

## IELTS Writing Correction Sample: Essay

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### WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

***Some people believe that the experiences children have before they go to school will have the greatest effect on their future life. Others argue that experiences gained when they are teenagers have a bigger influence.***

***Discuss both these views and give your opinion.***

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

Write at least 250 words.

### HOW TO READ ESSAY FEEDBACK

First off, don't freak out that you see lots of highlighting - they're not all mistakes.

I use the **colour coding system**: the highlighted parts correspond to one of the 4 criteria of assessment below. The coloured parts are *not* necessarily mistakes - they can show the successful use of language as well.

This system lets you see how criteria and the score reflect the specific features of your writing.

So, here's how to best go about it:

1. Read through the summary table to get the gist of the feedback across the four criteria.
2. Go through the essay and all the comments carefully. To make sure you don't miss any comments, you can click on all the corrections and yellow highlights - the comments will pop up on the right.
3. Review each criterion one by one and focus on the parts in that colour in the essay.
4. Read the feedback table once again - this time it will make more sense to you
5. Read the final recommendations on how to improve the score

**The following remarks, observations and corrections are based purely on the attached task and using public access IELTS Writing Band Descriptors for guidance.**

See more: [https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/ielts\\_task\\_2\\_writing\\_band\\_descriptors.pdf](https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/ielts_task_2_writing_band_descriptors.pdf)

Criteria	Score	Comments
<p><b>Task Achievement</b></p> <p>purpose, consistent and appropriate tone (=register), all the required key points, clear explanations</p>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>you address <b>all parts of the task</b> and write on point although the ideas <b>could be more developed</b>. Some points are <b>not very clear or well-supported</b> (e.g. <i>a person's ability to study before school &gt; their success in 7-10 years? / making new social connections in teenage years &gt; help with career etc.</i>)</li> <li>the opinion/conclusion <b>lacks focus</b> and explanations a bit. Some points are <b>repetitive</b></li> </ul> <p><b>tone is appropriate</b> overall but avoid using contractions (<i>I'm sure</i>)</p>
<p><b>Coherence and Cohesion</b></p> <p>clear organization &amp; progression, cohesion bw &amp; within sentences, effective &amp; varied cohesive devices, referencing</p>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <b>macro structure</b> of the essay is <b>clear</b> - information is logically divided into paragraphs, there is a thesis statement, topic sentences, examples and conclusion.</li> <li>there is <b>overall progression</b> of ideas</li> <li>the range of <b>cohesive devices</b> is <b>limited</b> and their use is <b>not always accurate</b></li> <li><b>connections</b> between sentences may be <b>faulty</b></li> </ul> <p><b>referencing</b> is not always used accurately (e.g. <i>experiences - it</i>)</p>
<p><b>Lexical Resource</b></p> <p>wide range, less common vocab, flexible &amp; precise, accurate collocations/spelling/word formation,</p>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the range of vocabulary is <b>adequate</b> for the task but quite <b>limited</b>, which results in a fair amount of <b>repetition</b> (e.g. <i>important, choose, have an influence</i>)</li> <li>while <b>some collocations are valid</b> (e.g. <i>make decisions, extremely important, experiences gained</i>), other attempts are <b>inaccurate</b> (e.g. <i>early ages, high school people</i>)</li> </ul> <p>one <b>spelling mistake</b> might impede communication = make meaning unclear (e.g. <i>collage vs collage</i>)</p>
<p><b>Grammatical Range &amp; Accuracy</b></p> <p>wide range of structures, accurate grammar &amp; punctuation</p>	5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a <b>mix of simple and complex</b> sentences, some of which are less accurate than the others</li> <li>frequent grammatical errors include: articles, subject-verb agreement (e.g. <i>character are</i>), punctuation (<i>commas</i>), pronouns (<i>what, that</i>), sentence structure</li> </ul> <p>some mistakes make ideas difficult to understand (e.g. <i>and this on skill depends where a person would be...</i>)</p>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>6.0</b>	

There is no one opinion which that experience is more important: the one people get before they are 6-7 years old or the one they get later. Time before school affects the character, fears, preferences and ability to study. However, high school experience is important for choosing a future career, college and friends. Ultimately, I think that first experiences in life are the most critical.

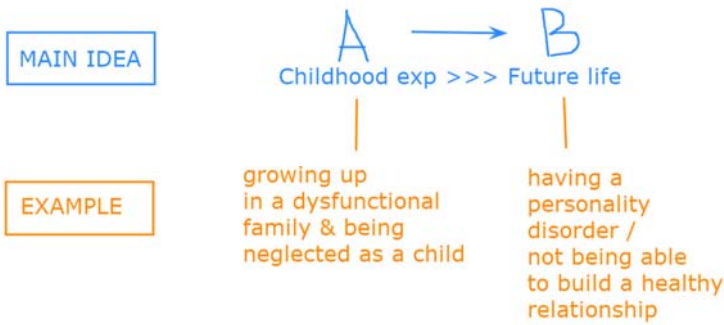
Thesis:

- Quite a good first attempt!
- It's better to combine the 2 views in the thesis into one sentence using 'While/Whereas/Although'
- Try to generalise the main points slightly, outlining the main arguments you're going to use but not revealing all the details

e.g.

While time before school lays the foundations of one's character, preferences and abilities, in adolescence we go through major changes in our social and intellectual development. Ultimately, I think/believe that the first experiences in life are the most critical / are of paramount importance.

I'm sure, psychologists can name hundreds of reasons, why the experiences people have in their early childhood are extremely important, but there are three more fundamental reasons of them. First of all, it is the time when their character is created. Because of early ages, a person can become shy or confident, happy or depressed for their whole life. Moreover, experiences before school affects the fears and preferences for life. For example, a person can be afraid of dogs because of traumatic childhood memories. Finally, people learn how to study before school, and this on skill depends where a person would be in 7-10 years' time.



On the other hand, the experiences gained during teenage years / in adolescence while teenagers have a big influence too, because only in high school people start to make their own decisions, they can choose the college and understand how to make new useful connections. (Connection bw these ideas?) Ability to make decisions is a key skill — it helps in work and in a personal life. For example, teenagers can find and choose a partner or a job for their whole life. Another reason, why teenage experiences are important is that in this period people are choosing a college. It determines what that people they would meet and how good their education would be.

**Commented [A1]:** It's better to use experiences in plural as in the essay task  
> which experiences are ...

When we say experiences (use it as a countable noun), we mean events and things we've lived through and maybe learned from

When we use experience in singular, as an uncountable noun, we usually imply our knowledge/skills, e.g. work experience etc.

**Commented [A2]:** or before the age of seven

**Commented [A3]:** this is not exactly the same as being a teenager. Be careful not to swap terms and shift focus from an age period to an education context

experiences when they are teenagers vs experiences they get in high school

**Commented [A4]:** As a result of some experiences at an early age, ...

**Commented [A5]:** You're trying to give an example of the possible effects/outcomes of childhood experiences (it's like point B). Instead, try to focus on the transition/influence of childhood exp on a person's future life.

(see the mindmap below)

We need to illustrate/develop the idea A >>> B, where:

- A = childhood experience
- >>> = affects
- B = future life

To make a good ex., you need to:

- 1) think of an ex. for A, e.g. family situation a person grows up in (positive or negative)
- 2) connect it to a specific effect it will have on their future life, e.g. healthy or disturbed personality
- 3) Explain the example showing HOW A affects B

e.g.

To illustrate, if a child grows up in a dysfunctional family and is neglected by his/her parents, it is likely/possible that they will develop a personality disorder or have difficulty building a healthy relationship in the long run.

or

...they might develop a personality disorder ...  
(try remain tentative, not certain that sth "will" happen)

**Commented [A6]:** make sure your statements/examples are reasonable and not far-fetched

**Commented [A7]:** adolescents / teenagers / young people

**Commented [A8]:** you can eliminate this part of the sentence - you'll comment on these main points in the paragraph

The topic sentence just states the topic & controlling idea - it doesn't have to list the subtopics, like the thesis statement

**Commented [A9]:** Present Simple for general truths

After all, in high school people are learning to make useful connections. It helps to be friends with people that can help with career, money or personal life.

Focus on just a couple of points and develop them in more depth

e.g.

1. learning to communicate > how does it affect future life, why is it important?

2. choosing a field of study/passion > how does it affect future life?

I believe that the most important experience people can get before school. (What's the connection between these two sentences?) Teenage experiences have a huge influence, because they affect # affects work and personal life. However, most of decisions made in teenage years / in adolescence teen ages can be fixed or changed. But early childhood experiences programs the whole life starting with character, ability to study, fears and preferences.

**Commented [A10]:** it's not a synonym to 'Finally'

Here's how 'After all' is used:

- 1) =despite what has been said or expected  
ex. So you made it after all!
- 2) used when you are explaining something, or giving a reason  
ex. He should have paid. He suggested it, after all.

**Commented [A11]:** This point about "useful people" you meet in teenage years and how they can help you excel in life. I don't think you actually believe this. It can't be very well-supported or developed because it's a bit of a stretch (exaggeration)

Try to go for more 'common-sense' ideas/examples that are easy to agree with and to back up

**Commented [A12]:** Sentence structure should be: Subject Verb Object

- I believe that people can get the most important experience before school
- I believe that experiences a person has before school have a more crucial effect on their further life than those in adolescence.

**Commented [A13]:** Again, swap this structure for Although/While... , ...  
It will set the focus right

e.g.  
Although teenage experiences do have a huge influence on one's path in life, early childhood experiences determine the most fundamental characteristics of a person's psyche and future life. (>>> explain this point in more detail)

**Commented [A14]:** It's not recommended to begin sentences with and/but in academic writing

**Commented [A15]:** this is a good point - you could expand on it a little, showing how this matters more and in turn affects the teenage experiences as well

**Commented [A16]:** best if you can rephrase that in the conclusion

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Not bad at all for the first essay! But I'm sure it's within your power to improve your performance.

In order to achieve a 6.5 or 7 you should:

- **Develop your ideas** using clear common-sense examples
- **Explain your opinion** in more detail
- Use more **varied cohesive devices** and pay attention to accurate **referencing** (it, they) and **substitution** (one/ones)
- Make sure there is a **clear logical link** between all sentences
- Brainstorm **different ways of expressing** the same ideas and try to **paraphrase** them whenever possible
- Try to learn and use proven, **natural collocations**
- Review the common grammatical mistakes you make and revisit the **relevant rules**
- Try to **vary sentence structures** you use

**Proofread** to check the spelling, grammar, word choice & logic.