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Analyse the question and state a clear position

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Task 2 is an argument or discussion responding to the exact instruction. Identify the topic, the restricted focus and every required action. A question about public transport funding is narrower than a general question about transport. If asked to discuss both views and give your opinion, do all three. Your position can be qualified, but the reader should be able to understand it throughout the essay.

Plan a small number of relevant main ideas before writing. For each, ask why it supports your answer and what example would make the reasoning concrete. Do not attach a memorised introduction that could fit any topic. A direct opening can paraphrase the issue and state your response. Avoid claiming that the essay will prove an absolute truth when the issue is debatable. A useful position explains the conditions behind your view, such as supporting investment where demand is high while recognising the needs of remote communities.

Worked examples

Focused position: Cities should prioritise reliable buses, although rural areas still need road maintenance.

Task check: “Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?” requires an explicit overall judgement.

Try it yourself: language control

1. Choose: After revising the essay, I checked whether each paragraph (answer / answered) the question.

2. Correct: The graph increased from 40 to 60.

3. Choose: A conclusion should (summarise / introduce) the main position.

4. Choose: The task asks for two views and (your opinion / only one view).

5. Write a qualified comparison using 50 and 75.

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Part 1: answer naturally and extend usefully

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Part 1 asks about familiar topics such as home, study, work and interests. Answer the question directly, then add a reason, example or small detail. A one-word answer gives little evidence of your language, but a long unrelated speech is also unhelpful. Listen to the tense: a question about childhood needs a different response from one about present habits or future plans.

Build flexible language from your own life. If asked whether you enjoy reading, you might state your preference, describe what you read and explain when you find time. You do not need a dramatic life story or an impressive occupation. Clear, relevant language matters more than unusual facts. Record a short response and listen for repeated fillers, unfinished sentences and unclear endings. Improve one feature at a time. Memorised paragraphs can sound unnatural and may fail to answer the actual question when its wording changes.

Worked examples

Question: Do you enjoy cooking? Model: Yes, especially at weekends, because I have time to try a new dish.

Past contrast: I rarely cooked as a child, but now I prepare dinner several times a week.

Flexible study and evidence

A training provider compared two optional revision arrangements. One group attended a weekly classroom session, while another used short online lessons and a discussion meeting every fortnight. Learners selected their own arrangement, so the groups were not randomly assigned. Both groups improved on a final task, but the provider could not conclude that the delivery format alone caused the improvement. Starting knowledge, available study time and attendance differed. Teachers also reported that some online learners valued replaying explanations, whereas others missed immediate help. The provider planned to keep both options while collecting more consistent records of participation and progress.

Find evidence in the text

1. How often did the online group have a discussion meeting?
2. Were learners randomly assigned?
3. Did both groups improve on the final task?
4. Why can the format alone not be identified as the cause?
5. Give one advantage and one limitation reported by online learners.

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Grammar that makes meaning precise

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Accurate grammar helps a reader or listener understand time, cause, contrast and degree of certainty. Use a complex sentence when the relationship needs one, rather than because long sentences appear impressive. A concessive clause can show a limitation; a relative clause can identify a particular group; a conditional can explain when a claim applies. Keep subjects and verbs easy to track.

Check recurring errors in your own work. Articles depend on whether a noun is countable and specific; plural endings need to match quantity; tense should follow the time frame. A sentence with several clauses still needs a clear main structure. Combine ideas only when the connection is logical. In revision, read a paragraph aloud to notice where the sentence loses direction, then simplify or divide it. Range and accuracy work together: a controlled short sentence can be more effective than an ambitious sentence whose meaning collapses.

Worked examples

Concession: Although online courses are flexible, they require self-discipline.

Conditional: If services become more reliable, more commuters may leave their cars at home.

Apply the skill

1. Academic timed task: The table gives annual library loans. Fiction: 2021 1,200; 2025 1,500. Non-fiction: 2021 800; 2025 1,100. Children's books: 2021 1,000; 2025 1,800. Use about 20 minutes and write at least 150 words.

2. General Training timed task: You attended a weekend course. Write to the organiser describing one useful feature, explaining a problem and suggesting an improvement. Use about 20 minutes and write at least 150 words.

3. Timed Task 2: Some people believe community facilities should be funded mainly by local government; others think users should pay most of the cost. Discuss both views and give your opinion. Use about 40 minutes and write at least 250 words.

Use separate paper or a device recording for longer responses. Keep your attempt for feedback. This is EWS skill practice, not an official score.

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