

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE 25: ACADEMIC WRITING

Hello. I'm Margot Politis. Welcome to Study English, IELTS preparation.

Today on Study English we're going to give you some tips and strategies for answering Task 1 IELTS Academic questions.

We'll look at what's involved in planning an essay, and then we'll try planning answers to some practice questions.

Task 1 of the IELTS Academic module asks you to describe data.

The key word is 'describe'.

That means you don't need to comment on or interpret the data. Your task is only to describe the data.

When you're writing a description, it's important to know what the context is and who your audience is.

In Task 1, the audience is usually a university lecturer or a teacher. So we know that it should be formal.

Let's review what we know about task 1.

The key word is 'describe', and the context is 'formal'.

There's a range of things you might be asked to describe. Let's have a look at some examples.

You might be asked to describe data.

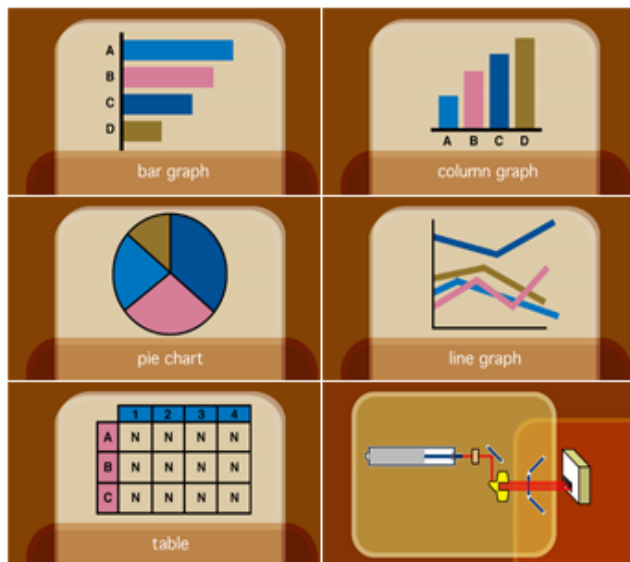
That could be in a 'bar graph' or 'column graph',

a 'pie chart' or a 'line graph'.

Or it could be presented in the form of a 'table'.

You might have to describe some kind of 'process or cycle'.

You could also be shown a diagram of a 'machine or object' and asked to describe the parts or the function.

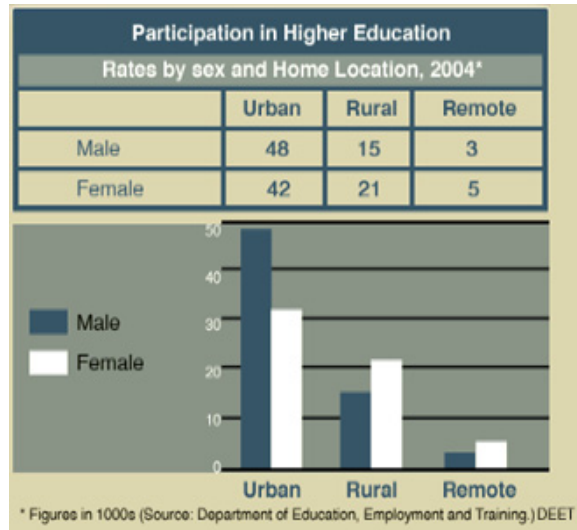


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Now, let's take a look at a practice question. Here's an example Task 1 question:

This table gives participation rates in higher education, in New South Wales, for males and females according to home location, in urban, rural or remote areas, for the year 2004. We also have a graph.



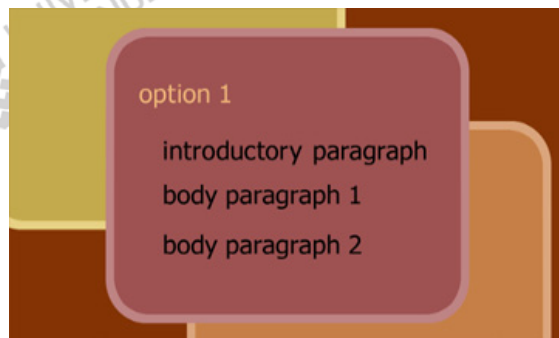
The graph shows the same information as the table.

We can see that we have information about the number of men and women who go onto higher education, or university, in three different areas.

Before we can describe this data, it's a good idea to think about how to organise our description.

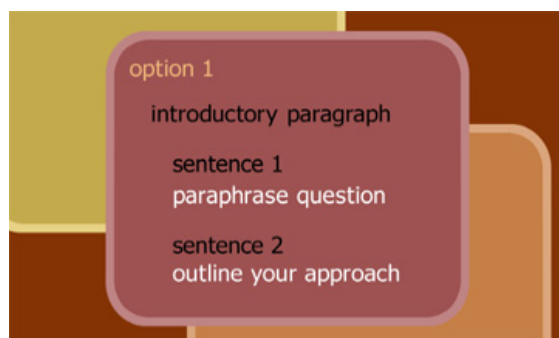
There are two options. It's up to you which one you choose, but let's look at each of them.

With Option 1, you could divide your essay up into an introductory paragraph and two body paragraphs.



One paragraph would describe 'male participation rates' in each of the three locations, while the other paragraph would describe 'female participation rates'.

So our essay would be structured like this.



The first paragraph is the introductory paragraph. It should only have 2 sentences.

Sentence 1 should paraphrase the question, and sentence two should outline your approach to the data.

The second two paragraphs are body paragraphs 1 and 2.

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In the first, you might address 'female participation rates' for each location – urban, rural and remote.

In body paragraph 2, you'd talk about 'male participation rates' for each location – urban, rural and remote.

Or, you could try Option 2, and divide the essay up into three body paragraphs, one for each of the locations.

The essay would be structured like this: with an introductory paragraph, as always; then 3 body paragraphs.

Body paragraph one would discuss 'urban participation rates' for males and females.

Body paragraph 2 would discuss 'rural participation rates' for males and females.

And body paragraph 3 would be used to discuss 'remote participation rates' for males and females.

There's no clear answer as to which way is better. They are both correct.

But remember that your essay needs to be at least 150 words.

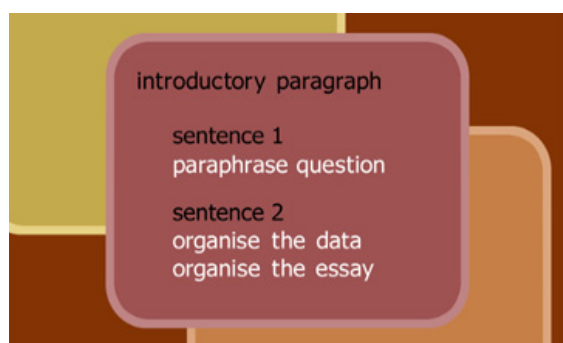
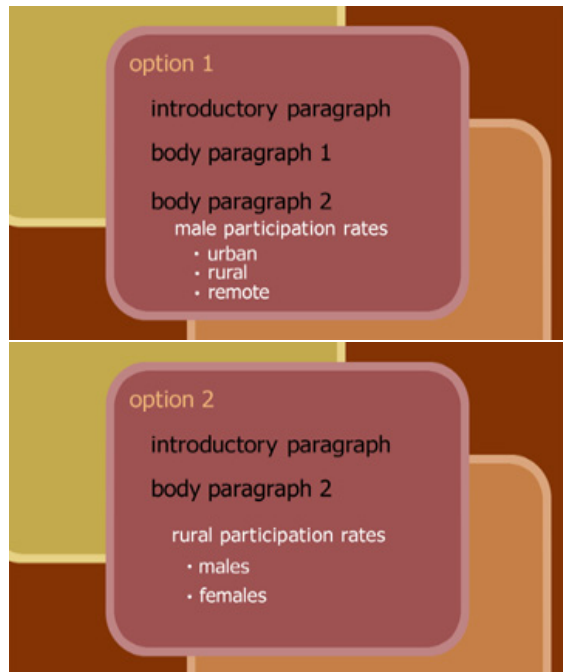
Now, let's take a closer look at how to structure your essay.

The first paragraph is always the introductory paragraph.

There should be two sentences in your introductory paragraph.

Sentence 1 aims to paraphrase the question, by telling the reader what the topic is. It is important not to just copy the question. You can use the language of the question and build your own sentence.

In sentence 2, outline how you will organise the data and therefore how you'll organise the essay.



Let's try to write our introductory paragraph.

It might look like this:

"The table represents data, supplied by the Department of Education, Employment and Training, on the participation rates in higher education for males and females in 2004. The data is for three locations: urban, rural and remote."

The table presents data, supplied by the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET), on the participation rates in higher education for males and females in 2004. The data is for three locations: urban, rural and remote.

So, our first sentence tells us about the question. It includes information about where and when the data has come from.

Our second sentence tells the reader that we have divided the data into three sections. There will be three body paragraphs - one each about the 'urban', 'rural' and 'remote' data. This is an introductory paragraph for Option 2.

The order of the paragraphs will follow the order given in our introduction: 'urban', then 'rural' and then 'remote'.

So, let's review and take an overall look at the essay we're creating.

Let's say we've decided to go with Option one.

Remember, that was an essay with two body paragraphs, one describing 'female participation rates' for the three locations, and one describing 'male participation rates'.

So, let's start with our introductory paragraph.

We might write:

"The table presents data supplied by the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET), on the participation rates in higher education in 2004 from three locations: urban, rural and remote. The data is divided into two sets: female and male participation."

Notice our second sentence tells the reader that the data will be presented according to female and male participation rates.

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So our first body paragraph will be about data for 'female participants'.

Here's the structure of body paragraph 1.

It shows 'female participation rates' in each of the three locations.

Body paragraph 2 will describe 'male participation rates' for each of the three areas.

Now, let's finish with another example.

Here's our data.

It's a table. You can see that it shows data for the number of international students studying intensive English courses in Australia.

We have the number of students in 2002, 2003 and 2004 for five countries: China, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Netherlands.

introductory paragraph
The table presents data, supplied by the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET), on the participation rates in higher education from three locations: urban, rural and remote. The data is divided into two sets: female and male participation.

body paragraph 1
female participation rates
urban
rural
remote

body paragraph 2
male participation rates
urban
rural
remote

	2002	2003	2004
China	11070	11426	11748
Korea	4355	7237	7471
Taiwan	2918	2733	2465
Hong Kong	2803	2308	1768
Netherlands	22	18	37

So, how could you structure this essay?

One option is to have body paragraphs for each of the three years. Within those paragraphs you'd have to describe data for the 5 countries.

You might be able to think of some other structuring options as well. If you want to practice with some more examples, just go to our study English website.

It's at abcasiapacific.com/studyenglish.

And that's all for today. I'll see you next time, for more. Bye bye