

Helping your Students with IELTS Academic Writing

Task 1 (slides)

Put the sentences in the correct order

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

- a. It could also be due to factors such as the individual feeling that the crime is possibly not serious enough to report.
- b. Secondly, there is a tendency to use these statistics in either the media or for political purposes to influence the public's views.
- c. It is unlikely that crime statistics show the true pattern of crime for a number of reasons.
- d. Moreover, governments tend to want to show that crime rates may be falling in order to show that their policies are working.
- e. This may be for a number of reasons, such as people feeling that the police might not take their crime seriously or that perhaps they feel that they have dealt with it themselves.
- f. However, generally speaking, there are a relatively small number of reasons why crime rates change and these changes are perhaps due to reasons other than government policy.
- g. Firstly, relatively few crimes that are committed are actually reported.

Task 2 (slides)

Now find and highlight the examples of hedging language

It is unlikely that crime statistics show the true pattern of crime for a number of reasons. Firstly, relatively few crimes that are committed are actually reported. This may be for a number of reasons, such as people feeling that the police might not take their crime seriously or that perhaps they feel that they have dealt with it themselves. It could also be due to factors such as the individual feeling that the crime is possibly not serious enough to report. Secondly, there is a tendency to use these statistics in either the media or for political purposes to influence the public's views. Moreover, governments tend to want to show that crime rates may be falling in order to show that their policies are working. However, generally speaking, there are a relatively small number of reasons why crime rates change and these changes are perhaps due to reasons other than government policy.

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Activity ideas to ensure IELTS preparation is engaging for learners

Reading and Listening

Sentence Gamble: Rather than learners just writing 'true', 'false', and 'not given', and then checking the answers, add a competitive edge. Learners work in twos or threes to decide how confident they are about their answers, and then have an imaginary amount of money to bet against each answer. The more confident they are on a particular answer, the more they bet. Here are example instructions for the learners:

You have \$1000 to spend. Choose how much money you are willing to gamble on each of your sentences being correct. You must gamble at least \$50 on each sentence, and you must spend the \$1000 total.

If your sentence is correct, you double the amount you've gambled (e.g. if you gambled \$200 on sentence 1, and you're correct, you keep the \$200 and receive an extra \$200). However, if your sentence is wrong, you lose that money.

Writing

Group essays: Instead of learners just writing one essay each with the same title, why not get them to collaborate on four different essays in groups of four? This activity gives the learners an opportunity to write the four sections of an essay (typically: introduction, pros, cons, and conclusion), but also requires them to engage with a selection of topics, read their group's work carefully, and continue essays in a logical style. Each student would start by writing an introduction to a different title, the introductions would then be passed clockwise and the students all write the pros. This would continue until the four essays are complete and they can then be read as a whole to check for coherence and cohesion. Possible titles include:

- Some people argue that the government spends too much money on art and sculptures. To what extent do you agree?
- Some people argue that the best way to solve climate change is by increasing fuel costs. To what extent do you agree?
- As computers can translate language accurately these days, there's no need to learn a foreign language. To what extent do you agree?
- Some people think homework should be banned. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Speaking

Disappearing monologue: In all speaking exams, not just IELTS, it's important that candidates don't repeat the same words and expressions; nor should they just talk using simple sentence constructions. It's also important that learners have strategies for when they need thinking time - they shouldn't be wasting time by sitting in total silence. To highlight a variety of phrases, and useful fillers, this activity starts as a full example of a candidate's answer that the students should read aloud. After the first run through, the useful phrases should disappear. By the end, the students will only have a few key words that they have to use to recreate the whole answer (or nothing at all), using the useful expressions. The monologue could even disappear completely. A short example is:

Well, that's a very good question. I'll have to think about that. Okay, so when I was child I went to a school that encouraged a lot of sport. However, I was quite a lazy child so still managed to avoid it is much as possible. Interestingly, my best friend at school was excellent at sport and used to play tennis and basketball all the time. In more recent years, I've started taking more of an interest in sport and, it may surprise you to know that, I actually took part in a marathon last year...

The highlighted words are the ones that we'd remove, in the hope that learners can remember them and put them back in where logical. An IWB, TV or OHP would ideally be used for this task.