

Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics



Useful Ideas & Vocabulary
for over 150 IELTS Essay
Topics.

For Academic & GT IELTS Writing Task 2.

IELTS Liz

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This book contains useful ideas for essay topics which can be used for IELTS writing task 2. The ideas presented are not intended to influence any person's personal opinions and do not represent the opinions of the author.

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FAMILY

Parents or Teachers Should Discipline Children

Parents	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents know their children better than teachers. • Parents might be able to understand reasons behind bad behaviour. • Parents need to be responsible for their child's conduct at home. • Parents are ultimately responsible for the upbringing of their child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers must maintain discipline in their classroom. • Students should learn correct conduct at school. • Teachers are qualified in different discipline techniques. • If teachers do not discipline a naughty child, other children will suffer from the disruption.

Vocabulary Exercise: Find the odd-one-out in each of these groups of words and phrases. Use a good dictionary to help you if necessary.

1 bad behaviour / obedience / misbehaviour / unruliness

2 to lack discipline / to keep discipline / to impose discipline / to maintain discipline

3 to discipline sb / / to penalise sb / to punish sb / to reward sb

4 disobedient / disruptive / well-behaved / naughty / unruly

Family Size: Families are Smaller than Before

Bigger Families Previously	Smaller Families Nowadays
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bigger family meant more children to help and earn money. • Agricultural families relied on children as farmhands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller families are more geographically mobile and can move city more easily to find work. • The cost of bringing up children has risen.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having more children was important because the infant mortality rate was higher. • Many children provided security for parents in their old age in a time without social benefits. • Having many children was sometimes considered to be prestigious. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mothers often work and do not have time to take care of large families. • Modern life is geared towards small families. • Women have access to birth control. • Women have more awareness and choice these days. |
|---|---|

Vocabulary Exercise: Match the words and phrases from the sentences with their definitions.

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|------------------|--|
| 1 mortality rate | a) a baby or very young child |
| 2 infant | b) contraception |
| 3 geared towards | c) inspiring respect |
| 4 bringing up | d) organised in a way that is suitable for a particular situation or purpose |
| 5 birth control | e) raising |
| 6 prestigious | f) the number of people who die in a particular group during a particular period of time |

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Women Having Children Later in Life

Reasons	Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working women prefer to focus on building their career and climbing the career ladder. • Some couples prefer having financial stability before having and raising a child. • The increase in divorce can affect when a woman decides to have children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child, as a young adult, may feel the burden of taking care of elderly parents. • The age gap is bigger between parent and child which can lead to difficulties relating to each other. • Older parents get tired more easily which can restrict their enjoyment and

- Advances in technology, such as IVF, help older women become pregnant.

participation in parenthood.

- There is an increased chance of health complications with the baby.

Collocations Exercise: Match the verbs 1 – 5 with the nouns a) – e) to make common collocations. Then read the sentences above to check your answers.

1 to build

a) financial stability

2 to climb

b) birth

3 to restrict

c) one's career

4 to give

d) participation

5 to have

e) the career ladder

Childless Marriages

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Married couples can focus on their careers. Children change a marriage and add too many _____ (1). Without children, there is more freedom. Children are a financial _____ (2). Childless couples can spend more time _____ (3) to each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is hard to relate to other married couples whose lives _____ (4) around their children. A family unit cannot be considered a family without children. Some societies view childless couples as _____ (5). Some childless couples did not choose this and suffer without children. Without children there is a lack of support in old age. Children are the glue that holds the family together.

abnormal burden devoted responsibilities revolve

Sentence Completion Exercise: Use the words in the box to complete the arguments *for* and *against* childless marriages.

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Divorce

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is better for parents to separate than to argue all the time. • An unhappy marriage can cause a child to suffer distress and witness unpleasant scenes. • Divorce is no longer stigmatised in society. • Children are unsure of who they might live with afterwards. • A happy parent is a good parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of divorce can be stressful for children. • Children feel insecure as their family falls apart. • Each parent can devote quality time to their children rather than quantity. • Children may miss the other parent after the divorce. • Some divorce settlements result in hostility between parents. • Children may feel caught between both parents

1 Spot the Mistake Exercise: Identify the two arguments which are in the wrong category.

2 Matching Exercise: Match the items 1 – 5 with the items a) – e) based on the information given in the ideas above.

1 to witness

2 to be

3 to feel

4 to result in

5 to be caught between

a) two people

b) insecure

c) hostility

d) scenes

e) stigmatised

Single Parent Families

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children do not need two parents to have a stable upbringing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial strain is sometimes placed on only one parent.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children benefit from a loving environment provided by one parent. • Single parent families are preferable to a dysfunctional marriage. • Children from dysfunctional marriages can suffer emotional distress. • Children may have more responsibilities in the house, which helps their development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children might miss the influence of having parents of each gender around. • Children are not given a role model for a healthy adult relationship. • Children are not able to grow up understanding adult relationships. • Children are not able to witness how adults work through difficulties and disagreements. • Children have no other parent to turn to for comfort or support.
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Vocabulary Exercise: Find words and phrases in the sentences above that mean:

- 1 a feeling of extreme unhappiness (two words)
- 2 a person who someone admires and whose behaviour, attitudes, etc they try to copy (two words)
- 3 not working properly or normally (one word)
- 4 the way your parents taught you to behave when you were growing up (one word)
- 5 worry and pressure caused by lack of money (two words)

Children Spending More Time with Grandparents

Matching and Categorising Exercise: Match these sentence halves. Are the completed sentences *for* (+) or *against* (-) children spending more time with grandparents? See the Answer Key for six more ideas for this topic.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 Both child and grandparents | a) they are relied on for child care too often. |
| 2 Children might be confused if | b) can enjoy a closer relationship. |
| 3 Grandparents can offer children | |

4 Grandparents might feel exploited if

c) a different perspective on life.

d) grandparents say one thing and parents another.

Both Parents Working

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some families need two incomes for financial stability. Children benefit from the extra family and income. (1) Children learn to appreciate the value of the money. Children might need to take more of responsibilities in the home. (2) Additional responsibilities help children mature more quickly. Some parents are happier if they have a working life as well as a family life. Children benefit from having a healthy, happy parents. (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children with both parents working lack parental guidance. Parents do not have the time available to care for their children sufficiently. Children might lack support with a homework and other personal issues. (4) Parents struggle to cope when a child is sick as they must both go to work. Parents might argue about whose job it is most important and who takes time off for domestic issues. (5) Children sometimes feel abandoned.

Spot the Mistake Exercise: In arguments 1 – 5 above, there is *one extra word* which does not fit. Spot the incorrect extra word.

Care of the Elderly: Families Should be Responsible

1 Elderly people have paid taxes which should be used for their care.

2 Elderly people thrive better when cared for by people who love them.

- 3 Family should support one another whatever the situation.
- 4 Family understand the needs of the elderly best.
- 5 Grandparents have looked after their child in the past, now the children should look after them.
- 6 If both adults work, there may be no one at home to provide the necessary support.
- 7 Nursing homes and retirement homes are structured to provide the right support and care.
- 8 Retirement homes provide support but not the love that the elderly person needs.
- 9 Some families do not have the extra finances available.
- 10 Some elderly people require specialised care that the family cannot provide.
- 11 The elderly should be surrounded by familiar objects and people.
- 12 The family are not trained to take care of elderly people.

Categorisation Exercise: Mark the arguments above (+) if they are *for* the idea of the family being responsible for the care of the elderly or (-) if they are *against* it.

Researching Family History

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding out about ancestors is a type of self-discovery. Knowing about their ancestors helps people feel part of a larger family. Family history can reveal hereditary medical conditions which might be prevalent among the current generation. Knowing if cancer, for example, is common in their family can help people take the necessary preventive measures. Researching family history can show cultural history. There might be common skills to discover within a family's history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is better for people to focus on present family members rather than those in the past. Unpleasant information might be unearthed. A past member of the family might have been an embarrassment which is best forgotten. People might discover secrets that are damaging to family members today. The past is best left in the past. Hereditary diseases do not necessarily reoccur and may cause undue stress and worry.

Vocabulary Exercise: The words in *italics* all appear in the sentences *for* and *against* researching family history. Choose the best option (**a**, **b** or **c**) to complete the following statements.

1 Your *ancestors* are...

- a) your close friends
- b) relatives who lived a long time ago
- c) places where your parents and grandparents were born.

2 A *hereditary* disease...

- a) is passed to a child by its parents
- b) requires a surgical intervention
- c) affects the heart and the arteries.

3 A condition or belief that is *prevalent* is...

- a) rare
- b) new
- c) common.

4 *Preventive* measures or actions are intended to...

- a) cure a disease very quickly
- b) replace medical insurance
- c) stop something bad from happening.

5 If you *unearth* evidence or information about something bad, you...

- a) try to keep it secret
- b) discover it after careful searching
- c) share it with all the print and electronic media.

6 If you say that somebody is an *embarrassment* to you, you mean that they make you feel...

- a) nervous and uncomfortable
- b) sad and angry
- c) proud and happy.

7 If something is *damaging* to someone, it affects them...

- a) for a very long time
- b) in a bad way
- c) both physically and mentally.