestyle to encourage them to change their habits and visit the museums atleast once a week. It has to be said that free museums can attract more people outside and of course there is a huge benefit for government while people utilizing transportation system while visiting museums and besides, refurbishment of museums and refreshment make impression of spectators and visitors during watching.

However, government needs to earn income by charging museums in order of staff satisfaction and invest for various purposes which can bring several benefits for them. Therefore, it is essential for some of the museums to charge for entry and perhaps, with the entrance income they might spend for renewing the facilities as well as renovating. It is mainly for this reason that many executive officers putted this regulation in priority in order to notice people that they can follow the rules.

In conclusion, i believe museums and governments must try to provide a free entry for public in order to extend their businesses and make their people happier by implementing these entertainments and besides, encourage them to change their habits and develop their cognizant with regard to the painting, art exhibitions. I think demerits of charging people for admission to museums outweigh the merits.

Task Response: 5

Addresses task only partially. Ideas are relevant but development unclear due to grammatical errors.

Coherence & Cohesion: 5

Some organization present but not always clear. Inadequate use of cohesive devices.

Lexical Resource: 5

Limited range with noticeable errors in word formation and spelling that cause difficulty.

Grammar: 5

Limited range of structures with frequent errors that impede communication.

Detailed Criteria Comparison

Assessment Criteria	Band 8 Characteristics	Band 5 Characteristics
Task Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fully addresses all parts of the taskPresents well-developed response with relevant ideasClear position maintained throughoutIdeas are extended and supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Addresses task only partiallyIdeas may be relevant but unclearPosition unclear or inconsistentLimited development of ideas
Coherence & Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clear logical progression throughoutFlexible use of linking devicesAppropriate paragraphingClear central topic in each paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some organization but not always clearInadequate or inaccurate linkingParagraphing may be present but faultyLack of clear progression
Lexical Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wide range of vocabularyNatural and sophisticated usagePrecise meaning and collocationsOccasional minor errors only	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Limited range of vocabularyBasic word choicesNoticeable errors in spelling/word formationErrors may impede understanding
Grammar Range & Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wide range of structuresFlexible and accurate usageComplex sentences handled wellError-free sentences are frequent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Limited range of structuresSimple sentences may be accurateFrequent errors in complex sentencesErrors impede communication

Key Differences Analysis

Introduction Quality

Band 8 Strengths:

- Clear paraphrase of the question
- Concise thesis statement (45-55 words)
- Sets up the essay structure
- Natural, sophisticated language

Band 5 Issues:

- Unclear thesis statement
- Awkward phrasing and errors
- Doesn't clearly set direction
- Overly complex without clarity

Body Paragraph Development

Band 8 Strengths:

- Clear topic sentences
- Well-developed explanations
- Relevant examples
- Logical flow within paragraphs

Band 5 Issues:

- Unclear main ideas
- Poor explanation development
- Repetitive content
- Lack of clear examples

Language Use

Band 8 Examples:

- "predominate over"
- "evident benefit"
- "obvious downsides"
- "plus points"

Band 5 Problems:

- "atleast" (spelling error)
- "putted" (grammar error)
- "cognizant" (inappropriate usage)
- Repetitive basic vocabulary

Conclusion Effectiveness

Band 8 Strengths:

- Clear summary of main points
- Consistent with essay content
- Forward-looking statement
- Natural language flow

Band 5 Issues:

- Unclear position statement
- Inconsistent with body content
- Grammatical errors
- Repetitive language

Improvement Strategies: From Band 5 to Band 8

Task Response Enhancement

Planning Strategies:

- Spent 5-7 minutes planning
- Identify 2 clear advantages and 2 disadvantages
- Plan specific examples for each point
- Decide your position (for outweigh questions)

Development Tips:

- Use PEEL structure (Point, Explain, Example, Link)
- Ensure each body paragraph has one clear focus
- Avoid repetition between paragraphs
- Maintain consistent position throughout

Vocabulary Enhancement

Advantages Vocabulary:

- benefits
- positive aspects
- merits
- plus points
- advantageous
- beneficial

Disadvantages Vocabulary:

- drawbacks
- downsides
- negative aspects
- shortcomings
- detrimental
- adverse effects

Linking Phrases:

- On the other hand
- Furthermore
- In contrast
- Another reason
- However
- Nevertheless

Grammar Range Enhancement

Complex Structures to Practice:

- Conditional sentences (If everyone spoke...)
- Relative clauses (which, that, who)
- Passive voice variations
- Participle phrases
- Inversion for emphasis

Common Error Areas:

- Subject-verb agreement
- Article usage (a, an, the)
- Preposition accuracy
- Verb tense consistency
- Sentence boundaries

High-Scoring Essay Templates

Type 1: Direct Discussion

Introduction:

It is argued that [paraphrase topic]. While there are certain benefits to [topic], there are also some drawbacks that need to be considered.

Body 1 (Advantages):

One evident benefit of [topic] is that [advantage 1]. Another reason why [topic] is advantageous is that [advantage 2].

Body 2 (Disadvantages):

On the other hand, there are obvious downsides to [topic]. Firstly, [disadvantage 1]. Secondly, [disadvantage 2].

Conclusion:

In conclusion, while there are plus points to [topic], the drawbacks should also be taken into account when considering [topic].

Type 2: Outweigh Question

Introduction:

It is argued that [paraphrase topic]. While there are certain drawbacks to [topic], I believe the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

Body 1 (Disadvantages):

Admittedly, there are some downsides to [topic]. [Disadvantage 1] and [disadvantage 2].

Body 2 (Advantages - stronger):

However, the benefits of [topic] are more significant. [Advantage 1] and [advantage 2].

Conclusion:

In conclusion, although there are some negative aspects to [topic], the advantages clearly outweigh the disadvantages.

Essential Success Tips

Time Management

- 5 minutes: Planning
- 30 minutes: Writing
- 5 minutes: Checking
- Always write 250+ words

Quality Control

- Check task response completeness
- Verify clear paragraph structure
- Review grammar and spelling
- Ensure consistent position

Practice Focus

- Practice with real IELTS questions
- Time yourself regularly
- Get feedback on your writing
- Build vocabulary systematically

Remember

The difference between Band 5 and Band 8 lies in clarity, accuracy, and sophistication. Focus on clear task response, logical organization, varied vocabulary, and accurate grammar to achieve higher scores.

This comparison guide is based on official IELTS band descriptors and authentic student samples with examiner feedback.