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## Essay Planning 4: Writing Conclusion paragraphs

The easiest way to write a conclusion for the IELTS essay is to follow this formula:

- Start with a conclusion phrase
- Repeat the main ideas from your essay – although try to use different words if possible
- State your opinion

- **Start with a conclusion phrase**

Starting your last paragraph of your essay with a conclusion phrase tells the examiner that this is not a main paragraph. It prepares the examiner for the conclusion, so they expect to see a summary of your essay.

**Typical phrases include:**

In conclusion, ...  
In short, ...  
To summarise, ...  
Overall, ...

**Try to avoid:**

As a result, ... This is far better in the main part of the essay, meaning 'so'  
Finally, ... This is far better in the main of the essay, suggesting the last in a series of ideas.

You only write 1 essay in the IELTS exam, so just learn and use 1 phrase.

- Repeat the main ideas from your essay – although try to use different words if possible

Main ideas are very important in your essay, as I explained in [Essay Planning 2 Writing Paragraphs](#), and again they are important at the end of your essay. They should be clearly stated in your main paragraphs so they are easy for you to find and therefore repeat. Try to use different words if you can, as this shows your variety of vocabulary.

- **State your opinion**

This should be the same opinion you gave in your introduction. However, check that your opinion reflects the view of your essay. By this I mean, if you agree with the topic then you should have written more ideas that relate to this. If you think there are more disadvantages then make sure you have written more disadvantages.

### Your conclusion

The examiner should be able to read it and know:

- **what the different attitudes towards the topic are**
- **how you feel about it.**

In fact, the examiner should read your conclusion and understand what you talked about, without having to read your essay!!

**To help you understand how to apply this formula let's look at a variety of IELTS essays.**

**Example 1** (The question was provided by one of my students who took the exam in June 2010)

**Some people find commuting to and from the office difficult. They say employers should allow their workers to do certain office tasks from home. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working from home?**

As computers have come to dominate our world so communication has changed. As a result, those workers who spend many hours commuting believe that part of their job could be completed from home. **I feel that there are more advantages to be had from this situation.**

Comment [mIt1]: My opinion

**One benefit of working from home is that it is more economical for both the employee and the company, as well as better for the environment.** For example, the employee spends less money on travel to and from work, while the company does not incur costs in providing office space and office facilities. In addition, the environment benefits from less pollution as the worker does not need to commute.

Comment [mIt2]: Main idea

**It is also more advantageous for working mothers, who may prefer the convenience of this arrangement.** Rejoining the workforce is very difficult for them due to the number of hours that are required in the office. If they can work from home, they can complete the tasks in their own time, which may be more suitable than having to follow the normal 9 to 5 schedule.

Comment [mIt3]: Main idea

**Despite these advantages, there is a negative aspect. Some workers may feel more isolated and lonely when working from home.** This is because the work environment allows face-to-face interaction, and this can be very important in providing a person with a sense of belonging.

Comment [mIt4]: Main idea

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In short, those people who like interacting as part of a team may not enjoy working from home. However, others may find it more convenient and cost-effective if they do not have to commute every day. In my opinion, the number of people who would prefer to work from home is likely to increase as the benefits tend to outweigh the disadvantages.

(Word count 287)

**Example 2** (The question was provided by one of my students who took the exam in May 2010.)

Please note that I also used this question in [Essay Planning 1 Brainstorming 1](#).

**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?**

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.

One argument in favour of teaching academic subjects is that they are focused on the study of theories, and they provide the appropriate learning required if students wish to study traditional subjects at university, and succeed in their career. These subjects, such as Maths and Science, help students develop critical thinking and analysis skills, so that they can find the solutions to problems and draw conclusions from their work. Some students will thrive at these subjects because they enjoy using theoretical approaches. As a result, they may go on to study similar subjects at university and ultimately graduate to become the engineers and doctors of the future.

On the other hand, there is an argument that considers the study of more vocational subjects to be of benefit. These subjects focus on developing practical skills. Students may enjoy doing more project work, or have more opportunities to develop social skills. For example, students learn how to work as a team through sport. In addition, subjects such as Music and Art, are far more practical and relevant to those students who wish to become musicians or fashion designers. The equal importance of these subjects is supported by the increasing number and popularity of vocational subjects now offered at universities.

In conclusion, both subjects are of benefit to students. While some students enjoy developing their knowledge through theories and critical analysis, others prefer more practical application. However, I believe that both types of studies are necessary for the development of a balanced individual.

(Word count 310)

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**Comment [mIt5]:** The conclusion includes the main ideas and my overall opinion

**Comment [mIt6]:** My opinion

**Comment [mIt7]:** Main idea

**Comment [mIt8]:** Main idea

**Comment [mIt9]:** The conclusion includes the main ideas and my overall opinion

**Example 3** (The question was provided by one of my students who took the exam in 2010.)

Please note that I also used this question in [Essay Planning 1 Brainstorming 2](#) and [Essay Planning 3 Introductions 1](#).

**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?**

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 it can both improve and harm a child's mind, but this depends on which programs the child watches.

Comment [mIt10]: My opinion

The main benefit is the educational value it provides. This could be for school children who can watch programs related to their studies. It provides a captivating alternative to the normal class structure and helps develop their visual and auditory skills. There are also programs for pre-schoolers which provide stimulating and fun ways for this age group to develop some basic skills before they start their formal education.

Comment [mIt11]: Main idea

Another positive is that programs can develop children's interests. Such programs encourage youngsters to take up new hobbies, or learn about nature and the world around them. As these kids may not normally be exposed to such matters, by watching programs such as Discovery Channel for children, they can have access to far more information.

Comment [mIt12]: Main idea

However, there are programs that are not suitable for viewing and may even harm a child's development. Those that show violence, for example police TV series, can cause children to develop an inappropriate attitude towards crime as they are unable to understand the difference between reality and fiction. Furthermore, cable TV provides programming 24 hours a day, and easy access to TV can reduce the need children have to think for themselves.

Comment [mIt13]: Main idea

In summary, the extent to which a child benefits from TV depends on the types of programs they watch and the number of hours they spend doing this. If they are encouraged to watch programs that develop knowledge and interests then TV can be a very useful tool.

Comment [mIt14]: The conclusion includes the main ideas and my overall opinion

Word count 305

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