

GUIDE TO THE WRITING SECTION OF THE EXAM

- Students must select **ONE** of the 2 or 3 questions on the writing paper.
- The question requires you to write a **discursive composition**.
- **This should be written in more formal English in line with academic writing.**
- Students must be careful to answer the exact question which is asked. For example, if the question asks you to “discuss the negative impact of tourism in some areas,” you would be wrong to write 200 words about the history of tourism or about mostly positive effects of tourism or your holidays! **Irrelevance will be penalized**. TIP: **Look back at the question frequently** to ensure you are answering it.
- You should write at least 200 words to fully develop your answer.
- Points will be awarded for a good range of vocabulary, grammar and structures.

FORM

Your composition should be composed of 4 paragraphs.

- An introduction
- 2 central paragraphs
- A conclusion

Leave a space between each paragraph or clearly indicate that it is a new paragraph. (see examples below)

Carefully read the notes **in green** on the example essay.

These regard cohesion and conventions of writing a short formal/academic essay.

Besides these points remember to follow these guidelines:

- Do not use slang or colloquialisms
- Words like *guys, dudes, kids, stuff*, are not to be used, for example. Use more formal/neutral vocabulary.
- Do not use contractions *isn't /don't* . Use *is not do/ not*
- *Avoid too much personal information. Avoid sentences like : I am a guy from Sardinia and we love eating good food. My mum and my aunt always cook fresh and we know that junk food is no good ... bla bla (adapted from actual essay), which failed obviously.*
- Prefer a style like: *In certain countries, high-quality, fresh food is widely available and appreciated by most families. There is a greater awareness of the dangers of so-called junk food.*
- Only use the “I” voice in the introduction giving your thesis statement. (I agree that technology is harmful.....) or perhaps in the conclusion. It is also possible to express this in other ways: *It is clear/evident that technology can be harmful*

Writing Sample Question and Model Essay

Question: Nowadays, the way many people interact with each other has changed because of technology. In what ways has technology affected the types of relationships people make? Has this become a positive or negative development?

Model Essay

introduction:

It is clear that modern relationships between people have been affected by advances in technology. Many agree that although technology has resulted in a better quality of life in some regards, it has undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on human relationships.

(40 words)

Notes on the above introduction.

- Don't make a super long introduction (3 to 5 lines is a good length)
- Don't go into details in the introduction. Keep it general. 1 background statement (perhaps paraphrasing that offered in the question) and 1 clear thesis statement, which will be the final sentence in your introduction. (in red above) The thesis statement tells the reader of your position with regard to the main question: "*has this become a positive or negative development?*"

Leave a line space then write the first main paragraph. Remember do not leave empty lines or start new lines at random. Many students do this. A new line or space indicates a new paragraph.

In red below, you can see the TOPIC SENTENCE. This should be the first sentence in the paragraph. It is a synopsis of the content of the paragraph. It tells us what the paragraph will be about. The paragraph should not contain any ideas which are not relevant to this main controlling idea (the topic sentence) Remember to check that this is relevant to the main question and the thesis statement you have written in the final sentence of the introduction, thus creating cohesion between the various parts.

Main Paragraph 1:

One negative impact of technology is apparent in the phenomenon of people having more acquaintances and fewer close friends. This can be seen in the tendency to have an extremely high number of "friends" on social media websites such as Facebook. However, while it is true that the people involved have made contact, it is often the case that time spent on such sites may lead to less face-to-face interaction between people. This is because using social media sites has become an integral part of the lives of many people and connecting with others digitally has become so much easier. As a result of such sites, most people spend more time interacting and communicating online with their friends than they do meeting them in person.

The rest of the paragraph above (in blue) supports the topic sentence. It demonstrates how the topic sentence is true: it explains, proves, perhaps gives an example

main paragraph 2:

The second paragraph explores another aspect which is relevant to the question. It may be a contrast to the first paragraph (positive aspects v negative aspects) or it may be an additional main point you wish to discuss, but must be relevant to the main question. Do not deviate and write about points that interest you but which cannot be connected to the question directly.

Here too, in the second main paragraph, there is a mix of explanation, results and examples to EXPLAIN, SUPPORT the topic sentence.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the previously-mentioned changes have had other negative effects. Firstly, many people might feel lonelier as they spend more time with the computer rather than with other human beings. Studies have shown that people need real face-to-face interaction if they want to remain emotionally healthy, thus the lack of such communication has led not only to loneliness but also to depression. Consequently, many of those who use technology to communicate with others are gradually losing important social skills. These days, it is very common for people to communicate and express themselves using emoticons or other forms of expression that are common online. However, an unfortunate consequence of all this is that one day, people might well lose the level of ability they once had to express themselves as effectively using their body language or tone of expression.

Conclusion:

To sum up, people have fewer close friends and have less direct contact with people due to technology. They are becoming less adept in social situations. Given this situation, it is recommended that people should seek to spend less time on electronic devices in order to improve their relationships with others.

Note: the conclusion does not introduce new examples. It sums up,

paraphrasing and reiterating the opinion given in the thesis statement and supported throughout the 2 main paragraphs.

Please do not write main paragraph 1, conclusion etc as headings.
Students have done so in the past!

Other examples of essays written by students with good results

Some people believe that overcrowding of our planet will lead to irreversible damage to the environment and that resources are not enough to go round. Others believe that technology will save us and that the population will not continue rising exponentially

Some people consider overpopulation of our planet an important issue, which creates considerable damage to the whole of humanity and the ecosystem. Other people see it as a problem that could be solved with the help of technology. **In my opinion, overpopulation of our planet is an underestimated issue that has caused irreversible damage.** (thesis statement)

One of the resulting problems is depletion of natural resources.(topic sentence) The limited amount of water and food that Earth can produce is below current needs. Most of the environmental damage observed over the past fifty years is due to the growing number of people on the planet. The data shows that our numbers have increased dramatically from 1 billion in 1800 to 7.4 billion in 2016. The world population increased fourfold in the last century. The damage inflicted by humans includes forest clearing, reckless hunting for wildlife and pollution.

Another related issue is environmental degradation and whether it can be reversed. Our species continues to expand, while in the rest of the biosphere we are witnessing an alarming decline in biodiversity. More humans on Earth equals more CO₂ in the atmosphere. It has been suggested that technology which captures carbon from the air will manage to reduce the CO₂ levels in the atmosphere. However, this technology is only in its early stages and it is not known whether it will ever be able to have an impact in a significant way.

It would seem that there is no chance of surviving if the world population does not begin to decrease exponentially. The number of people does matter, of course, but how people consume resources matters much more. In my opinion, the future consequences of overcrowding will only make the current situation worse, unless

people understand how to moderate their consumption and meet their needs by living in a sustainable way.

A lot of places in the world rely on tourism as a main source of income. Unfortunately, tourism can also cause problems if it is not managed correctly.

Describe the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in the modern world. Do you think that the benefits of tourism outweigh its drawbacks?

Billions of people around the world take trips every year in normal, non-pandemic, circumstances drawn by the attractiveness and beauty of many places. Although travelling can be considered one of the most exciting experiences, it is also known that certain problems may arise as a direct result. This is undeniable but I believe that it is worth it for the following reasons.

Tourism is not just a source of income as its importance is also impacts positively on the environment, culture and employment. It is true that the economic aspect is the most relevant one because tourists' visits and overnight stays in hotels make a nation's GDP grow. Furthermore, there are many jobs which are strictly connected to tourism, for instance, museum guides, souvenir shop owners and travel agencies. In addition, it motivates citizens to preserve the environment which is frequently cleaned and taken care of. Also, the city hall promotes reconstruction works in preparation for the coming of millions of tourists. As far as culture is concerned, tourists get to know new customs and local traditions only by travelling, therefore it represents an important means of cultural enrichment.

Conversely, there could potentially be some disadvantages along with the above-mentioned benefits, in particular regarding the environment. Tourism leads to the overcrowding of cities even if temporarily. For this reason, pollution and degradation may increase. This is especially true for famous cities which attract tourists from all over the world because of their history and monuments, which may be damaged.

To sum it all up, the issues that may derive from tourism cannot be underestimated but the considerable number of positive aspects gives us reason to continue travelling and discovering the world.