

Task 2 Question Types

Quick Reference

Five essay types. What each question signal asks for. The single trap that caps your Task Response score if you miss it. From Chapter 12 of the Complete Band 7+ Academic Writing Guide.

The Five Essay Types

TYPE 1 Opinion (Agree / Disagree)

Question signals: *To what extent do you agree or disagree? · Do you agree or disagree? · Do you think that...? · Is it better to...? · Should...? · Some believe X. Do you think this is true?*

What you must do: Take ONE clear side. State it in the introduction. Maintain the same position consistently to the conclusion.

Trap: Sitting on the fence — writing "I partially agree" without committing. Vague position = lower Task Response.

TYPE 2 Discussion (Both Views + Opinion)

Question signals: *Discuss both views and give your own opinion. · Some people think X, others believe Y. Discuss. · What are the arguments for and against...? Discuss.*

What you must do: Present BOTH views fairly in separate body paragraphs. Then add YOUR opinion — typically stated in the introduction and reinforced in the conclusion.

Trap: Omitting your own opinion when explicitly asked. This alone caps Task Response at Band 5, even if the two views are covered well.

TYPE 3 Advantages & Disadvantages

Question signals: *What are the advantages and disadvantages of...? · Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages? · Is this a positive or negative development? · What are the benefits and drawbacks?*

What you must do: Cover BOTH sides. If "outweigh" is asked, state which side is greater in your conclusion and why. If just "advantages and disadvantages," no verdict needed.

Trap: Covering only advantages OR only disadvantages. Also: failing to make a verdict on an "outweigh" question.

TYPE 4 Cause & Solution

Question signals: *What are the causes of this problem and what measures could be taken? · Why does this happen? How can it be solved? · What problems does this create and what can governments do?*

What you must do: Address BOTH causes AND solutions in equal depth. Link each solution directly to a stated cause. No opinion required — this is not an opinion essay.

Trap: Listing five shallow causes and five shallow solutions — produces a list, not an argument. Depth over breadth at Band 7+.

TYPE 5 Two-Part (Double Question)

Question signals: *Why is this happening? Is this a positive or negative development? · What are the reasons for this? What do you think can be done? · Why do some people...? Do you think...?*

What you must do: Answer BOTH questions fully, in SEPARATE body paragraphs, with equal depth for each.

Trap: Answering one question thoroughly and giving only 1–2 sentences to the second. This caps Task Response at Band 5.

THE DIAGNOSTIC RULE

If you are unsure which type a question is, ask yourself: "How many separate things must I address?" Count them. Then check whether an opinion is *explicitly requested*.

Common mistake: Treating "What are the advantages and disadvantages?" as an Opinion essay and stating which side is greater — when no verdict was asked for, this is wasted effort that adds no marks.

The rest of the method

This cheat sheet is one page of Chapter 12. The full **IELTS Academic Writing: Complete Band 7+ Guide** contains all fourteen writing frameworks (QSCAN, BLUEPRINT, PEEC, LINK, SWAP, MIX, PRIME, TREND, COMPARE, SCORE, OPAL), five complete Band 7+ model essays, fill-in planning templates, and the Chinese Learner Insight sections for each criterion.

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