

IELTS Writing

Task 2: Problem Solution Essay

Movement of people from agricultural areas to cities

Paul Winterbottom

Elements of a good IELTS essay

1. Good **organisation** (makes the structure clear)
2. Good **ideas** (relevant - logical – supported)

Elements of a good IELTS essay

1. Good **organisation** (makes the structure clear)
2. Good **ideas** (relevant - logical – supported)
3. Good **writing**
 - good collocations
 - natural and appropriate
 - accurate
 - relevant and clear

General planning

1. 250+ words (write 280+)
2. No maximum
3. 40 minutes: write task 2 after task 1
4. 10 minutes planning
5. 4 paragraphs
6. Leave a blank line between paragraphs
7. Position must be clear throughout*
8. Ideas must be: relevant / extended / supported*
9. Each paragraph must have ONE topic*

*see Band Descriptors

The question

The movement of people from agricultural areas to cities to work can cause serious problems in both places. (SUBJECT)

What are the serious problems and what measures can be taken to solve these problems? (TASK)

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

In the exam:

1. Read the question carefully – check all the elements that you need to answer.
2. Decide the kind of essay.

The question

The movement of people from agricultural areas to cities to work can cause serious problems in both places. (SUBJECT)

What are the serious problems and what measures can be taken to solve these problems? (TASK):
PROBLEM - SOLUTION

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

In the exam:

1. Read the question carefully – check we answer it fully.
2. Decide the kind of essay: **problem solution essay**
3. If you are asked for an **an opinion / views – make strong and clear throughout.**
4. Focus planning on content: **relevant ideas – fully extended and well supported** (see Band Descriptors)

Problem - Solution: Essay Structure

Template for problem - solution essay:

	Problem – Solution Essay: Paragraph Structure
Paragraph 1	Introduction: lead – in sentence Explain what I am going to do
Paragraph 2	The problems
Paragraph 3	The solutions
Paragraph 4	Conclusion Short summary of my solution to the problems

Content planning: General

General: Problem – Solution Essay

1. Problems: Categories of problems:
 1. Economic problems / money
 2. Crime
 3. Social / family
 4. Health
 5. Personal
2. Solutions:
 1. Money – but explain **how** to spend it to reduce the problem

The question

The movement of people from agricultural areas to cities to work can cause serious problems in both places. (SUBJECT)

What are the serious problems and what measures can be taken to solve these problems? (TASK):
PROBLEM - SOLUTION

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

Content planning: this essay: IDEAS

Migration causes PROBLEMS

Problems: Paragraph 2: (1) for the city and (1) for the agricultural areas: 2 in total

for the city:

1. Health: not enough resources / pressure on services
2. Crime: people steal if they haven't enough money
3. Social - family: loneliness / family break up / lack of support / not enough houses – poor conditions / schools / hospitals drive up prices
4. Economic financial: can't find job / undercut local workers

Content planning: this essay: IDEAS

Migration causes PROBLEMS

Problems: Paragraph 2: (1) for the city and (1) for the agricultural areas: 2 in total

for the agricultural areas (the countryside):

1. Social or Economic: Lose active young workers – economic future / do the farm work
2. Family Social : family breakdown – social support damaged – only economically inactive left

Content planning: this essay: IDEAS

Solutions:

Requires investment / money to

1. make the conditions in the city better for people who move their and deal with the problems
2. develop the agricultural areas so that people – especially young men – do not feel the need to leave for the city to improve their lives

Model answer: Paragraph 1:

People have different opinions about both the problems caused by movement to the cities from the countryside and how best to solve them. Below I will consider what, in my opinion, are two of the main problems, and how I think they can be reduced, or even solved.

Model answer: Paragraph 1:

People have different opinions about both the problems caused by movement to the cities from the countryside and how best to solve them. (LEAD IN)

Below I will consider what, in my opinion, are two of the main problems, and how I think they can be reduced, or even solved. (WHAT I AM GOING TO DO)

Model answer: Paragraph 2:

One of the main problems for the cities is that the arrival of a large number of people can put a lot of pressure on the infrastructure of the city. It can result in a shortage of housing, schools and health care facilities. And this in turn can lead to serious problems for the whole community. For example, if the population grows quickly it can cause house prices to rise, which makes it difficult for the children of long term residents to find decent homes at a reasonable price. In turn this can then lead to tension between the existing inhabitants and the new arrivals. For the countryside, the problem is different. Rather than too many people there may be too few, and this may cause the whole community to decline. For example, young people leaving may result in a shortage of labour to do the agricultural work. The local economy then contracts which in turn leads to more people leaving in a vicious circle.

(In parts of rural Spain, for example, many small towns and villages have lost many of the most dynamic young people to the cities, most of the remaining population is elderly, and the result is economic and social decline.)

Model answer: Paragraph 2: **DETAIL**

1. **One of the main problems for the cities** is that the arrival of a large number of people can put a lot of pressure on the infrastructure of the city. **(TOPIC)**
2. It can result in a shortage of housing, schools and health care facilities. **(EXTEND)**
3. And this in turn can lead to serious problems for the whole community. **(EXTEND)**
4. For example, if the population grows quickly, it can cause house prices to rise, which makes it difficult for the children of long term residents to find decent homes at a reasonable price. **(SUPPORT - EXAMPLE)**
5. In turn this can then lead to tension between the existing inhabitants and the new arrivals. **(EXTEND EXAMPLE)**
6. **For the countryside, the problem is different.** **(SWITCH: SUB TOPIC)**
7. Rather than too many people there may be too few, and this may cause the whole community to decline. **(SUB TOPIC)**
8. For example, young people leaving may result in a shortage of labour to do the agricultural work. **(SUPPORT EXAMPLE)**
9. The local economy then contracts which in turn leads to more people leaving in a vicious circle. **(EXTEND EXAMPLE)**

Model answer: Paragraph 2: **DETAIL**

1. One of the main problems for the cities is that the arrival of a large number of people can put a lot of pressure on the **infrastructure** of the city. **(TOPIC)**
2. **It can result in** a shortage of housing, schools and health care facilities. **(EXTEND)**
3. **And this in turn** can **lead to** serious problems for the whole community. **(EXTEND)**
4. **For example**, if the population grows quickly, **it can cause** house prices to rise, **which makes it** difficult for the children of long term residents to find decent homes at a reasonable price. **(SUPPORT - EXAMPLE)**
5. **In turn this** can then lead to tension between the existing inhabitants and the new arrivals. **(EXTEND EXAMPLE)**
6. For the countryside, the problem is different. **(SWITCH: SUB TOPIC)**
7. **Rather than too many people there may be too few**, **and this may cause** the whole community to decline. **(SUB TOPIC)**
8. **For example** young people leaving **may result in** a shortage of labour to do the agricultural work. **(SUPPORT EXAMPLE)**
9. The local economy **then** contracts which **in turn leads to** more people leaving in a vicious circle.. **(EXTEND EXAMPLE)**

Model answer: Paragraph 3

In my opinion, the solution to these problems is to invest money to in both areas, and in both long and short term projects. In the cities, the urgent short term solution is to build enough houses to provide reasonable accommodation at an affordable price, together with enough schools and hospitals. The result would be a better social living conditions and a reduction in the tensions, between newcomers and long term residents. In the countryside, the longer term solution is for the government to invest more money in creating better local facilities. This investment would lead to better employment opportunities, together with high quality local schools and homes. The final result would be that fewer people would leave, which would both benefit those communities and reduce the pressure on the cities.

Model answer: Paragraph 3: **DETAIL**

1. In my opinion, the solution to these problems is to invest money to in both areas, and in both long and short term projects. **(TOPIC)**
2. In the cities, the urgent short term solution is to build enough houses to provide reasonable accommodation at an affordable price, together with enough schools and hospitals. **(SUB TOPIC - EXTEND)**
3. The result would be a better social living conditions and a reduction in the tensions, between newcomers and long term residents. **(EXTEND – SUPPORT)**
4. In the countryside, the longer term solution is for the government to invest more money in creating better local facilities. **(SUB TOPIC – EXTEND)**
5. This investment would lead to better employment opportunities, together with high quality local schools and homes. **(EXTEND)**
6. The final result would be that fewer people would leave, which would both benefit those communities and reduce the pressure on the cities. **(EXTEND – SUPPORT)**

Model answer: Paragraph 3: **DETAIL**

1. In my opinion, the solution to these problems is to invest money to in both areas, and in both long and short term projects. (TOPIC)
2. In the cities, the urgent short term solution is to build enough houses to provide reasonable accommodation at an affordable price, together with enough schools and hospitals. (SUB TOPIC - EXTEND)
3. The result would be a better social living conditions and a reduction in the tensions, between newcomers and long term residents. (EXTEND – SUPPORT)
4. In the countryside, the longer term solution is for the government to invest more money in creating better local facilities. (SUB TOPIC – EXTEND)
5. This investment would lead to better employment opportunities, together with high quality local schools and homes. (EXTEND)
6. The final result would be that fewer people would leave, which would both benefit those communities and reduce the pressure on the cities. (EXTEND – SUPPORT)

Model answer: Paragraph 4

In conclusion, therefore, I think that the movement of people to the cities from the countryside leads to serious social problems in both areas. The solution requires money and time – and short term and longer term plans - and a commitment to making both communities attractive places to live and work. If this happens, I believe the problems can be dramatically reduced and both areas can thrive.

