

Technique

A common criticism of IELTS candidates is that they overgeneralize in Task 2. Avoid overgeneralizing by giving reasons.

Task 2 Avoiding overgeneralization

1 Read the sentences below. Then answer questions a–c.

- The international community should ensure that education is free for all schoolchildren.
- They should provide books.
- Parents should be encouraged to become involved in schools.

- a How are the ideas connected?
- b Do the second and third sentences support the first sentence?
- c What ideas can you think of to support the first sentence?

2 The opinion statement below is very broad. In your opinion, which reason is most appropriate?

Opinion statement: Education is a major factor in lifting people out of poverty

Reason 1: ... since it gives people more ideas about what to do with their lives.

Reason 2: ... because it gives them greater opportunities when they look for work.

3 All of the opinion statements a–h below are very broad. For each statement, decide whether you agree or disagree.

- a Universities should make more links with businesses.
- b The present young generation knows more than their previous counterparts.
- c Teaching thinking at school is essential, even at primary level.
- d More time needs to be devoted to learning music, either during or after school hours.
- e Physical education is a necessary part of the learning process for all pupils.
- f Play is a major part of the learning process for children.
- g It is important for children to try to learn another language early in their education.
- h Being bored and learning to deal with boredom is a necessary part of the learning process for children.

4 Look again at the statements you agreed with in 3. Choose from the phrases below to intensify your opinions and add these to the sentences you agreed with in 3.

Example

It is important that universities should make more links with business.

It is important that There is no doubt that One cannot deny that
It is impossible to argue against the fact that

When you make an argument that is general, make sure you justify it with a trigger word such as *because* and *since* as trigger words.

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- 5 Look again at the phrases you disagreed with in 3. It is possible to present opinions as belonging to someone else – possibly to hide your own opinion. Choose from the phrases below and add these to the sentences you disagreed with in 3.

Some people think/feel/believe/claim/argue that
 Other people are of the opinion that
 Yet other people put forward the view that

- 6 To avoid overgeneralization, give reasons. Add the reasons below to opinions a–h in 3.

- 1 *since* it creates a healthy basis for later life.
- 2 *as* it helps the brain to function better and increases coordination.
- 3 *because* children now find it more difficult to reason.
- 4 *since* they have more access to information.
- 5 *because* it helps them intellectually and also helps to find a job.
- 6 *as* this would connect their research with the real world.
- 7 *because* interaction helps to develop social skills.
- 8 *as* it teaches them how to be creative on their own.

Developing reasons

- 7 In IELTS, opinions and reasons should be supported with 'examples from your knowledge and experience'. Sentences a–c give three examples to support the argument below. Match each example with the descriptions 1–3.

Play is a major part of the learning process for children as it teaches them how to be creative.

- a Take for example children in my country who learn musical games at an early age.
- b For instance, children who draw and paint are widely known to have greater spacial awareness.
- c For example, play can develop artistic or musical skills.

- 1 a general example
- 2 an example from knowledge
- 3 an example from experience

8 Develop the ideas below by adding your own examples like those in 7 on page 35. Use the phrases in the box to help you.

For instance, For example, like namely
Take for example A good example is

- a Out of school activities help children develop because they can learn subjects that are not in the school curriculum.
.....
.....
- b Education is being reduced to a production line because the focus is on targets rather than on learning.
.....
.....
- c Travel helps to broaden the minds of children because it helps to bring to life the things they read in class.
.....
.....
- d Private education complements state education very well as it can do things state education cannot.
.....
.....
- e Successful entrepreneurs and sports stars should teach in schools and universities since they would provide good role models for young people.
.....
.....

9 Develop three of the sentences below. Use phrases to intensify your own or others' opinions. Give your own reasons and examples.

Example: Too much emphasis is put on passing exams.

Technique

- When you state a reason, think how you could illustrate it with examples.
- Use phrases such as *For example* and *like* as trigger words.

Some people feel that too much emphasis is put on passing exams, because pupils spend a large proportion of school time doing tests rather than learning. For example, children in some British schools prepare for tests for weeks before the exams, but they are not taught anything.

- a Foreign language learning should be compulsory.
- b Students need to have good study skills on entering university.
- c University lecturers need some teacher training.
- d Boys and girls ought to be educated in separate schools.
- e Teachers' salaries need to be as high as doctors' or lawyers'.