



IELTS™ =9

To what extent do you agree?

Essay

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Introduction:

In this section for the “to what extent do you agree” essay we will look at typical structures, DO's and DON'Ts and examples to help you maximize your answer to such a question.

What is the overall structure of a to what extent do you agree essay?

Format 1 = you agree

Introduction: clearly state your position

Paragraph one = first reason(s) why you agree (+why other side is wrong {if necessary})

Paragraph two = next reason(s) why you agree (+why other side is wrong {if necessary})*

Conclusion = summarize, clearly re-stating your position

* It is a good idea to introduce “the other side” if you think the other side has a strong argument. You can introduce the argument and then show why it is wrong. If you feel there is no strong argument for “the other side”, then you do not need to introduce anything.

Format 2 = you disagree

as above but with a “disagree” position

Format 3 = you mostly agree but also disagree

Introduction= clearly state your position

Paragraph 1 = give reasons why you disagree

Paragraph 2 = give reasons why you agree *

Conclusion = re-state position

* it is possible to change the order of paragraph 1 and 2, or even to begin the reasons why you agree at the end of paragraph 1

Format 4 = you mostly disagree but also agree

as for format 3, just change the order.

Format 5 = you mostly agree but partially disagree (again)

Introduction= clearly state your position

Paragraph 1 = give reasons why you disagree and match them with reasons why you agree.

Paragraph 2 = Same as 1 OR

Which one should I choose?

You will have noticed that there are more formats for this type, and different variations within these formats. This essay structure is “the most flexible”. Weaker / pessimistic students can choose for example to only ever “agree fully” with the question, and practice only “agree fully” structures. If you have enough time before the exam, I recommend answering the task with your genuine

answer and practising different structures.

As usual, generally follow the IELTS criteria advice: “Organize logically” as you see best.

What should I do and what should I not do in a “to what extent do you agree” essay?

DO

- show in the introduction your direct answer: e.g. I fully agree / I partially agree / this is clearly not true
- paraphrase the words in the statement
- connect the language of your introduction to the specific question
- make sure your conclusion re-answers the task question

DON'T

- talk about advantages and disadvantages
- give advice on how to make things better

MANY candidates who should get an 8/9 for TA get a 6 because they do not state a clear position i.e. how much they agree / disagree

As well as these “DO's” and “DON'Ts” we can add the two following

TRY TO

- give a summary or signal in the introduction of ideas to come later (without detailing them)

AVOID

- using long structures that are not specific to the particular question

Example Answer 1:

a) Read the exam task:

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

In the future more and more shopping will be done from home rather than going to shops themselves. Some people believe that as a result people will become more isolated from each other. To what extent do you agree?

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

b) Which introduction

- ◆ **introduces all aspects** of the **specific** task
- ◆ presents a **clear** position in answer to the task?

1. The twenty first century has witnessed some really significant developments, one of which is unlimited access to the Internet. While it cannot be denied that the Internet offers a vast array of advantages, some people consider the consequences of the extended usage of the Internet to be profound and far-reaching.
2. The twenty first century has witnessed some really significant developments, one of which is a greater amount of shopping done online. While some may say that there is greater isolation among people as a result, I believe this is not the case.
3. The twenty first century has witnessed some really significant developments, one of which is a greater amount of shopping done online. While some may say that this could lead to greater isolation of people from each other, I am of the opinion that this will most certainly not be the case.

Answers:

Introduction 1 is very bad. It really over-generalizes, talking about advantages and disadvantages of the Internet but not online shopping. The position is also not clear. "To what extent do **you** agree?", but the reader can only see "some people". Note, if it was something like "almost everybody would agree that" then this would clearly indicate, in an indirect way, that this is the author's position, so it would be better.

Introduction 2 does a good job of introducing shopping and the resulting isolation. It also introduces a position "I believe this is not the case". Do you think this answers the question "**To what extent** do you agree?" Is it to some extent, or no small extent, or a great extent? i.e. it is not 100% clear. This is not a big problem if the answer becomes clearer in the body. Still, it is best to make it clear

in the introduction. A major problem introduction 2 has is that it ignores “will”, the task talks about the future, but the introduction doesn't.

Introduction three introduces all aspects of the task and presents a clear position.

c) What is wrong with the following first body paragraph?

The internet has modernized the retail industry and will continue to do so. The first reason why this has happened is that selling online allows businesses to cut down on rental costs, which then results in a more attractive price for the customer than the one offered in brick and mortar shops. Another contributing factor to the switch to online shopping is immediacy. You can click on a product and make a purchase all in a matter of minutes, perhaps even seconds. Pleasant though walking around a shopping center may be, the time saved by buying online is giving it a greater and greater share.

Answer: This paragraph is very over-generalized. It answers a different task question “What are the reasons for online shopping's growing popularity?” and not the task in question.

c) - Read through the full essay and take out useful structures. The introduction has been done:

The twenty first century has witnessed some significant developments, one of which is a greater amount of online shopping. While some do have some grounds to believe this may lead to greater isolation of people from each other, my position is that this will most likely not be the case.

_____ has witnessed some significant developments, one of which is _____g. While some do have some grounds to believe _____, my position is that this will most likely not be the case / this is certainly not the case.

The main reason for this is that it is not shopping that brings people together. People generally meet up to socialize while doing a variety of activities such as eating out or or going for a walk among others. Even when people do get together to go shopping, more often than not it is accompanied by other activities such as catching a movie. From this I would conclude that in the future people will continue to congregate for non-shopping reasons, and will most likely continue to catch up while doing some shopping among other leisure activities.

The concern people have may be linked to more fundamental shifts that could happen as a result of online shopping. It is possible that in the not-so-distant future we will be able to have almost anything we want delivered to our house at great convenience. People's mentality could consequently change, leading them to view leaving the house as a relatively onerous burden.

To conclude, while the aforementioned shift in mentality cannot be ruled out given the progress of technology, I am generally inclined to disagree that people will become isolated as a result. Even if we can have all shopping delivered to us, just as we do now, in the future we will seek to meet friends and do things together.

Answer:

_____ has witnessed some significant developments, one of which is _____g. While some do have some grounds to believe _____, my position is that this will most likely not be the case / this is certainly not the case.

The main reason for this is that _____. Even when

_____, more often than not_____. From this I would conclude that _____.

The _____ people have may be linked to _____. It is possible that

_____.

To conclude, while the aforementioned_____ cannot be ruled out given the progress of technology, I am generally inclined to disagree that people will become isolated as a result. Even if we can have all shopping delivered to us, just as we do now, in the future we will seek to meet friends and do things together.

Example Answer 2:

a) Read the exam task:

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

Some people say it is more important for school children to study history and literature than it is for them to study science and math. To what extent do you agree?

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

b) Read through the example answer: and tick or cross for each section of the criteria

TA and CC	Criteria	
Does the introduction	introduce all aspects of the task?	
	state a clear position in answer to the task question?	
	paraphrase the language of the task?	
Does each body paragraph	Have a central topic?	
	focus on the specific parts of the task instead of over-generalizing?	
	have logical organisation?	
	use a range of cohesive devices and linking words?	
Does the conclusion	Summarize clearly the position of the author in reference to all parts of the task?	

The question of what to prioritize in children's learning at school has long been of great concern. There are those who believe that more importance should be placed on history and literature than the sciences or mathematics. While the first two are important, I cannot agree that their importance is greater than the second pair.

The first and foremost reason for this is the ever-increasingly technological society we live in. Subjects like physics, chemistry and math form the basis of technology, so a student well-versed in these is far better-equipped to find suitable employment and then contribute more to society. Study of such subjects also develops cognitive skills to a greater extent, which is essential in our everyday life. A child who has developed such skills will have no difficulty implementing technology connected with not just smart phones, but also smart homes, smart cars and so on.

The aforementioned points do not at all mean that humanities subjects such as history and literature are not important. Study of literature helps children to articulate their ideas, useful in every area of life. It also develops imagination and expressiveness, which can help enrich life around the child. History provides an important context in which to understand the present and build the future. It is just that these subjects' relative importance is diminishing in a world where robots and automated processes are starting to appear.

In summary, literature and history play an important role in people's lives and should hence be focused on at school. Our increasingly technology-dominated world, however, demands we place a greater focus in schools on math and science so our children can contribute to and benefit from this situation as much as possible.

Answer:

Each section is ticked.

c) Go through again and note **in bold** the cohesive devices / linking words. The introduction has been done as an example.

The question of what to prioritize in children's learning at school has long been of great concern. There are those who believe that more importance should be placed on history and literature than the sciences or mathematics. **While / the first two /** are important, I cannot agree that **their** importance is greater than **the second pair**.

The first and foremost reason for **this** is the ever-increasingly technological society we live in. Subjects **like** physics, chemistry and math form the basis of technology, **so** a student well-versed in **these** is far better-equipped to find suitable employment and then contribute more to society. Study of such subjects also develops cognitive skills to a greater extent, which is essential in our everyday life. A child who has developed such skills will have no difficulty implementing technology connected with not just smart phones, but also smart homes, smart cars and so on.

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Answer:

The question of what to prioritize in children's learning at school has long been of great concern. There are those who believe that more importance should be placed on history and literature than the sciences or mathematics. **While / the first two /** are important, I cannot agree that **their** importance is greater than **the second pair**.

The first and foremost reason for **this** is the ever-increasingly technological society we live in. Subjects **like** physics, chemistry and math form the basis of technology, **so** a student well-versed in **these** is far better-equipped to find suitable employment and **then** contribute more to society. Study of **such** subjects **also** develops cognitive skills to a greater extent, **which** is essential in our everyday life. A child who has developed **such** skills will have no difficulty implementing technology **connected** with **not just** smart phones, **but also** smart homes, smart cars **and so on**.

The aforementioned points do not at all mean that humanities subjects **such as** history and literature are not important. Study of literature helps children to articulate their ideas, useful in every area of life. It **also** develops imagination and expressiveness, **which** can help enrich life around the child. History provides an important context **in which** to understand the present and build the future. **It is just that / these /** subjects' relative importance is diminishing in a world **where** robots and automated processes are starting to appear.

In summary, literature and history play an important role in people's lives and should **hence** be focused on at school. Our increasingly technology-dominated world, **however**, demands we place a greater focus in schools on math and science **so** our children can contribute to **and** benefit from **this situation** as much as possible.

d) Go through the same essay above and take out useful structures generally useful for an essay.

Answer:

The question of _____ has long been of great concern. There are those who believe that _____ . **While** _____ are important, I cannot agree that _____

The first and foremost reason for **this** is _____ . _____ **like** _____ , _____ , **so** _____ .

The aforementioned points do not at all mean that _____ .