

Below are some extra tips for an IELTS discussion essay. For more tips, please see my free IELTS website ([www.ieltsliz.com](http://www.ieltsliz.com)).

### Instructions from IELTS

The instructions may vary and be re-worded by IELTS for a discussion essay. Here are some ways in which IELTS can phrase the discussion essay instructions:

- Discuss both sides and give your opinion.
- Discuss both views and state your opinion.
- Discuss both sides and state your view on this issue.
- Discuss both sides. (this indicates no opinion is needed)

These instructions refer to the content of your essay from the beginning to the end. Students aiming for a high band score should ensure they follow these instructions in the introduction, body and conclusion of their essay.

### Recommended Word Count

Aim for between 270 and 290 words. That is enough words to develop your ideas for a high score. If you have two body paragraphs, you are looking for around 95 words for each paragraph. If you have three body paragraphs, you should aim for about 65 words for each body paragraph.

You do not lose marks for writing over 300 words. However, it will not give you a higher score to write a long essay. Students only aiming for band score 7 or 7.5 should only aim for around 270 words and ensure accuracy in language as well as focus in ideas. Students with band score 8 or 9 level of English might aim for around 300 words.

### Check list for a Discussion Essay

1. Identify the issue or issues in the essay question.
2. Decide your opinion. Do you agree with one of the sides offered or do you have your own view?
3. Be careful presenting a specific opinion. This does not mean to agree with both sides 100%.
4. Brainstorm supporting ideas for your essay.
5. Plan paraphrasing but always aim for accuracy.
6. Structure: two body paragraphs if you agree with one side, three body paragraphs if you have a specific opinion.
7. Introduce the essay question (both sides) and your opinion in your introduction.
8. Check the essay question before starting any body paragraph.
9. Write topic sentences fully.
10. Make sure your supporting points are presented as other people's views rather than just advantages.
11. Don't change your discussion essay into an advantage disadvantage essay.
12. Refer to people having different views and re-state your opinion in the conclusion.
13. Use appropriate linking devices
  - a. On the one hand,
  - b. On the other hand,

- c. Finally, in my view, (if you have three body paragraphs)
  - d. Use a range of linking devices in your essay to link supporting ideas.
14. Make sure your conclusion is shorter than your introduction. You can have just one sentence or two if you wish for your conclusion. Start your conclusion with the appropriate linking devices: In conclusion, To conclude, To sum up, To reiterate.
15. Never write under 250 words for writing task 2. You will receive a lower band score if you do.

#### Language to express other people's opinions:

- Some people think
- It is often thought that
- X is often thought
- Many people believe
- It is commonly believed that
- X is commonly believed
- According to some
- It is maintained by some that
- Some people are of the opinion that
- Many people consider that
- X is considered by some
- Some people argue that
- It is often argued that
- It may be claimed by some that
- Some people support the opinion that
- Many people are convinced that
- On the one hand / On the other hand

#### Tips

Don't use the following expressions as they are unsuitable for an IELTS essay:

- One side of the coin / The other side of the coin / The flip side (these are too informal and not appropriate for IELTS essay writing)
- Supporters of ... / Advocates of ... (these are unsuitable for most topics and best avoided)
- Experts believe ... (IELTS essays are about the views of people in general rather than experts)