EEC LEARNING — IELTS SCORE REPORT

Studying at school and learning outside it

IELTS Writing Task 2 · practice

STUDENT
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QUESTION TYPE
Writing Task 2

MARKED ON
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The question

WRITING TASK 2

Some people say that studying at school is not important because the most important things are learnt outside the school. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. You should write at least 250 words.

BAND
6.0

OVERALL BAND · IELTS BAND SCALE

Competent user

You take a clear, balanced position (partly disagree) and support it with two sensible reasons and one personal example, so the essay answers the question. The main weakness is accuracy: small mistakes with agreement, articles and word forms appear in almost every paragraph, and the vocabulary is safe but repeats words such as 'school', 'things' and 'very'. Fix agreement and article slips first, because they hold your Grammatical Range & Accuracy at 5.5.

272	4	6.5
WORDS WRITTEN	CRITERIA MARKED	NEXT BAND TARGET

FIX THIS FIRST

Grammatical Range & Accuracy — band 5.5

Your lowest criterion; raising it lifts your band faster than anything else. Start here: Proofread for agreement and articles after every paragraph and practise joining two main clauses correctly (semicolon, full stop or a linker) so that a complex sentence is also an accurate one.

Your criteria

Task Response (answering the question) — 6.0 / 9

You state your position in the introduction ('I partly disagree with this opinion') and keep it to the end, and both sides of the question are covered. The reasons are relevant but thinly developed: 'schools gives a structure to the children' is stated and then left, and the cousin example in paragraph 3 shows learning outside school but does not explain why it matters more or less than school.

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Coherence & Cohesion (clear order and joined ideas)

6.0 / 9

The essay is easy to follow: four clear paragraphs with an introduction, two body paragraphs and a conclusion, and a logical order from 'Firstly' to 'In conclusion'. Cohesion is mostly mechanical. 'Firstly', 'Also', 'On the other hand', 'Moreover' and 'However' are used, but 'Firstly' is never followed by 'Secondly', 'so' joins three different sentences, and 'On the other hand' signals a contrast where you are really making a concession.

Lexical Resource (word choice)

6.0 / 9

The vocabulary is adequate for the topic and the meaning is always clear: 'basic skills', 'calculate a loan', 'free courses', 'practical things'. The range is limited, though. 'Things' appears three times ('most valuable things', 'practical things', 'the things learned at school'), 'very' modifies three different words, and 'base', 'come on time' and 'the best way' are less precise than 'foundation', 'arrive on time' and 'the best approach'. There is one spelling slip in a common word ('knowlege') and one in a longer word ('independantly').

Grammatical Range & Accuracy (grammar: sentence types and mistakes)

FIX FIRST **5.5** / 9

You use a mix of simple and complex sentences (relative clauses, 'if', 'while helping', 'so that'), which is good for band 6. Accuracy is the problem. Errors in agreement ('schools teaches', 'schools gives', 'this skills'), articles ('outside the school', 'the learning outside', 'the combination of both of them') and one comma splice ('...in his father's shop, nobody taught him this') occur in most paragraphs. They rarely block meaning, but they are frequent enough to keep this criterion below 6.

To reach the next band

Weakest criterion first — work down the list.

Grammatical Range & Accuracy

NOW 5.5 · NEXT 6.0

- Proofread for agreement and articles after every paragraph and practise joining two main clauses correctly (semicolon, full stop or a linker) so that a complex sentence is also an accurate one.

Task Response

NOW 6.0 · NEXT 6.5

- Take each main idea one step further: say what follows from it (for example what happens to a person who never learns to read well) and finish each paragraph with a sentence that links back to your position.

Coherence & Cohesion

NOW 6.0 · NEXT 6.5

- Use a wider range of linking devices that match the relationship (concession, result, example) and replace repeated 'school' and 'this kind of learning' with reference words such as 'it', 'such an approach' or 'formal education'.

Lexical Resource

NOW 6.0 · NEXT 6.5

- Replace general words with topic vocabulary ('curriculum', 'literacy', 'vocational training', 'hands-on experience') and use at least a few less common collocations, while keeping your spelling accurate.

Your answer

Nowadays, many people say that school is not important because the most valuable things are learned outside the school. I partly disagree with this opinion, because school gives us a base for everything else, although I accept that real life also teaches us a lot.

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Firstly, schools teaches students the basic skills which they need in every job, for example reading, writing and mathematics. Without this skills, a person can not understand a contract or calculate a loan, so it would be very difficult to live independantly. Also, schools gives a structure to the children. They must come on time, finish homework and work in a team, and these habits are very helpful when they start working in a company. In this way, school prepares them for working life as well as for exams.

On the other hand, I agree that many practical things are learned outside school. For instance, my cousin learned how to cook, how to manage money and how to talk to customers while helping in his father's shop, nobody taught him this in the classroom. This shows that experience can be a good teacher. Moreover, the internet is full of free courses, so people can gain knowlege by themselves at home. However, this kind of learning is only possible if a person already knows how to read well and how to search for correct information, which are the things learned at school.

In conclusion, I think school is still very important, because it prepares students for the learning outside. The best way is the combination of both of them, so that young people become educated and also experienced.

Grammar mistakes we found (7)

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“Nowadays, many people say that school is not important because the most valuable things are learned outside the school.”	**Nowadays, many people say that school is not important because the most valuable things are learned outside school.**

Why: Article. 'School' as an institution of learning takes no article: 'outside school', 'at school', 'in school'.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“Firstly, schools teaches students the basic skills which they need in every job, for example reading, writing and mathematics.”	**Firstly, schools teach students the basic skills which they need in every job, for example reading, writing and mathematics.**

Why: Subject–verb agreement. The subject 'schools' is plural, so the verb is 'teach', not 'teaches'.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“Without this skills, a person can not understand a contract or calculate a loan, so it would be very difficult to live independantly.”	**Without these skills, a person can not understand a contract or calculate a loan, so it would be very difficult to live independantly.**

Why: Demonstrative agreement. 'Skills' is plural, so it needs 'these', not 'this'.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“Also, schools gives a structure to the children.”	**Also, schools give children structure.**

Why: Subject–verb agreement ('schools give') and articles: 'children' here means children in general, so it takes no 'the', and 'structure' is uncountable, so it takes no 'a'.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“They must come on time, finish homework and work in a team, and these habits are very helpful when they start working in a company.”	**They must come on time, finish homework and work in a team, and these habits are very helpful when they start working at a company.**

Why: Preposition. You work 'at' a company (or 'for' a company), not 'in' a company.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“In conclusion, I think school is still very important, because it prepares students for the learning outside.”	**In conclusion, I think school is still very important, because it prepares students for learning outside school.**

Why: Article and incomplete phrase. 'The learning outside' is missing its noun; say 'learning outside school' with no article.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“The best way is the combination of both of them, so that young people become educated and also experienced.”	**The best way is a combination of both, so that young people become educated and also experienced.**

Why: Article and pronoun. This is a general idea, so 'a combination', and 'both of them' is heavy: 'both' is enough.

These are your own sentences with the mistake fixed. Write each fixed sentence once, then check your next answer for the same mistake.

Spelling and punctuation (4)

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“independantly”	**independently**

Why: The adverb comes from 'independent', which ends in -ent, so the adverb ends in -ently.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“knowlege”	**knowledge**

Why: Missing 'd': know-ledge. Say it as two parts, 'know' + 'ledge'.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“can not”	**cannot**

Why: In formal writing 'cannot' is one word.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“opinion, because”	**opinion because**

Why: No comma before 'because' when it introduces the reason a sentence depends on.

These are small slips in spelling or marks like commas. Learn the right form and use it next time.

Word choice (5)

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“a base for everything else”	**a foundation for everything else**

Why: 'Foundation' is the usual word for the starting layer that later learning rests on; 'base' is vaguer and sounds like a military or sports word here.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“come on time”	**arrive on time**

Why: 'Arrive' is the precise verb for reaching a place; 'come on time' is spoken English.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“The best way”	**The best approach**

Why: 'Approach' suits a method of teaching or learning; 'way' is a general word you use three times in this level of essay.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“practical things”	**practical skills**

Why: 'Things' says nothing. The idea is skills (cooking, managing money), and 'skills' also links to your earlier 'basic skills'.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“very helpful”	**valuable**

Why: A strong single adjective is better than 'very' plus a weak one, and 'very' is repeated in this essay.

These words are real, but a better word fits this idea. Learn the better word.

How your sentences are built (2)

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“For instance, my cousin learned how to cook, how to manage money and how to talk to customers while helping in his father's shop, nobody taught him this in the classroom.”	**For instance, my cousin learned how to cook, how to manage money and how to talk to customers while helping in his father's shop; nobody taught him this in the classroom.**

Why: Comma splice: two complete sentences are joined by only a comma. Use a semicolon, a full stop or a linker such as 'and yet'.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“However, this kind of learning is only possible if a person already knows how to read well and how to search for correct information, which are the things learned at school.”	**However, this kind of learning is only possible if a person already knows how to read well and how to search for correct information, and both of these skills are learned at school.**

Why: Unclear relative clause: 'which' has no single noun to point to (it points at two actions), so the plural 'are the things' is confusing. Rebuild it as a new clause with a clear subject.

These sentences are broken or badly joined. Read the fixed version, then write it once yourself.

Joining words to fix (3)

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“Also,”	**In addition,**

Why: Addition. 'Also' at the start of a sentence is informal and weak; 'In addition' or 'Secondly' signals the second reason clearly.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“On the other hand, I agree that many practical things are learned outside school.”	**Admittedly, I agree that many practical things are learned outside school.**

Why: Concession. You are conceding a point to the other side, not offering an alternative, so 'Admittedly' or 'It is true that' fits better than 'On the other hand'.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“so it would be very difficult”	**which would make it very difficult**

Why: Result. 'So' joins three different sentences in this essay (here, 'so people can' and 'so that young people'); vary the device.

Joining words show how ideas connect, like because, but and so. Use the fixed word next time.

Formal or friendly? Style fixes (3)

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“Nowadays, many people say that”	**It is often claimed that**

Why: Register. 'Nowadays, many people say' is a very common cliché opening; a more neutral, academic phrasing sounds more formal.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“real life also teaches us a lot”	**real life also teaches us a great deal**

Why: 'A lot' is informal. 'A great deal' keeps the same meaning in a formal register.

YOU WROTE	BETTER
“I think school is still very important”	**school remains highly important**

Why: In a conclusion your position is already clear, so 'I think' weakens it, and 'very important' repeats the same intensifier used elsewhere.

This says how formal your writing is. Match it to the task and the reader.

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Your sentences, made better

YOUR SENTENCE	UPGRADED
“I partly disagree with this opinion, because school gives us a base for everything else, although I accept that real life also teaches us a lot.”	**I partly disagree with this view since school provides the foundation on which all later learning depends, although I accept that real life also teaches us a great deal.**

Why: Precise noun ('foundation'), a relative clause with 'on which', and a more formal quantifier.

YOUR SENTENCE	UPGRADED
“Without this skills, a person can not understand a contract or calculate a loan, so it would be very difficult to live independantly.”	**Without basic literacy and numeracy, a person would struggle to understand a contract or calculate a loan, which would make independent living extremely difficult.**

Why: Topic vocabulary ('literacy', 'numeracy'), a conditional structure and a result clause with 'which'.

YOUR SENTENCE	UPGRADED
“They must come on time, finish homework and work in a team, and these habits are very helpful when they start working in a company.”	**Pupils must arrive punctually, meet deadlines and cooperate with classmates, and these habits prove invaluable once they join the workforce.**

Why: Precise verbs, parallel structure and a stronger adjective in place of 'very helpful'.

YOUR SENTENCE	UPGRADED
“Moreover, the internet is full of free courses, so people can gain knowlege by themselves at home.”	**Moreover, the internet offers countless free courses, enabling people to acquire knowledge independently from home.**

Why: A participle clause ('enabling') replaces 'so', and 'acquire' is a better collocation for knowledge.

YOUR SENTENCE	UPGRADED
“The best way is the combination of both of them, so that young people become educated and also experienced.”	**The most effective approach combines both, producing young people who are not only educated but also experienced.**

Why: The noun phrase becomes a verb, and 'not only ... but also' gives balance.

This is your idea, written in a stronger way. Copy the pattern in your next answer.

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Your action plan

1. Proofread every body paragraph once for plural subjects and verbs ('schools teach'), then once for 'this/these' and articles. Do this on your next three essays before you count words.
2. Add one more step to every main idea: write 'This means that...' or 'As a result...' after your example and finish by returning to your position.
3. Learn and use six topic words for education (curriculum, literacy, vocational training, hands-on experience, self-directed learning, formal education) and replace 'things' each time.
4. Build a small set of linkers for each job (addition, contrast, concession, result, example) and use a different one each time; avoid starting two sentences with 'Also' or 'So'.
5. Write two complex sentences per paragraph and check each one for a complete subject and verb in both clauses before moving on.

Pick one point and practise it in your next answer.

Useful words for this question

foundation
the basic knowledge on which later learning is built — Primary school gives children the foundation they need for later study.

curriculum
the subjects taught in a school — A broad curriculum helps students find what they are good at.

literacy and numeracy
the ability to read and write, and to work with numbers — Literacy and numeracy are needed in almost every job.

vocational training
teaching for a particular job or trade — Vocational training prepares people for work such as plumbing or nursing.

hands-on experience
learning by doing the real activity — Hands-on experience in a family shop taught him how to deal with customers.

self-directed learning
studying by yourself, without a teacher — Online platforms have made self-directed learning easier than ever.

acquire
to gain a skill or knowledge — Students acquire teamwork skills by working on group projects.

well-rounded
having a wide range of skills and knowledge — A mix of school and real life produces well-rounded adults.

formal education
learning in schools and colleges with set lessons and exams — Formal education gives people a recognised qualification.

lifelong learning
continuing to learn throughout your whole life — Lifelong learning keeps workers' skills up to date.

These words fit this topic. Use two of them in your next answer.

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Sentence patterns you can try

COMPLEX SENTENCE WITH A RELATIVE CLAUSE	*Schools give children the discipline that employers look for.*
SECOND CONDITIONAL	*If students learned only outside school, they would miss the basic skills every job needs.*
PASSIVE VOICE	*Basic literacy is usually taught in the early years of formal education.*
PARTICIPLE CLAUSE	*Working in a family business, my cousin learned how to deal with customers.*
CONCESSIVE CLAUSE	*Although the internet offers free courses, most learners still depend on the reading skills they gained at school.*

These sentence types show a wider range of grammar. Use one or two in your next answer.

Joining words you can add

CONTRAST **whereas**	*School teaches general knowledge, whereas the workplace teaches job-specific skills.*
RESULT **as a result**	*Pupils work in teams every day and, as a result, they enter work already used to cooperating.*
CAUSE **for this reason**	*Reading is the key to all other learning; for this reason, schools teach it first.*
ADDITION **in addition**	*In addition, schools give pupils a safe place to make mistakes and learn from them.*
CONCESSION **nevertheless**	*Real life teaches many lessons; nevertheless, it cannot replace the basic education that school provides.*

Joining words connect your ideas, like because, but, so and for example. Add two of them in your next answer.

Task relevance

On topic. You answer the question that was asked (agree or disagree) and give both sides. Make sure the examples support your position: the cousin example fits the 'outside school' side only, so link it clearly to your conclusion.

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