

IELTS Writing

Task 2: Opinion essay

Money and Science

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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 usually
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

Some people think that too much money and time have been allocated to scientific research.
(SUBJECT)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? (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

Some people think that too much money and time have been allocated to scientific research.
(SUBJECT)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? (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 we answer it fully.
2. Decide the kind of essay: **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: **relevant ideas – fully extended and well supported** (see Band Descriptors)

Opinion: Essay Structure

Template for opinion essay:

Paragraph 1	Introduction: Lead in sentence My opinion (strong) + what I am going to do.
Paragraph 2	Argument 1 to support my opinion
Paragraph 3	Argument 2 to support my opinion
Paragraph 4	Conclusion Repeat my opinion: follows from 2 and 3

The question: 2 options: agree or disagree

Some people think that too much money and time have been allocated to scientific research.
(SUBJECT)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? (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.

NOTE: do not try to choose a third / alternative position

Choose:

1. Agree
2. Disagree

My opinion will be **strong** and **clear** throughout the essay.

Either:

1. **TRUE THAT:** Too much money & time are allocated to scientific research
2. **NOT TRUE THAT:** Too much money & time allocated to scientific research

I choose 1: I strongly agree that too much money & time are allocated to scientific research

Content planning:

I believe: too much money & time are allocated to scientific research:

I need 2 main ideas for paragraphs 2 and 3 to support my position. These MUST be separate.

These ideas must be fully extended and well supported.

NOTE: it is not important whether I really think this – it is just a writing / idea development exercise in the exam.

Content planning:

Too much money & time are allocated to scientific research:

My general thinking:

1. “scientific research” is a broad area
2. I am NOT arguing that ALL money and time is wasted – only that SOME is.
3. If I can show some BIG specific areas where too much money & time are allocated, I can defend my position
4. I can: 2 areas: (1) **medical research** & (2) **military / weapons research**
5. These **2 areas will be the TOPICS for paragraphs 2 & 3**

Essay Plan:

Paragraph 1	Introduction: Lead in sentence My opinion: too much time and money spent on scientific research. I am going show how 2 major areas are wasteful.
Paragraph 2	Area 1: big waste of resources in medical research
Paragraph 3	Area 2: big waste of resources in military research
Paragraph 4	Conclusion The arguments in 2 & 3 justify my opinion

Content planning: Paragraph 2

Too much money & time are allocated to **MEDICAL** research:

1. Medical research is directed by drugs companies towards drugs that can make money
2. Drugs that make money treat illnesses in rich countries
3. These illnesses are mainly “lifestyle” RELATED: e.g. heart disease / diabetes / cancer / arthritis
4. Would be better to change lifestyle (but less profit!)
5. This “scientific research” use of money and talent is wasteful and damaging:
6. **BENEFIT OF CHANGE:** If this effort was directed to helping basic healthcare in developing countries: e.g. clean water, vaccinations, antibiotics
7. **BENEFIT OF CHANGE:** Then MILLIONS of lives could be saved

Content planning: Paragraph 3

Too much money & time are allocated to **MILITARY** research:

1. HUGE resources are devoted to military research and development
2. In my opinion this is a waste of money and talent & countries should choose to opt out of – or greatly reduce - this commitment
3. **BENEFIT OF CHANGE**: money could be spent on more socially useful areas
4. **BENEFIT OF CHANGE**: the time of talented people could be spent on more socially useful areas

Model answer: paragraph 1

People have different opinions about the value of scientific research in the modern world. Personally, I believe that although a lot of research is useful, a great deal of money and time is also wasted. To support my view, I will argue below that far too much money and time is wasted on medical and military research and this could be better used elsewhere.

Model answer: paragraph 1

1. People have different opinions about the importance of scientific research in the modern world. (Lead in)
2. Personally, I believe that although a lot of research is useful, a great deal of money and time is also wasted. (Opinion – position)
3. To support my view, I will argue below that far too much money and time is wasted on medical and military research and this could be better used elsewhere. (What I am going to do)

Model answer: paragraph 2

First, I believe that a lot of current medical research represents a huge waste of resources – both money and talent. Medical research is driven by the profit of drug companies, not people's real needs. For example, many of the chronic illnesses of rich countries, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes and arthritis are a result of lifestyle choices. I believe people should be encouraged to change their lifestyles – not to take drugs to deal with the diseases cause by their lifestyle. However, there is little profit in this for drug companies, and people do not find it easy to change. At the same time, millions of people still die in developing countries because they do not have access to the basics for healthy living, such as clean water, antibiotics and vaccinations. These could easily be provided with the money currently used for research into lifestyle illnesses.

Model answer: paragraph 2

1. First, I believe that a lot of current medical research represents a huge waste of resources – both money and talent. (TOPIC)
2. Medical research is driven by the profit of drug companies, not people's real needs. (EXPAND)
3. For example, many of the chronic illnesses of rich countries, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes and arthritis are a result of lifestyle choices. (EXPAND – EXAMPLE)
4. I believe people should be encouraged to change their lifestyles – not to take drugs to deal with the diseases cause by their lifestyle. (EXPAND – EXAMPLE)
5. However, there is little profit in this for drug companies, and people do not find it easy to change. (EXPAND – EXAMPLE)
6. At the same time, millions of people still die in developing countries because they do not have access to the basics for healthy living, such as clean water, antibiotics and vaccinations. (EXPAND – SUPPORT 2)
7. These could easily be provided with the money currently used for research into lifestyle illnesses. (EXPAND – SUPPORT 2)

Model answer: paragraph 3

Secondly, a lot of money and time is also spent on scientific research into weapons and military equipment. Again, I think that much of this is unnecessary, and countries can and should reduce this spending dramatically. This would both save a lot of money and free talented people to spend their time in more socially useful areas. And this transfer of resources, I believe, would lead to an improvement in the living conditions of ordinary people.

Model answer: paragraph 3

1. Secondly, a lot of money and time is also spent on scientific research is into weapons and military equipment. (TOPIC)
2. Again, I think that much of this expenditure is unnecessary, and countries can and should reduce this spending dramatically. (EXPAND)
3. This would both save a lot of money and free talented people to spend their time in more socially useful areas. (EXPAND - SUPPORT)
4. And this transfer of resources, I believe, would lead to an improvement in the living conditions of ordinary people. (EXPAND – SUPPORT)

Model answer: paragraph 4

Consequently, I believe that far too many resources are currently allocated to "science". This is because many people seem to think that anything called "scientific research", especially research into health issues, must be a good use of people's money and time. I do not think this is true, and I think that much current spending is wasteful – particularly in the medical and military areas - and many talented people could use their time better elsewhere.

