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## Essay Planning 3:

### Writing Introduction paragraphs

The easiest way to write an introduction for the IELTS essay is to follow this formula:

- Write 1 sentence to start the topic
- Re-write the statements from the question using your own words
- State your opinion

#### Your introduction

The examiner should be able to read it and know:

- **what the topic is**
- **how you feel about it.**

#### Your essay

The examiner will read it and expect to see:

- **the topic discussed**
- **more positive or more negative ideas, or a balance of both, depending on how you stated your opinion.**

To help you understand how to apply this formula let's look at a variety of IELTS essay questions and possible introduction paragraphs.

**Schools should concentrate more on teaching academic subjects because they are of greater benefit for children in the future. Less importance should be given to non-academic subjects such as sports and music.**

**Do you agree or disagree?**

This essay topic was provided by one of my students who took the IELTS exam in May 2010.

Schools today teach a variety of subjects from serious academic studies, such as science, to lighter, more fun subjects, such as sports. Many people believe, however, that academic classes are more beneficial than less academic subjects for their children's future lives. In my opinion, schools should offer a balanced approach to learning, with equal importance being given to all subjects.

**Comment [mIt1]:** Start the topic

**Comment [mIt2]:** Re-writing the 2 statements from the essay question

**Comment [mIt3]:** My opinion on this topic

This is an example of a good introduction to an essay that then goes on to talk about the benefits and importance of both kinds of subjects. For appropriate main paragraphs to follow this introduction, take a look at [Essay Planning 2 Writing Paragraphs 1](#).

When you re-write the statement sentences it is very important that you try to use your own words as much as possible. Obviously I have repeated some words (schools, subjects, academic, children, future, sports) as these are very common words.

However, I **haven't repeated phrases**. Look at the differences:

#### **Essay Question Vocabulary**

academic subjects  
non-academic subjects  
greater benefit  
children in the future

#### **My Introduction Vocabulary**

academic studies / academic classes  
lighter, more fun subjects  
more beneficial  
children's future lives

**If you directly copy phrases (or sentences) from the essay question the examiner won't count these words.** This could mean that your final answer is less than 250 words – and you will lose points in the [Content section](#).

Using a variety of vocabulary is one of the important points examiners look at when grading your essay, ([see the vocabulary section](#)), so by starting well in your introduction you give a good impression. Obviously you need to continue using a variety throughout in order to achieve a satisfactory result.

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Let's try a different essay question.

Some parents think that having children watch television programs is good for their mental development, whereas others believe that this is not true.

What is your opinion?

This essay topic was provided by one of my students who took the IELTS exam in May 2010.

As many households today own a television, children have far easier access to this form of entertainment than perhaps their parents did when they were young. As a result, some of these parents believe that TV is detrimental to their child's development. I think watching television can both improve and harm a child's mind, but the extent to which it does either depends on which programs the child is allowed to watch.

Comment [mIt4]: Start the topic

Comment [mIt5]: Re-writing the 1 statement from the essay question.

Comment [mIt6]: My opinion

The main paragraphs following this introduction would talk about the benefits and disadvantages of various TV programs on mental development. The opinion sentence suggests the essay will be balanced. However, it is also possible that the writer will have *slightly* stronger opinions on one side depending on how many good or bad TV programs are discussed.

Again some of the more common words have been repeated – television, parents, children, development. However, the phrases have been changed.

#### Essay Question Vocabulary

watch television programs  
mental development  
think

#### My Introduction Vocabulary

this form of entertainment / watching television  
child's development / improve a child's mind  
believe / think

Here are a couple more questions with suggested introductions.

**Health services are a basic necessity for a person. However, private companies have made health services quite costly for ordinary individuals.**

**Do the advantages of private health care outweigh its disadvantages?**

This essay topic was provided by one of my students who took the IELTS exam in June 2010.

In many countries today there are two sectors of health provision – state and private. Many people argue that health care is a basic right for everyone and so should be provided by the Government. In capitalist societies there are also private firms that offer health services but unfortunately these are generally very expensive. Even though these private services provide excellent facilities, in my view, they cause more problems than benefits for the countries they operate in.

Obviously the opinion of this writer is that there are more disadvantages than advantages, and this needs to be clearly shown in the main paragraphs. My advice would be to write 3 short main paragraphs; the first with advantages, and then two more with disadvantages, as this clearly supports the opinion that there are more disadvantages.

**Tourism has a negative effect on some destinations and many people believe that certain tourists are to blame for this.**

**What are some of the negative impacts that have been identified?**

**What are the solutions to this situation?**

This essay topic was provided by one of my students who took the IELTS exam in May 2010.

The structure of this essay is a little different from the others. The following main paragraphs don't require arguments for and against, or discussion of advantages and disadvantages. My advice is to write 1 main paragraph stating the negative effects of tourism on some areas with good examples. Then write your next paragraph on how to try and solve these same problems.

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As international travel becomes easier the number of people holidaying abroad has increased. With increasing tourist numbers to popular vacation spots, the impact on these areas can be negative. This is the result of certain pressures on the local environment, but more recently people have realized that the tourists themselves are causing problems. The negative effects that have occurred as a result of this tourism need to be carefully considered in order to try and prevent further damage in the future.

**Comment [mIt7]:** Related to first question

**Comment [mIt8]:** Related to second question

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