

●●● Academic & General Training Module

IELTS™

Problem – Solution Essay Writing

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TASK 2 – AC & GT MODULE

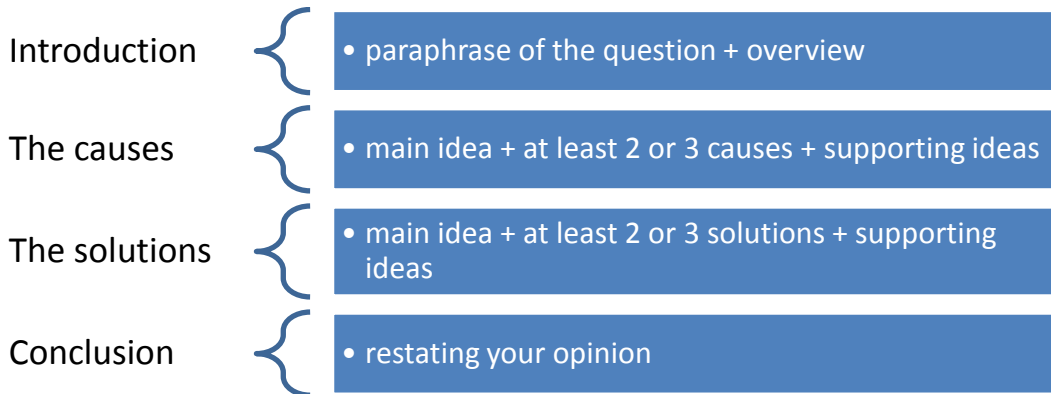
Unit aim: Developing Cause – Solution essay

- Organization of cause – solution essay
- Expressing cause and effect: creating template in body
- Expressing solution: creating template in body
- Using linking phrases as trigger words to improve template development
- Writing a full task 2: cause (problem) – Solution
- Grammar note: reference words in writing
- Question bank

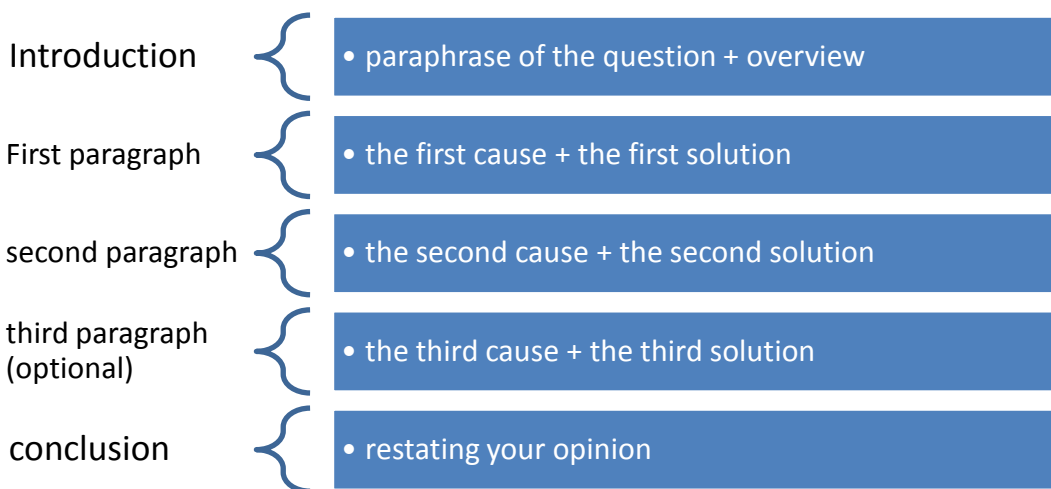
Organization of Cause (problem) – solution essay:

One major type of essay common in both academic and general training task 2 is cause or problem and solution. In order to develop this type of writing the following organizations can be applied.

The first structure would give you this opportunity to use a wider range of structures with clearer organization.



The second structure is also common.

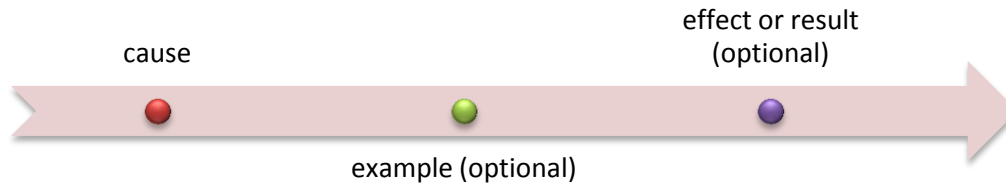


Note that the solutions you propose should be in agreement with the causes you mention. Care should be taken not to write irrelevant ideas so that you create coherence in writing.

Expressing cause and effect: creating template in body

What is a template?

A template is a pattern which is often used for creating similar things. In writing, templates can be formed in order to make writing easier, more organized, and coherent. The following template can be applied in expressing cause and effect in English.



Notice that either the example or the effect / result part can be optional. This means that you can include one or both to expand your writing in the body part. Look at the following sample to help understand this template.

Sample question: why do you think schools have severe problem with student's behavior?

Sample idea for template in body

There are a number of factors which can be considered as the major causes of this problem. The first is inappropriate parental role model. This can be seen by the fact that many parents nowadays are having bitter quarrels over unimportant issues in family context while ignoring the effect on their children. This behavior will lead to students' misbehavior often confronted in educational settings.

Cause

Example

Effect

Cause – effect structures:

The following words or phrases are often used to express cause and effect/ result in writing.

Cause

- cause sth
- cause sth / sb + to + verb (base form)

Examples:

Lack of parental supervision causes students' misbehavior.

Lack of parental supervision causes students to misbehave in schools.

Lead to

- lead to sth
- lead to sb / sth + verb (ing)
- lead sb / sth + to + verb (base form)

Examples:

Machinery life style has led to stressful life.

Machinery lifestyle has led to people experiencing stressful life.

Machinery lifestyle has led people to experience stressful life.

Make

- make sth
- make sb / sth + verb (base form)

Examples:

Uncertain future plan is a major factor which makes people experience tension in their lives.

Uncertain future plan is a major factor which makes tension in life.

Miscellaneous phrases

-A....occurs and consequentlyB.....happens.
-A....occurs. In consequence,.....B....happens.
-A....occurs and as a resultB....happens.
-A....occurs which results in.....B.....happening.
-A....occurs. By doing this,.....B....happens.
-A....occurs and this in turn would result in.....B.....



Common mistake:

Many students often confuse the use of lead to sb/sth + verb(ing) and lead sb/sth to + verb(simple form)

- ✓ *It is obvious that chain smoking will lead to smokers and nonsmokers suffering from a number of serious heart diseases.*
- ✓ *It is obvious that chain smoking will lead smokers and nonsmokers to suffer from a number of serious heart diseases.*
- ✗ *It is obvious that chain smoking will lead to smokers and nonsmokers suffer from a number of serious heart diseases*

Exercise 1: using cause- effect – result in writing

Complete the following statements with the correct form of cause, make, lead to, consequently (in consequence), result in. more than one correct answer might be possible in some cases.

1. It is often said that overspending on luxury items mayfeeling of dissatisfaction.
2. One major factor whichpeople to react unwisely is lack of training in emotional control.
3. A large number of students do not bother to pursue their education in higher level and this.....expansion of illiteracy in society.
4. It is important to create more links between universities and factories. Thisstudents to experience theoretical lessons in a practical context.
5. Parents' and teachers' demands on young learners may impose mental pressure on them. , their performance at school may not be satisfactory. In fact, they often face academic failure due to these demands.
6. Endowing freedom of expression to artists may.....to chaos in a conservative society.
7. Teleworking can reduce the amount of time people spend commuting and this.....greater time available for family and some leisure activities.
8. Foreign made programs which are imported and broadcasted maylocal companies go out of business.

Answer key

1. Cause/ lead to/ result in
2. Causes/ leads to
3. Causes/ leads to/ results in
4. Causes/ leads to
5. In consequence/ consequently
6. Lead
7. Results in
8. Make

Expression solution: creating template in body

Previously you learned how to create template in the cause – effect part of your writing. In this part you will learn how to do this in the solution part. The following structures outlined in the table below are quite common in academic writing.

Solution phrases
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should (strong suggestion)• Could (possible suggestion)• The most obvious solution / answer is• One / Another option is to• One / the next possibility is to• A good idea is to• One practical method in approaching the issue is to• The ultimate solution often provided is• A further step is (to)



Common mistake:

Care should be taken about the collocations normally used with the word solution.

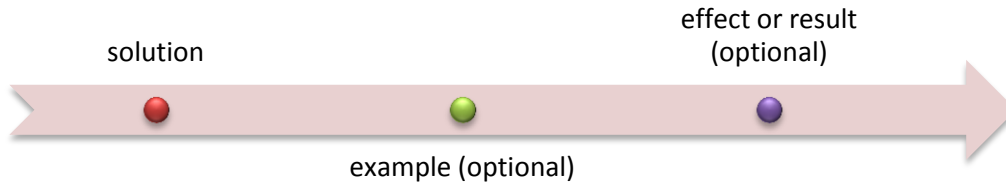
Common verbs: *devise/find/propose/provide and reach a solution*

Common adjectives: *(a/an) ideal/obvious/optimal/ultimate/instant/ingenious/ creative/practical/temporary solution*

Types: *a diplomatic/ legislative/ military/ political solution*

Preposition: *the solution to sth*

The following template can also be applied in developing solution paragraph. Note that the use of example or effect / result can be optional. This means you could either include both or one in your body to create complex and more coherent piece of writing. The following sample piece of writing helps to clarify the use of this template.



Sample question: What do you think can be done to solve the problem of student’s behavior at school?

Sample idea for template in body

A number of drastic measures can be taken in order to reach an ideal result. I think the most obvious solution for schools or other academic institutions is providing training sessions in different areas such as in behavioral therapy for parents. By doing this, parents aberrant behavior would be modified which will in turn have positive impact on their children’s interaction at school.

Idea

Example

Effect



Common mistake:

Notice that when there is a subject in the statement then active tense should be used. If the Noun or the phrase starting the sentence cannot be the doer then passive is correct. Look at the following examples:

- ✓ *TV programs with violent scenes should be censored.*
- ✗ *TV programs with violent scenes should censor.*

TV program itself cannot do the action of censoring so it should be used in passive voice.

Exercise 2: focus on solution phrases

Rewrite the following statements on the subject of test standardization and practicality using the items from the table of solution phrases. You need to alter between active or passive where possible. Notice that the underlined parts in the examples are paraphrases.

Examples:

Administrative bodies should revise the standard of tests nationwide.

- *I think the most obvious solution is to revise the standard of tests nationwide.*

Administrative bodies could arrange team of professionals in devising tests.

- *Team of professionals could be arranged in devising tests.*
- *A further step is to arrange team of professionals in devising tests.*

1. I think one of the most practical methods in approaching the subject is introducing tests that teach.
Tests that teach should.....
2. A further step is to reduce the number of multiple choice questions.
The number of multiple choice questions.....
3. Schools could provide tests that not only evaluate student’s theoretical knowledge but also help to assess their creativity.
One option is to.....
4. One possibility is to devise tests based on students’ future needs.
A good idea is to.....
5. A national plan can be devised as a framework of test generation.
The ultimate solution is

<p>Key</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tests that teach should be introduced.2. The number of multiple choice questions should be reduced.3. One option is to provide tests that not only evaluate student’s theoretical knowledge but also help to assess their creativity.4. A good idea is to devise tests based on students’ future needs.5. The ultimate solution is devising a framework of test generation.
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Linking phrases in writing as trigger words to improve template development

Linking phrases are often used to mark functions such as solutions, results and examples. The table below provides a short list of the most common functions used in task 2 as well as some linking phrases. Match each function on the right with correct linking phrase on the left.

Linking phrases	Function
1. And / as well as/ furthermore/ in addition 2. For instance/ such as/ which includes 3. Therefore/ hence/ as a result/ and so /consequently... 4. Because/ as/ since/ due to 5. If/ provided that/ as long as 6. In order to/ to	a. Addition b. Condition c. Example d. Purpose e. Reason f. Result

The following sample paragraph on the topic “why a large number of people are immigrating to mega cities clarifies and what problems are caused by this?” shows how these structures can be used in order to achieve a well – structured piece of writing.

Sample paragraph

*In recent years there has been a boom in moving to cities. This has occurred **mainly because** there is a variety of facilities accessible. **This includes** wider access to significantly more advanced health care and transport system. **As a result** of this excessively uncontrolled movement, cities are witnessing adversities in different aspects **such as** disproportionate urban development and expansion of civil facilities.*

Writing a full task 2: Cause (problem) – Solution

Read the following topic and consider the notes based on the templates you previously learned. Then read the sample paragraph and see how they are integrated in a coherent writing.

In general, people do not have such a close relationship with their neighbors as they did in the past. What do you think are the reasons and what can be done to improve contact between neighbors?

You should write at least 250 words.

My writing plan

Causes:

- *Mobile life style: change living place>>> superficial relation ship*
- *More time at work >>> closer ties with colleagues*
- *Modern life style: individual activities and travel by car>>> less contact with others*

Solutions:

- *Communal areas: e.g. playgrounds - halls >>>a place for meeting and making friends*
- *Welcoming new comers*
- *Form associations >>> discuss the things*

In nowadays societies, neighbors play a secondary role in each other's lives while their relationships were of primary importance in the past. The following essay focuses on the main causes of having less contact with each other and proposes a number of solutions to improve the situation.

In terms of the leading factors, it is undoubtedly true that our life styles have shifted towards a more mobile one which means that we are changing our living place quite frequently. This may lead to having a more superficial relationship with neighbors. The second major reason might be people's preoccupation at work. This often causes people to form tighter ties with their colleagues than their neighbors. The last underlying factor is modern lifestyle. For instance, many people's priority is watching television or even travelling around in their car. Consequently, they have less interaction with others including their neighbors.

What is needed to combat this problem is definite action. The most obvious solution, in my mind, is establishing communal areas such as playgrounds for children and halls for adults. By doing this, an opportunity is provided for the neighbors to reach each other more. A further step could be setting welcoming rules for new comers so that they could orientate themselves to the new place and share experiences which in turn assist people in achieving closer bonds with newly arrived neighbors. Finally, in order to tackle the issue of solitary activities, people in a neighborhood should form associations which provide a context in which they will manage to discuss and solve each other's daily issues.

To conclude, I believe these suggestions will probably not solve the issue of attenuated contact between neighbors in communities totally; however, they will facilitate reformation of such interactions. (291 words)

Grammar note: reference words in writing

Reference words are the ones which are normally used firstly to avoid repetition of a noun, phrase or even a clause or idea and secondly to create coherence in writing. The following categories are among the most common ones used in writing. After reading them, go back to previous page and find examples of these in the sample text.

Determiners predeterminers	Possessive adjectives	Subject/Possessive pronouns	Relative pronouns	Adverbs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This / that • These / those • Such • Such a/an (+Noun) • One • Ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My, his, her, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I, you, he, etc. • Mine, his, her, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who • Which • That • Where • When 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here • There
Inclusives	Articles	<p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Except possessive pronouns and relative pronouns, other words can be followed by a noun or noun phrase if necessary. • Possessive pronouns replace a noun or noun phrase. • The words each, every and all should be avoided in writing as they are considered absolute words which have a too general meaning. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each • Every • Both • All • Either • Neither • None • Some • Most 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A, an • The 			



Common mistake:

Notice that a reference word always refers back to a word, phrase or idea in the same sentence or in the sentence preceding the one containing the reference word. A reference word never refers back to a word or phrase in a different paragraph or statement.

- ✓ *Many people believe that school education should be compulsory and they argue that higher levels of literacy make a more prosperous society. (they refers to many people in the same sentence)*
- ✗ *Many people believe that school education should be made compulsory. While this may be true I would argue that forcing people to follow something may not have satisfactory results. I think they should change their views. (they is incorrectly used and does not refer back to any word)*

About the author



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