

MINDSET ENGLISH

WRITING WORKBOOK

IELTS Band 9-Style Writing Lab

Vocabulary by function, reliable structures, an original high-band model answer and a practical grading rubric.

ORIGINAL

PRINTABLE

ANSWER KEY

Use this pack for learning and timed practice. It is not a prediction of live test questions and is not endorsed by the IELTS test owners.

What a high-band answer looks like

A strong answer is not a collection of rare words. It answers the exact question, develops ideas fully, moves logically and uses precise language with flexible grammar. The official Writing criteria are Task Achievement or Task Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy. Task 2 contributes twice as much as Task 1 to the Writing score.

IMPORTANT

The model in this workbook is an original Band 9-style teaching example. Only a certified IELTS examiner can award an official band score, and performance can vary across tasks.

The four lenses

CRITERION	ASK YOURSELF
Task response	Did I answer every part and maintain a clear position?
Coherence and cohesion	Can the reader follow the argument without effort?
Lexical resource	Are words precise, natural and appropriate to the topic?
Grammar	Are structures varied, controlled and easy to understand?

Task 2 structures that stay clear

Introduction: two purposeful moves

Move 1 - frame the issue: Paraphrase the debate without copying the task.

Move 2 - answer it: State a precise position that the body paragraphs can prove.

PATTERN

While [opposing consideration] is valid, I believe [position] because [reason 1] and [reason 2].

Body paragraph: claim to consequence

Claim: the paragraph's main answer.

Reason: why the claim is true.

Example: a specific illustration.

Consequence: why the example matters for the question.

PATTERN

One significant advantage is ... This is because ... For example ... As a result ...

Counterargument: acknowledge, limit, return

A high-band response can recognise a competing view without losing its position.

PATTERN

Admittedly, ... Nevertheless, this concern can be reduced by ..., meaning that ...

Conclusion: judgement, not repetition

Restate the answer at a higher level. Do not introduce a new reason or copy the introduction sentence.

Vocabulary by function

Learn the job a phrase performs. Then practise it across several topics so it becomes usable rather than memorised decoration.

FUNCTION	USEFUL LANGUAGE	NATURAL EXAMPLE
Position	I am convinced that / A more effective approach is	A more effective approach is to improve public transport before restricting cars.
Concession	Admittedly / Although this concern is valid	Admittedly, compulsory modules can increase workload.
Cause	stems from / can be attributed to / is driven by	The decline can be attributed partly to higher housing costs.
Effect	leads to / enables / undermines / strengthens	Regular feedback enables learners to correct patterns early.
Example	A clear illustration is / This can be seen when	This can be seen when small firms train staff internally.
Comparison	whereas / by contrast / substantially higher than	Rail use was substantially higher in 2025 than in 2010.
Careful claim	tends to / is likely to / may contribute to	Flexible hours may contribute to better staff retention.
Evaluation	a short-term benefit / a significant limitation	A significant limitation is the cost of maintaining the system.

AVOID

Do not force memorised phrases such as 'every coin has two sides'. Precision and natural collocation are more valuable than unusual vocabulary.

Academic Task 1 language

Overview patterns

Overall, X remained the largest category, although its share declined considerably.

Overall, all three alternatives increased, with rail recording the sharpest rise.

The most noticeable features are the reversal in X and the relative stability of Y.

Change with control

DIRECTION	VERBS	NOUNS AND MODIFIERS
Up	rose, climbed, grew, doubled	an increase, a steady rise, a sharp climb
Down	fell, declined, dropped, halved	a decrease, a gradual fall, a marked reduction
Stable	remained stable, levelled off	little change, relative stability
Variation	fluctuated, peaked at, reached a low of	a fluctuation, a peak, the lowest point

Reliable four-paragraph plan

1. Introduction: paraphrase what the visual shows.
2. Overview: report the two or three biggest features.
3. Details: compare one logical group with figures.
4. Details: compare the remaining group with figures.

DO NOT

Do not explain why the figures changed unless the task provides that information. Task 1 reports evidence; it does not invite your opinion.

Original Task 2 prompt

QUESTION

Some people believe universities should require every student to study at least one subject outside their main field. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons and include relevant examples.

Planning in four minutes

Position: Agree with a limited, carefully designed requirement.

Reason 1: Cross-disciplinary knowledge improves judgement and communication.

Reason 2: Breadth should not weaken specialist depth.

Solution: One relevant, flexible module rather than a large compulsory programme.

Model answer - Band 9 style

University education is often expected to produce both specialist expertise and adaptable graduates. Although students need sufficient time to master their principal discipline, I agree that a carefully limited requirement to study outside it can improve the quality and usefulness of their education.

The main benefit of cross-disciplinary study is that important problems rarely fit within a single academic boundary. An engineering student who understands basic economics, for instance, is better equipped to consider whether an elegant technical solution is affordable at scale. Likewise, a business student who studies environmental science may evaluate the long-term consequences of a company's decisions rather than focusing exclusively on immediate profit. In both cases, the additional subject does not replace specialist knowledge; it gives students a wider framework in which to apply it.

A second advantage is improved communication. Graduates commonly work with colleagues whose training, assumptions and vocabulary differ from their own. Encountering another discipline at university forces students to explain ideas without relying on specialist shorthand and to recognise that evidence can be interpreted in different ways. These habits are valuable not only in employment but also in public debate, where complex decisions require cooperation between experts and non-experts.

Nevertheless, the requirement should remain modest. A medical or architecture student already faces an intensive programme, and an unrelated compulsory course could become a distraction rather than an opportunity. Universities should therefore offer a choice of relevant modules and limit the requirement to one well-designed course. This would preserve disciplinary depth while giving students genuine intellectual breadth.

In conclusion, all students should experience at least one subject beyond their main field, provided that the choice is flexible and the workload proportionate. Such a policy would develop broader judgement and clearer communication without undermining the expertise for which a degree is primarily designed.

Why the model works

FEATURE	EVIDENCE IN THE ANSWER
Direct position	The introduction agrees but defines the condition: carefully limited study outside the main field.
Full development	Each reason moves from claim to explanation, example and significance.
Logical progression	Breadth, communication, limitation and final judgement form a clear argument.
Precise vocabulary	Phrases such as 'specialist shorthand', 'disciplinary depth' and 'workload proportionate' express exact meanings.
Grammatical flexibility	The answer mixes complex clauses, conditionals, comparison and concise simple sentences without sacrificing clarity.
Controlled cohesion	Connections are created through meaning and reference, not by adding a memorised linker to every sentence.

NOTICE

The model does not use a template such as 'This essay will discuss both views'. Its structure is visible through the argument itself.

Practical self-grading rubric

This MindSet rubric simplifies the official criteria for practice. It is not an official band calculator.

AREA	HIGH-BAND EVIDENCE	RED FLAG
Task response	Every part answered; position precise and consistent; main ideas fully supported.	A paragraph discusses the topic generally but does not prove the answer.
Coherence	Paragraphs have one purpose; ideas progress naturally; referencing is clear.	Linkers are repetitive or the reader must guess how examples connect.
Vocabulary	Wide, precise vocabulary used naturally; collocations fit; spelling is controlled.	Rare words are forced, repeated or used with the wrong partner.
Grammar	Flexible sentence forms with strong control; errors are rare and do not distract.	Long sentences lose control, or only safe simple structures are used.

Score your draft: 0-2 each

0 = missing or unclear, 1 = partly controlled, 2 = consistently strong.

Task response __ /2 Coherence __ /2 Vocabulary __ /2 Grammar __ /2

This score is a practice signal, not an IELTS band. Write one action: **In my next draft I will...**



Final editing routine

First 2 minutes: task

Underline the exact question. Confirm that the thesis answers it and every body paragraph supports that thesis.

Next 2 minutes: paragraph logic

Read only the first sentence of each paragraph. Together, they should form a logical summary of your argument.

Final 3 minutes: language control

Check subject-verb agreement, articles, singular and plural nouns, punctuation, repeated words and the ending of each long sentence.

OFFICIAL REFERENCES

Writing criteria and preparation:

<https://ielts.org/take-a-test/preparation-resources/writing-test-resources>

Academic Writing format: <https://ielts.org/take-a-test/test-types/ielts-academic-test/ielts-academic-format-writing>

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