

# IELTS Writing

Task 2: Discuss & Opinion essay  
Underground Railway v Roads

Paul Winterbottom

# Elements of a good IELTS essay:

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

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1. Good organisation (makes the structure clear)
2. Good ideas (relevant - logical – supported)
3. Good **writing**
  - ideas clearly linked – logical development
  - sentences / paragraphs linked
  - natural and appropriate language
  - accurate

# Planning

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General points:

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1. 250+ words (write 280+)

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2. **No maximum**

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3. 40 minutes: write task 2 after task 1

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2. No maximum
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4. 10 minutes planning

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5. 4 paragraphs

# Planning

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2. No maximum
3. 40 minutes: write task 2 after task 1
4. 10 minutes planning
5. 4 paragraphs
6. Leave blank line between paragraphs

# Planning

Content / Writing points :

1. Read the question carefully.

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3. If you are giving your opinion make it very clear and strong throughout.
4. Focus your planning on content. (Idea development!)

# Planning

Content / Writing points :

1. Read the question carefully.
2. Confirm the TYPE of essay.
3. If you are giving your opinion make it very clear and strong throughout Focus your planning on content. (Idea development!)
4. Expanding your reasons – logically - and supporting them (usually with examples) is important for task achievement & enables you to show your language skills.

# In the exam:

1. Read the question carefully – check you answer it fully.

# The Question

Some people argue that building an underground railway system can ease the pressure on the transport system, while others think building or broadening roads can achieve this.

Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

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

# The Question

Some people argue that building an underground railway system can ease the pressure on the transport system, while others think building or broadening roads can achieve this. (SUBJECT)

Discuss both views and give your own opinion. (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 you answer it fully.
2. Decide the kind of essay.

# The Question

Some people argue that building an underground railway system can ease the pressure on the transport system, while others think building or broadening roads can achieve this. (SUBJECT)

Discuss both views and give your own opinion. (TASK)

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

# The Question

Some people argue that building an underground railway system can ease the pressure on the transport system, while others think building or broadening roads can achieve this. (SUBJECT)

Discuss both views and give your own opinion. (DISCUSS AND OPINION ESSAY)

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 you answer it fully.
2. Decide the kind of essay: **discuss & opinion essay**

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3. If you are asked for an an opinion – **make it strong and clear from the start & throughout.**

# In the exam:

1. Read the question carefully – check you answer it fully.
2. Decide the kind of essay: **discuss & opinion essay**
3. If you are asked for an an opinion – **make it strong and clear from the start & throughout.**
4. Focus planning on content with examples to support your ideas.

# Discuss & Opinion: Essay Structure

# Template for discuss & opinion essay:

<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Introduction: Lead in sentence <b>What I am going to do + My opinion.</b>	
	Side A	Side B
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Side I do not agree with. (Make it clear I don't agree)	
<b>Paragraph 3</b>		(Make it clear I don't agree with A) Side I agree with
<b>Paragraph 4</b>	Conclusion – must follow logically <b>Repeat my opinion.</b>	

# The Question: 2 sides

(1) Some people argue that building an underground railway system can ease the pressure on the transport system, (2) while others think building or broadening roads can achieve this. (SUBJECT)

Discuss both views and give your own opinion. (DISCUSS AND OPINION ESSAY)

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

Pick a side: either strongly agree or strongly disagree.

## 2 sides: pick one!

1. Building an underground railway system can ease the pressure on the transport system.
2. Building or broadening roads can achieve this (this=ease pressure on the transport system)

I will discuss **BOTH** views but

My **personal opinion** will be **strong** and **clear** throughout.

## 2 sides: pick one!

1. Building an underground railway system can ease the pressure on the transport system.
2. Building or broadening roads can achieve this (this=ease pressure on the transport system)

I will discuss **BOTH** views but

My **personal opinion** will be **strong** and **clear** throughout the essay:

I agree with position 2

I firmly believe building or broadening roads can ease pressure on the transport system.

# Content planning

My general thoughts:

1. Lots of people think – public transport good / private cars bad
2. But: seems to me that lots of people WANT to use cars
3. Public policy – to be effective – should work WITH people's desires
4. That's why underground railways have not significantly eased transport congestion in cities where they are used
5. Building more roads is the most direct way to address the problem

# Content planning

Paragraph Structure: See Band Descriptors

1. Topic / Idea
2. Extend / Expand
3. Support / Examples

# Content planning

## Paragraph 2

1. The view / argument of those who have the other opinion (I do not agree with)

# Content planning

## Paragraph 2

1. The view / argument of those who have the other opinion (I do not agree with)
2. The argument of those who think that it is better to build an underground system

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2. The argument of those who think that it is better to build an underground system
3. I want to express THEIR argument in reasonable terms: NOT my opinion of their argument

# Content planning

## Paragraph 2

1. The view / argument of those who have the other opinion (I do not agree with)
2. The argument of those who think that it is better to build an underground system
3. I want to express THEIR argument in reasonable terms: NOT my opinion of their argument
4. I need to make it clear throughout that this is NOT my position – it is THEIR position

# Content planning

## Paragraph 2

1. The view / argument of those who have the other opinion (I do not agree with)
2. The argument of those who think that it is better to build an underground system
3. I want to express THEIR argument in reasonable terms: NOT my opinion of their argument
4. I need to make it clear throughout that this is NOT my position – it is THEIR position
5. **How:**
  1. consistently use “they” eg “They think...” / “They argue that...” / “According to them...” / “An example they often use is....”
  2. do this with every sentence or almost every sentence

## Content planning: Paragraph 2: THEIR argument

Building an underground railway system can ease the pressure on the transport system:

# Content planning: Paragraph 2: THEIR argument

Building an underground railway system can ease the pressure on the transport system:

**They** argue that

1. underground railways are can carry large numbers of people efficiently, cheaply and conveniently
2. this means that they are popular with many people – who choose to use them if they have the option
3. consequently they remove people from the existing roads and ease congestion there

**Examples:** large, busy cities such as London, New York and Tokyo all have large and widely used underground railway systems

## Content planning: Paragraph 3: MY argument

Building more or larger roads is the only way to effectively ease congestion:

# Content planning: Paragraph 3: MY argument

Building more or larger roads is the only way to effectively ease congestion:

1. Many people will always like & prefer to use cars
  - more convenient:** carry shopping / door to door / out of the rain
  - they are more comfortable:** families can travel together, and they can talk or listen to the radio
  - consequently:** underground railways do not solve the problem
2. Those cities that have large underground systems still have hugely congested roads:  
**Examples:** Tokyo & London.
3. Undergrounds have not solved the problem and the only effective way is to address people's real desire to be able to use their cars by building more & bigger roads.

# Template for discuss & opinion essay:

<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Introduction: Lead in sentence <b>Going to do consider arguments for underground + roads &amp; explain why I think roads are better</b>	
	Side A	Side B
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Arguments for underground railways (Make it clear I don't agree)	
<b>Paragraph 3</b>		(Restate: I don't agree with A) Arguments for cars / roads
<b>Paragraph 4</b>	<b>Conclusion: Therefore</b> : roads are the best way of addressing congestion issue.	

# Model Answer: Paragraph 1

Many people have strong opinions about the best way to try to resolve the problem of congestion in major urban areas. Below I will discuss the views of both those who think we should build more underground systems, and those who, like me, firmly believe that the best solution is to increase the road capacity.

# Model Answer: Paragraph 1

1. Many people have strong opinions about the best way to try to resolve the problem of congestion in major urban areas. (Lead-in sentence)
2. Below I will discuss the views of both those who think we should build more underground systems, and those who, like me, firmly believe that the best solution is to increase the road capacity. (What I am going to do + Strong Opinion)

## Model Answer: Paragraph 2

Those who argue for more underground railways argue that they can carry large numbers of people quickly, efficiently and cheaply. They argue that, as a result, this type of transport is often very attractive as it can both reduce commuters' travelling time and save them money. Consequently, they claim that a large number of people would transfer from cars to the underground train. This, in turn, would result in fewer cars on the road and less congestion. They often use the examples of large cities such as London, New York and Tokyo. All of these cities, they point out, have large scale, widely used, and very popular underground systems that are used by thousands of travellers every day.

# Model Answer: Paragraph 2

1. Those who argue for more underground railways argue that they can carry large numbers of people quickly, efficiently and cheaply.
2. They argue that, as a result, this type of transport is often very attractive as it can both reduce commuters' travelling time and save them money.
3. They claim that this would lead to a large number of people transferring from their cars to the underground trains.
4. This, in turn, would result in fewer cars on the road and less congestion.
5. They often use the examples of large cities such as London, New York and Tokyo.
6. All of these cities, they point out, have large scale, widely used, and very popular underground systems that are used by thousands of travellers every day.

# Model Answer: Paragraph 2

1. Those who argue for more underground railways argue that they can carry large numbers of people quickly, efficiently and cheaply. (TOPIC: IDEA)
2. They argue that as a result this type of transport is often very attractive as it can both reduce commuters' travelling time and save them money. (EXTEND: RESULT)
3. They claim that this would lead to a large number of people transferring from their cars to the underground trains. (EXTEND: RESULT)
4. This, in turn, would result in fewer cars on the road and less congestion. (EXTEND: RESULT)
5. They often use the examples of large cities such as London, New York and Tokyo. (SUPPORT: EXAMPLE)
6. All of these cities, they point out, have large scale, widely used, and very popular underground systems that are used by thousands of travellers every day. (SUPPORT: EXAMPLE: EXTEND)

# Model Answer: Paragraph 2

1. **Those who argue for** more underground railways argue that they can carry large numbers of people quickly, efficiently and cheaply. **(TOPIC: IDEA)**
2. **They argue** that as a result this type of transport is often very attractive as it can both reduce commuters' travelling time and save them money. **(EXTEND: RESULT)**
3. **They claim** that this would lead to a large number of people transferring from their cars to the underground trains. **(EXTEND: RESULT)**
4. This, in turn, would result in fewer cars on the road and less congestion. **(EXTEND: RESULT)**
5. **They often use** the examples of large cities such as London, New York and Tokyo. **(SUPPORT: EXAMPLE)**
6. All of these cities, **they point out**, have large scale, widely used, and very popular underground systems that are used by thousands of travellers every day. **(SUPPORT: EXAMPLE: EXTEND)**

# Model Answer: Paragraph 2

1. **Those who argue for** more underground railways argue that they can carry large numbers of people quickly, efficiently and cheaply. **(TOPIC: IDEA)**
2. **They argue** that **as a result** this type of transport is often very attractive as it can both reduce commuters' travelling time and save them money. **(EXTEND: RESULT)**
3. **They claim** that **this would lead to** a large number of people transferring from their cars to the underground trains. **(EXTEND: RESULT)**
4. This, **in turn**, would result in fewer cars on the road and less congestion. **(EXTEND: RESULT)**
5. **They often use** the examples of large cities such as London, New York and Tokyo. **(SUPPORT: EXAMPLE)**
6. All of these cities, **they point out**, have large scale, widely used, and very popular underground systems that are used by thousands of travellers every day. **(SUPPORT: EXAMPLE: EXTEND)**

## Model Answer: Paragraph 3: LINKING sentence

However, I do not find this (argument) very convincing.

Cohesive / Switch

convincing

persuasive

plausible

## Model Answer: Paragraph 3

However, I do not find this very convincing. I believe that many people will always want to use their cars, so increasing road capacity is the best way to improve congestion. There are several reasons why people choose to use a car. First, they allow people to carry their shopping easily and to go shopping as a family. Secondly, they are much more convenient as they allow people to go directly from door to door, when they want to. And finally, they are a more comfortable way to travel: people can listen to the radio, chat or simply relax on the journey. For all these reasons I think many people will continue to choose a car when possible. This explains why cities like London and Tokyo - with large underground systems - still have highly congested roads, and the subway has not solved the problem.

# Model Answer: Paragraph 3

1. **However**, **I do not find** this very convincing. **(LINK)**
2. **I believe** that many people will always want to use their cars, so increasing road capacity is the best way to improve congestion. **(TOPIC / IDEA)**
3. There are **several reasons** why people choose to use a car. **(EXTEND / EXPAND)**
4. **First**, they allow people to carry their shopping easily and to go shopping as a family. **(EXTEND / LIST 1)**
5. **Secondly**, they are much more convenient as they allow people to go directly from door to door, when they want to. **(EXTEND / LIST 2)**
6. **And finally**, they are a more comfortable way to travel: people can listen to the radio, chat or simply relax on the journey. **(EXTEND / LIST 3)**
7. **This** explains why cities like London and Tokyo - with large underground systems - still have highly congested roads, and the subway has not solved the problem. **(SUPPORT / EXAMPLE)**

## Model Answer: Paragraph 4

Consequently, I believe developing the road system, by both building new roads and increasing existing capacity, is the best way to address people's natural desire to travel by car, and directly address the problem of congestion. Building more underground railways has never solved this problem in the past, and I do not think would do so now.

