



**IELTS™ =9**

# **Module 3: Essay Conclusion**

## **Task Achievement**

Contents:

Introduction:	2
Example Task One: Advantages and Disadvantages	3
Example Task Two: Advantages and Disadvantages	5
Example Task Three : Advantages and Disadvantages (Solution)	6
Example Task Four: Do Advantages Outweigh Disadvantages?	8

# Introduction:

In the first two sections we looked at the introduction and topic sentences for the main body paragraphs. In this section we look at how you can maximise your mark in your conclusion.

What should I do with my conclusion to maximise my **T**ask  
**A**chievement? (*TA = How you answer the question*)

1. You should summarize clearly your position (answer) for **all** parts of the specific exam task.
2. You should NOT include new information / ideas not covered in the body
3. You should not, generally, include information that is related to the topic but not asked for in the exam task.
4. It should be 10%-20% of the total essay.
5. Where possible, link the ideas in your conclusion with parts of the main body to show flexibility.

The conclusion summarizes your main ideas. Note:

Some candidates who in the introduction and main body are answering at a 7/8/9 TA level, end up with a 6 because they overgeneralize or include new information in the conclusion.

Let's look at some good and bad conclusion examples :

## Example Task 1: Two Questions (*Characteristics and Consequences*)

a) Read the exam task, think about your ideas and answer these questions

- What are the different parts of the task?
- What position is it asking your essay to take?

In some cities, public transport is bad and needs to be improved. What are the characteristics of bad public transport, and what are the consequences to the city of bad public transport?

**Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own experience or knowledge.**

b) Use this conclusion checklist to check the conclusion below for TA:

Does the conclusion

- ◆ summarize clearly your position (answer) for **all** parts of the specific exam task
- ◆ avoid including new information / ideas not covered in the body
- ◆ make up 10%-20% of the total essay
- ◆ link the ideas in your conclusion with parts of the main body to show flexibility

*In conclusion, public transport that is unreliable in terms of time and uncomfortable to travel in is bad public transport. The government must take steps in such a situation to ensure that the public transport improves so that people in the city can enjoy a higher standard of living.*

### Answer:

The conclusion loses marks for TA. “Does the conclusion summarize clearly your position to all the parts of the task?” = No. This conclusion does not summarize the position in answer to the question “What are the consequences...?”. “Does the conclusion avoid including new information / ideas not covered in the body/” = No. It includes information about what the government must do and how this would help improve public transport and the standard of living. This is not in the task.

**Note:** The fact that this conclusion includes an unasked for position is particularly bad for two reasons. Firstly, it does not include asked for information, which raises the question “WHY is this person writing about an unasked for point when they haven't even included what the exam task asks for!?!?!?” Secondly, the unasked for information is 59% of the conclusion. So it is a LARGE

amount of unasked for information. It is OK to have unasked for information connected with the topic, **if it supports** a position presented that addresses the exam task parts. For example, read the conclusion below

*In conclusion, public transport that is unreliable in terms of time and uncomfortable to travel in is bad public transport. The outcome for a city of such low standards is increased pollution and traffic jams. This represents a drop in the standard of living, which is why the government must take steps.*

The last part is related to the topic but not what the specific task asks for, **but it is fine for two reasons.**

1 – Most importantly, it supports the previous statement. The fact that the government “MUST take action” helps emphasize the seriousness of “a drop in the standard of living”. The statement “this means a drop in the standard of living” is in answer to the exam task question “what are the consequences”, so the unasked for information helps develop the author’s position in answer to the specific exam task.

2 – It is only 15% of the total number of words in the conclusion. i.e. not a significant part. Note, if it did nothing to develop the position in answer to the specific exam task, then it does not matter if it is a small or large part, it is best to leave it out.

## Example Task 2: Two Questions (*different types*)

a) Below are two **different exam tasks** and then **one conclusion**. Use the checklist point below to find which exam task the conclusion matches.

- ◆ summarize clearly your position (answer) for **all** parts of the specific exam task

1)

In some cities, public transport is bad and needs to be improved. What are the characteristics of bad public transport, and what steps should the government take?

2)

In some cities, public transport is bad and needs to be improved. What are the characteristics of bad public transport, and should the government take any steps to improve the situation?

*In conclusion, public transportation that is unreliable in terms of time and uncomfortable to travel in is bad public transport. The government must take steps in such a situation to ensure that the public transport improves so that people in the city can enjoy a higher standard of living.*

**Answer:** The conclusion matches the second exam task better. The conclusion in its first part summarizes the position in answer to the first question of **both** tasks, which is the same. However, the second “summary position” in the conclusion is “the government must take steps”, which answers the question “Should the government take steps?”, exam task 2. Exam task 1 has the question “What steps should the government take?”, so a better example summary for exam task one could be

*In conclusion, public transportation that is unreliable in terms of time and uncomfortable to travel in is bad public transport. The government must take two steps to make the situation better, namely increase the amount of trains to solve reliability issues and invest in renovation to help with comfort.*

## Example Task 3: Advantaged and Disadvantages (*outweigh*)

Read the exam task below (and do the usual)

More and more people are going overseas for their holidays. Do the advantages of going overseas for a holiday outweigh the disadvantages?

**Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own experience or knowledge.**

Use this conclusion checklist to check the conclusion below for TA:

Does the conclusion

- ◆ summarize clearly your position (answer) for **all** parts of the specific exam task
- ◆ avoid including new information / ideas not covered in the body
- ◆ make up 10%-20% of the total essay
- ◆ link the ideas in your conclusion with parts of the main body to show flexibility

The following conclusions are ok, but all have a possible weakness. What is the possible weakness of each one?

1. *In summary, there are certainly many benefits of traveling overseas as opposed to traveling within your own country. This does not mean, however, that there are no disadvantages like increased spending.*
  2. *In conclusion, most people would agree that the analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of the question at hand has shown that the advantages outlined above are certainly more than any possible downsides.*
  3. *To conclude, the two benefits as outlined above definitely carry more weight than the disadvantages of increased spending and loss of money to the local economy.*
  4. *In summary, the benefits of increased tolerance towards others, a more active returning member of society and innovative ideas clearly outweigh such downsides as significant spending of money that could in some ways, as mentioned, be harmful for the family budget, and the loss of capital overseas both on a macro and microeconomic level. Such loss to budgets and local capital is small compared to the large long-term positives of a peaceful and innovative society.*
1. The first one does not show a clear position in answer to the exam task question “Do the advantages ..outweigh the disadvantages?” We can guess from the wording “there are certainly many benefits” / “this does not mean that there are no disadvantages” that the candidate probably, maybe only possibly, has a position that the advantages are more. It is

NOT a good idea to leave the examiner guessing your position using words like “probalby, possibly” The examiner should say “It is clear that the essay's position in answer to the question is .... “

If your position is clear and fully developed you can get a 9. If you have an unclear position you get a 6, maybe even a 5 for TA.

Note, if in the whole essay of conclusion number one, the candidate has presented a clear position of the advantages being more, then this conclusion is fine, as the examiner knows that the candidate believes the advantages are more, so can verty safely guess this conclusion is saying the same thing. In any case, it is safer to clearly restate your position in your conclusion.

2. The second one presents a clear position, so what is the problem? There is nothing in the conclusion that is connected with the topic of travel. Theoretically, this is not a problem. But, there are candidates who learn a specific “generic” conclusion they can use for **any** topic that has the exam task question, in this case “Do the advantages ourweight the disadvantages?” For example, if you look at this task....

Do the advantages of encouraging children at school to be competitive outweigh the disadvantages?

**Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own experience or knowledge.**

Conclusion two could could used again here. If the topic was sport, it could be used, if the topic was hospitals, it could be used. Obviously if the rest of the essay is connected to the topic of traveling overseas, then such a “Generic” conclusion is not so bad. Still, if the conclusion is a summary of the position presented in this specific essay and could not just be “stuck” on the end of another essay, then that is generally better as proof of “flexibility”.

3. The third one is fine, but could be a little longer. This could be achieved by summarizing the benefits or summarizing the key reasons. Again, unless the rest of the essay is short, this conclusion is OK.
4. This last one is too long, it has either re-stated too much detail rather than summarize it, or it has introduced new detail. The first one is “unnecessary detail”, the second case of new information is illogical organisation, which is bad for your coherence and cohesion mark.

## Example Task 4: To what extent do you agree?

Read the exam task below and do the usual.

Technology is playing a bigger role in our lives. Some people believe that the government and not private companies should fund university courses connected with technology. To what extent do you agree?

**Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own experience or knowledge.**

Use this conclusion checklist to check the conclusion below for TA:

Does the conclusion

- ◆ summarize clearly your position (answer) for **all** parts of the specific exam task
- ◆ avoid including new information / ideas not covered in the body
- ◆ make up 10%-20% of the total essay
- ◆ link the ideas in your conclusion with parts of the main body to show flexibility

The following conclusions have weaknesses ranging from major to not so major. What are they?

1. In conclusion, while some may be of the opinion that it is private companies that should help financially sponsor those courses at university that are related to technology, I believe that the government, and not the former, that ought to do this for the reasons outlined in this essay.
2. To conclude, while I do agree that the government should contribute financially to technologically related university courses, I completely disagree with the idea that companies should not play a similar role.
3. To conclude, while I do agree that the government should contribute financially to technologically related university courses, I completely disagree with the idea that companies should not play a similar role. For this reason everyone should help out to make a better future for our world.



**Answer:**

Conclusion one makes a big mistake, as it does not address the specific exam task “to what extent do you agree”. It answers the task below.

Technology is playing a bigger role in our lives. Some people believe that the government and not private companies should fund university courses connected with technology. **Do you agree?**

**Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own experience or knowledge.**

Conclusion one is good in that even though it does not “re-specify” points made in the body of the essay, it at least refers to it with “for the reasons outlined in this essay.”

Conclusion two answers the specific task, so does well there. There is no attempt to refer back to “this specific essay”, even if just with the referencing expression from conclusion one. Using that or skillfully summarising the points in the essay could improve this conclusion.

Conclusion three has the same strength and weakness as outlined for conclusion two. However, it has an extra weakness in that it gives advice about what “everyone should do”, and the result. This is not asked for in the essay task, and does not support what is asked for, so will probably be considered “irrelevant detail” by the examiner.