

Writing for an Academic Discussion (WAD): Sample Questions and Responses

گروه TOEFL iBT مرکز زبان دکتر برزآبادی

www.ibtil.org

Contents

TOEFL iBT® Writing for an Academic Discussion Rubrics	3
How Responses Are Scored	5
Inside the TOEFL® Test – Writing for an Academic Discussion Question	9
Open-ended Questions	12
Sample Question 1	12
Sample Response 1	13
Sample Question 2	17
Sample Response 2	18
Sample Question 3	18
Sample Response 3	19
Paired Choice Questions	20
Sample Question 1	20
Sample Response 1	21
Sample Question 2	23
Sample Response 2	24
Sample Question 3	25
Sample Response 3	26
Sample Question 4	27
Sample Response 4	28
More Sample Responses	30

TOEFL iBT® Writing for an Academic Discussion Rubrics

Score	Description
5	<p>A fully successful response</p> <p>The response is a relevant and very clearly expressed contribution to the online discussion, and it demonstrates consistent facility in the use of language.</p> <p>A typical response displays the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant and well-elaborated explanations, exemplifications, and/or details • Effective use of a variety of syntactic structures and precise, idiomatic word choice • Almost no lexical or grammatical errors other than those expected from a competent writer writing under timed conditions e.g., common typos or common misspellings or substitutions like there/their
4	<p>A generally successful response</p> <p>The response is a relevant contribution to the online discussion, and facility in the use of language allows the writer's ideas to be easily understood.</p> <p>A typical response displays the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant and adequately elaborated explanations, exemplifications, and/or details • A variety of syntactic structures and appropriate word choice • Few lexical or grammatical errors
3	<p>A partially successful response</p> <p>The response is a mostly relevant and mostly understandable contribution to the online discussion, and there is some facility in the use of language.</p> <p>A typical response displays the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration in which part of an explanation, example, or detail may be missing, unclear, or irrelevant • Some variety in syntactic structures and a range of vocabulary

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some noticeable lexical and grammatical errors in sentence structure, word form, or use of idiomatic language
2	<p>A mostly unsuccessful response</p> <p>The response reflects an attempt to contribute to the online discussion, but limitations in the use of language may make ideas hard to follow.</p> <p>A typical response displays the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas that may be poorly elaborated or only partially relevant A limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary An accumulation of errors in sentence structure, word forms, or use
1	<p>An unsuccessful response</p> <p>The response reflects an ineffective attempt to contribute to the online discussion, and limitations in the use of language may prevent the expression of ideas.</p> <p>A typical response may display the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words and phrases that indicate an attempt to address the task but with few or no coherent ideas Severely limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary Serious and frequent errors in the use of language Minimal original language; any coherent language is mostly borrowed from the stimulus
0	<p>The response is blank, rejects the topic, is not in English, is entirely copied from the prompt, is entirely unconnected to the prompt, or consists of arbitrary keystrokes.</p>

Tips for Writing Your Response

- ❖ Read carefully what the professor is asking the students to write about, as well as the points made in the other posts. This should guide you in coming up with ideas to contribute to the discussion. You can spend a few seconds brainstorming what you want to write about, but do not spend too much time planning your response. Decide what you want to write about and start writing.
- ❖ In your response, clearly state your viewpoint on the professor's question. **You can agree with the ideas in the other posts, disagree with them, or develop entirely new ideas that are relevant to the topic of the discussion, but always make sure to use your own words and your own voice as much as you can.** Copying a lot of words and phrases from the other posts will not help you get a good score.
- ❖ Use precise words, not words that are too general. **Also, do not use examples or reasons that you memorized word for word previously** (at school, for example). Raters will not consider examples or reasons expressed in a completely memorized language to represent your own writing and your response will receive a lower score.
- ❖ Save a little time to proofread your work.

How Responses Are Scored

Raters will judge the quality of your writing. They will consider whether the response is a relevant and very clearly expressed contribution to the online discussion and whether it demonstrates consistent facility in the use of language, both in terms of the variety of grammatical structure and vocabulary and of how correctly and accurately you use language.

Contribution to the discussion is a very important criterion used to evaluate your response. **Remember that the discussion includes the professor's question as well as the posts by other students. You do not have to respond to the posts by the other students, but your response should not ignore what the other posts say.**

For example, if you want to use ideas that the other students have already mentioned, do not make it seem as though you are the first person in the discussion to raise them. At the same time, contributing to a discussion does not necessarily mean coming up with a lot of new ideas. One can also contribute to a discussion by agreeing with what someone else has already written. In that case, however, make sure that you don't just repeat what someone else has written—use your own words and your own voice, and elaborate on the ideas in your own way. Of course, other very effective ways of making your own contribution to the discussion are disagreeing with what the other posts say or introducing entirely new ideas as long as they are relevant to the topic of the discussion.

Raters are looking for ideas that are clear and well supported by reasons and examples. Since your response represents an online post, it does not need to be organized into separate paragraphs. However, your ideas need to be well connected, coherent, and clear. If you use a lot of words and sentences that are not well connected and do not support each other or that do not add up to a clear point of view or if you develop empty ideas, you'll receive a low score.

Another important criterion used by raters is variety in the use of language. The raters are looking for evidence that you can use a variety of structures and varied vocabulary. If you use very simple sentences and very basic vocabulary, you will probably not be able to express very complex or precise ideas. However, the variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary should be natural and support your ideas. If you try to use varied structures or vocabulary without a good reason, that will not help you get a high score. The final criterion is the correct use of language. It is important that your use of grammar is strong and consistent, that your word choices are correct and appropriate, and that your spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are correct. Your writing doesn't have to be absolutely perfect to get a top score, but the few small mistakes you may leave behind have to be typical of competent writers writing under timed conditions. If you make a lot of grammatical errors and if those errors make it hard to understand your meaning, you will get a lower score. In general, if your language

is hard to follow, your sentences are overly simple, and your vocabulary is limited, you may score no higher than a 3 no matter how impressive your ideas may be.

Lastly, a few words of caution about using memorized or formulaic language or other strategies that are not helpful in composing successful responses. **Do not try to add words to your response by using long memorized introductory or concluding phrases and sentences. They represent neither authentic writing nor the type of writing used in online discussions.** Raters will not look favorably on wordy introductions or conclusions such as the following:

The importance of the issue raised by the posed statement, namely creating a new holiday for people, cannot be underestimated, as it concerns the very fabric of society. As it stands, the issue of creating a new holiday raises profound implications for the future. However, although the subject matter in general cannot be dismissed lightheartedly, the perspective of the issue as presented by the statement raises certain qualms regarding practical application.

In conclusion, although I have to accept that it is imperative that something be done about creating a new holiday for people and find the underlying thrust of the implied proposal utterly convincing, I cannot help but feel wary of taking such irrevocable steps and personally feel that a more measured approach would be more rewarding.

Similarly, do not use other memorized sentences and examples in your response. **Extended stretches of memorized text do not represent the writer's true academic writing skills.** Responses that include memorized examples, arguments, or formulaic references to sources will receive considerably lower scores than responses containing the writer's own words. Here is an example of an extensive use of memorized text:

Professor's question in brief: Is honesty an important quality for a leader? By taking in mind the honesty, we can learn proper social behavior. in addition to my personal experience, there is a research that confirms my opinion. A poll, conducted by the New York times, stated an overwhelming 72% who did not think the honesty lack the code of conduct in society. however, people who did regularly contemplate the importance of

not lying were better regulating themselves in the societies. the major characteristic were that they do not lie in their daily life and seve honesty is the most important value in the societies because there is a order for people's lives. therefore it helps one abiltiy to be successful either in business or in academia. it helps people to strive and achieve their goal and making them successful in life.

All the writing in this example has been memorized from a prepared text and repeated in the essay. This includes a formulaic reference to a poll in The New York Times. This is not genuine development and will not be credited by raters. Responses with this type of writing often receive a low score.

Likewise, raters will not look favorably on paragraphs like the following one, which uses a lot of words but fails to develop any real ideas:

At the heart of any discussion regarding an issue pertaining to creating a new holiday, it has to be borne in mind that a delicate line has to be trod when dealing with such matters. The human resources involved in such matters cannot be guaranteed regardless of all the good intentions that may be lavished. While it is true that creating a new holiday might be a viable and laudable remedy, it is transparently clear that applied wrongly such a course of action could be calamitous and compound the problem rather than provide a solution.

In your writing, make sure you develop some solid ideas about the given topic. Do not just use a lot of words saying that a certain issue exists. Your response may be 100 or even 200 words long, but if it consists largely of the sorts of empty or content-free expressions shown, you will probably earn a score of just 1 or 2.

Inside the TOEFL® Test – Writing for an Academic Discussion Question

A video by ETS: https://www.ets.org/toefl/transcript/writing-for-an-academic-discussion-task.html?utm_medium=soc&utm_source=LinkedIn_Organic&utm_campaign=OC001-FQ223&utm_content=Organic_Well_WW_new_writing_section_static_v1&utm_term=watch

Highlights:

- ◆ You have 10 minutes to type your own post that contributes to the discussion. There's no maximum length for your response, but a good response is usually at least 100 words.
- ◆ Your opinion should contribute to the discussion. It should be clear and cohesive, and it should be developed and well supported by reasons or examples.
- ◆ The best way to approach a response is to read the discussion carefully and then come up with one or two ideas you would like to contribute to the discussion.
- ◆ You could take some inspiration from one of the other posts.
- ◆ When you give your opinion, you may refer to one of the other student posts to agree or disagree, but make sure to use your own words and phrases. Don't just copy what the other students have written.
- ◆ Before the test, make sure you understand what the raters are looking for and how each question is scored. Responses in the writing section will each be given an overall score from 0 to 5. For question 2, the writing for an academic discussion task, the raters are looking for three main things-- relevant and clearly developed ideas, variety in the use of language, and a correct use of language.

◆ First, relevant and clearly developed ideas. The raters are looking for ideas that contribute to the discussion and are well supported by reasons and examples. If you just use a lot of words and sentences that are not well connected and do not support each other, or that don't add up to a clear point of view, or if you develop empty ideas, you'll receive a low score.

◆ Second, variety in the use of language. The raters are looking for evidence that you can use a variety of structures and vocabulary. The variety should be natural and support your ideas. If you try to use varied structures of vocabulary without a good reason, that will not help you get a high score.

◆ The third criterion is a correct use of language. It is important that your use of grammar is strong and consistent, that your word choices are correct and appropriate, and that your spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are correct. Your writing doesn't have to be absolutely perfect to get a top score, but the few small mistakes you may leave behind have to be typical of competent writers writing under timed conditions.

◆ And don't try to create an answer by memorizing sentences or paragraphs on various topics before the test and then trying to relate them to the topic you receive, because the content won't be appropriate, and you'll just receive a low score.

به نظر می رسد به طور کلی با دو نوع سوال در این تستک مواجه می شویم:

1. Open-ended Questions
2. Paired Choice Questions

با بررسی نمونه های ETS برای هر کدام از دو نوع سوال می توانیم روش هایی برای پاسخ به انواع سوالات پیدا کنیم.

Open-ended Questions

در مثال زیر یک Open-ended Question ارائه شده است. در این نوع سوال انتخاب مشخص به داوطلب داده نمی شود. در واقع سوال می پرسد یک مورد را درباره موضوعی بیان کنید مثلاً بهترین راه برای انجام کاری، مهم ترین چیز در مورد موضوعی یا بهترین راه حل برای یک مشکل را بیان نمایید. در نمونه زیر می توانید سوال اصلی استاد را که با رنگ آبی مشخص شده ببینید.

Sample Question 1

- Your professor is teaching a class on economics. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response you should:

- express and support your opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words. You will have 10 minutes to write it.

- Dr. Achebe**

When people are asked about the most important discoveries or inventions made in the last two hundred years, they usually mention something very obvious, like the computer or the cell phone. But there are thousands of other discoveries or inventions that have had a huge impact on how we live today.

What scientific discovery or technological invention from the last two hundred years—other than computers and cell phones—would you choose as being important? Why?

- Paul**

I mean, we're so used to science and technology that we are not even aware of all the things we use in our daily lives. I would probably choose space satellites. This technology happened in the last hundred years, and it has become important for so many things. Just think about navigation, or telecommunications, or even the military.

- **Claire**

I am thinking about medical progress. Like, for example, when scientists discovered things about healthy nutrition. I am thinking of identifying all the vitamins we need to stay healthy. I am not sure exactly when the vitamin discoveries happened, but I know they are very important. Our health is much better than it was 200 years ago.

به نکات این سوال و نمونه پاسخی که در ادامه آمده توجه نمایید:

- سوال از شما خواسته مهم ترین اکتشاف یا اختراع 200 سال اخیر را از دیدگاه خود مطرح نمایید.
- سوال تاکید کرده انتخاب شما باید مواردی غیر از کامپیوتر و موبایل باشد. (پس وقتی سوالات را می خوانید دقت کنید این موارد را از دست ندهید و off-topic ننویسید.)
- سوال از شما نخواست به بین دو یا سه مورد مشخص انتخاب نمایید. به همین دلیل این سوال open-ended محسوب می شود.
- هر کدام از دانشجوها یک مورد را در پاسخ به سوال مطرح می کنند. اما نمونه ETS یک مورد جدید را در پاسخ به سوال مطرح نموده و همان را بسط می دهد.

Sample Response 1

In the past 200 years, tons of scientific discoveries or technological inventions have been shown to the world. If I had to choose one in particular it will probably be vaccine or antibiotics. With Pasteur's work and discoveries, the world changed in a way people couldn't imagine. So many people were dying really young because at that time life's conditions were not as good as the one we have now. With vaccine, we could now eradicate diseases that were killing millions of people, we learn so much about the immune system and ways our body reacts to pathogens and the answers it could produce to defend us against them. Medicine evolved so much and keeps evolving every day because scientists are curious to understand how our body is working and how it is able to communicate with our environment. People aged 40 are now not that old and still have a really long life to live and enjoy when 2 centuries ago it was synonymous of 80% chance of dying.

- 170 words

در نمونه بالا، نویسنده در ابتدا به سوال به صورت مستقیم پاسخ می دهد (TS) و در ادامه دلایل و جزئیات خوبی برای پاسخ خود ارائه می نماید. در این پاسخ، نویسنده هیچ اشاره ای به نظرات دو دانشجو ندارد و توضیحات ETS در ادامه نشان می دهد این نمونه -علیرغم ایرادات جزئی گرامری- می تواند نمره کامل را در این تسک کسب نماید. پس طبق این نمونه، لازم نیست حتما به نظرات دانشجویان دیگر که در Discussion Board مطرح شد اشاره نمایید و دیدگاه خود را در مورد نظرات آنان بیان نمایید. لطفا توضیحات ETS را در مورد نمونه پاسخ بالا به دقت بررسی نمایید.

Score Explanation

- **This is a fully successful response.** The writer chooses vaccines/antibiotics as the most important invention of the past 200 years. The author then provides a description, for contrast, of what life was like before Pasteur's work (people dying young) and after the vaccine was created (millions of lives saved, more understanding of the immune system). The writer continues on to point out that medicine continues to evolve because of Pasteur's work and how human lifespans have been extended. **Overall, the response provides well-elaborated explanations and details to support the main opinion and provides a relevant contribution to the discussion.**
- While there are almost no errors in grammar and word choice, there are a few minor ones that have little impact on meaning (such as "life's conditions were not as good as the one we have" rather than "were not as good as they are now," and "how our body is working and how he is able to communicate" rather than "how it is able to communicate"). **However, these errors are fairly minor** and such errors might be expected when writing under timed conditions. **The writer is able to use some complex sentences and relatively precise vocabulary, which is expected in a 5-level response.**

به یک نمونه سوال دیگر از نوع open-ended توجه نمایید.

Section 1 of 1


00:09:46 Hide Timer

Your professor is teaching a class on sociology. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.


- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.




Doctor Achebe

Let's think about population trends in urban and rural areas (villages). Living in urban areas can be expensive; nonetheless, when they have a choice of where to live, people in some countries do not wish to live in rural areas even if the cost of living there is lower. If governments of some countries want to attract more people to live in rural areas or villages, what is the best strategy or approach that governments can use? Why?



Claire

I would live in a rural area if the government gave more financial help to farmers. Although it may cost very little to live in a rural area, it costs a lot to begin a career in agriculture. If I had financial help, I would start my own farm and be happy to live in a rural area.



Kelly

In my country, urban centers are great places to live because you can access shops, restaurants, and museums. If the government of my country wanted to attract me to live in a rural area, the area would first have to attract more businesses focused on entertainment and culture than most rural areas have now.

Cut Paste Undo Redo

Hide Word Count 0

در این سوال از داوطلب خواسته شده بهترین استراتژی برای تشویق نمودن مردم به زندگی در مناطق روستایی را بیان نماید. داوطلب یک استراتژی (مثلاً develop infrastructure) را انتخاب می نماید و با یک یا دو دلیل نظر خود را بسط/توضیح می دهد.

داوطلب می تواند از نظر یکی از دو دانشجو Discussion Board استفاده نماید. اما دلایل و جزئیات ارائه شده باید متفاوت از آنچه باشد که دانشجو در Discussion Board مطرح کرده است. به بیان ساده، قرار نیست نظرات آن دو دانشجو در پاسخ شما کپی شود.

در برخی موارد این سوالات، چالشی هستند. به نمونه زیر توجه نمایید.

Section 1 of 1


00:09:13 Hide Timer

Your professor is teaching a class on environmental science. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.


- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.




Doctor Diaz

Nowadays, the world is facing a number of pressing environmental problems, and over the next few weeks, we'll be discussing various innovations that may help solve these problems. To begin our discussion, I'd like you to think of one global environmental problem—for example, it could be related to water, air, land, climate, biodiversity, energy, or something similar. Then explain what you think would be an effective solution to this problem.



Kelly

One of the major environmental problems is the limited freshwater supply in many areas of the world, which means that we need to find effective technologies to provide people with enough drinking water. One solution is to improve the technology for removing salt from seawater, which could allow us to use seawater to replenish dwindling freshwater supplies.



Paul

I think the biggest problem is the air pollution caused by the overuse of motorized vehicles. The obvious solution is for local governments to promote alternatives, like building bike lanes in cities or improving public transportation with electric buses. Both of these would be easy to implement as well.

Cut Paste Undo Redo

Hide Word Count 0

این سوال از شما می خواهد یک مشکل زیست محیطی و یک راه حل برای آن بیان نمایید. دقت نمایید این نوع در فرمت قدیم آزمون وجود نداشت. با اینکه تعداد این نوع سوالات در نمونه سوالات ETS کم هست، اما به هر حال باید برای انواع سوالات آماده بود و استراتژی مشخص برای پاسخ به آن اتخاذ نمود.

در این سوال داوطلب مثلاً می تواند Climate Change را انتخاب نموده و کوتاه توضیح دهد چرا این مشکل جدی هست و سپس یک راه حل برای آن ارائه نماید (مثل Climate education and awareness) و توضیح دهد چرا این راه حل موثر است.

حال به یک نمونه سوال دیگر توجه نمایید:

Sample Question 2

Your professor is teaching a class on sociology. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response you should:

- express and support your opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.



Dr. Diaz

Over the next few weeks, we are going to look at lots of different materials about the role of television programs and television watching in people's lives. But first, I want to know what you think about this topic. So here's a question for the class discussion board:

What do you think is the most significant effect that watching television has on people? Why do you think television has this effect?



Kelly

I know that one way that television influences people's behavior is that when you are watching television, you are not moving around or exercising. This is especially true for children. When children spend a lot of time watching television, they have a greater tendency to be overweight.



Paul

I think the main effect that television has on people is to broaden their experience. There are so many programs devoted to nature and travel. Think of all the different places in the world you can experience through television! Last night I watched a program about life in Antarctica, and it was fascinating!

Cut	Paste	Undo	Word Count: 0	Hide	8:43

این سوال نیز Open-ended می باشد و از داوطلب می خواهد مهم ترین اثر تماشای تلویزیون را بیان نماید. بر خلاف نمونه پاسخ قبلی، نمونه پاسخ زیر به نظر یکی از دو دانشجو اشاره می نماید (قسمت آبی) و سپس نظرات و دلایل خود را ارائه می کند. این نظرات و دلایل صرفاً تکرار کامنت های دانشجویان در Discussion Board نیست.

Sample Response 2

- In my opinion, **Paul is right when he says that watching television might broaden your experience.** By watching for example science programs, you can gain valuable insights into new topics. On the other hand, I think that a high percentage of people don't watch TV to increase their knowledge. I am of the opinion that many people watch TV in order to get distracted from their real lives. They watch films or series to be entertained and to forget problems they have at work or in their private lives. At least for me this works well -for instance if I am sad, I watch a comedy or a funny soap opera and afterwards, I am in a better mood. Therefore, I think that being entertained and distracted is the most significant effect of TV.

134 words

نمونه ای دیگر از کتاب Official Guide با نمونه پاسخ کوتاه تر:

Sample Question 3

Your professor is teaching a class on human resource management. Write a post responding

to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.

- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

Dr. Diaz

This week, we are discussing professional development, or workplace training. Some employees prefer to develop skills that will help them do their current job better. Others prefer to focus on training that helps them prepare for a better position in the future. **Which kind of professional development opportunities are more important for an employee to take advantage of? Why?**

Claire

It is far more important to focus on expanding skills that are relevant to your current job. By strengthening skills that can be put to use immediately, employees will get themselves noticed by their managers and be able to quickly advance at the company.

Paul

Companies offer a variety of training programs, and employees should take whatever opportunity is given to them, even if it is not directly related to their current job. You never know when a better job opportunity will present itself. Focusing only on skills related to your current job will not necessarily make you the best candidate for a better position.

Sample Response 3

I believe it depends on the stage of employment and the year of experience the employee has at the current position. On the one hand, if an employee just joined a new team, it is definitely for the new entrant to focus on training and learning skills that would be helpful for the current position. On the other hand, if an experience employee who is already familiar enough with all current tasks is looking for advancements, it would be helpful to learn new techniques to help them do better in the future. Also, with the development of technology, it is critical to keep learning new technical skills in the fast-changing business world.

112 words

Rater Comments

This writer has composed a very clearly expressed contribution to the online discussion, demonstrating consistent facility in the use of language. The writer clearly explains that the strategy employees should use for training depends on how long they have stayed with a company: new employees should focus on perfecting the skills they need for the current jobs, while experienced employees should learn new skills for the future. The writer adds that technological changes force everyone to keep up. The writer uses an effective variety of structures and precise word choices, with just a few slipups that can be expected from competent writers working under timed conditions: "it is definitely for the new entrant" (missing "important" after "definitely") and "an experience employee."

Paired Choice Questions

نوع دوم سوالات تسک 2 مهارت Writing سوالات Paired/Multiple Choice می باشد. در این نوع سوالات از شما خواسته می شود بین دو (یا گاهی سه) گزینه، یکی را انتخاب و دلیل/دلایل خود را بیان نمایید و بسط دهید. به مثال زیر توجه نمایید.

Sample Question 1

Your professor is teaching a class on education. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.

- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

Dr. Achebe

This week we analyzed some aspects of current educational systems. One type of school system we discussed was boarding schools, which, as the name suggests, is a type of school where students live during the school year. *I would like you to discuss whether you consider boarding schools beneficial for students' education or whether you think day schools, or schools where students do not live at the schools, are better for most students. Explain why you think so.*

Claire

I would have loved to have attended a boarding school. I feel like boarding schools would have helped me establish a strict daily routine and helped me become more disciplined. Also, being in a boarding school means that you are with friends and classmates around the clock, and I would have loved such an opportunity.

Andrew

I personally do not support the boarding school system as I believe it can lead to many psychological problems. In fact, I have heard about what is referred to as "boarding school syndrome," which, in simple terms, suggests that some students who attend boarding schools at a very young age can have long-term emotional or behavioral challenges. So why take that risk if most students can just go to day schools?

سوال دو گزینه به داوطلب می دهد. آیا مدارس شبانه روزی مفید هستند یا خیر.

Sample Response 1

I am more inclined to agree that a boarding school system is beneficial. Firstly, a boarding school is a place where you can make friends with your classmates. The "roommate" relationship is somewhat strong that you may remember forever, as you wake up, eat meals, study, and go to sleep together with your roommates on every school days. Secondly, a boarding school is usually close to your school campus, which means that you do not need to commute to and from school every day. Thirdly, a boarding school is not a place merely for a disciplined life; it often conducts various activities to help you get immersed in the living environment and make your life more colorful, which cannot be experienced at home. I personally do not agree with Andrew's point that boarding school places high mental pressure on students, as boarding schools are not prisons and students are still free to leave on weekends to bond with their family and pursue their interests.

164 words

Rater Comments

This response earned a score of 5. The writer has composed a very clearly expressed contribution to the online discussion, demonstrating consistent facility in the use of language. The writer clearly states a preference for boarding schools and proceeds to provide several arguments explaining that preference. It praises the intense companionships with schoolmates that boarding schools offer, leaving a student with memories for a lifetime; it points out how boarding schools take commuting out of the equation and also how many varied activities they offer to their students. Finally, it takes issue with Andrew's concerns about psychological problems, explaining that boarding school students are not prisoners and can visit their families and bond with them on weekends. The writer uses an effective variety of structures and precise word choices, especially as the response moves past its opening sentences, and the few errors we can find at the beginning ("is somewhat strong that you remember" and "on every school days") can be expected from a very competent nonnative speaker writing under timed conditions that leave little time for editing and correcting all of one's slips and stumbles. Note that high-level responses are not required to provide several arguments or reasons, as this response does. Many fully successful responses offer one extended argument or reason that is detailed and well elaborated.

در نمونه بالا، نویسنده در ابتدای پاراگراف به وضوح به سوال پاسخ می دهد و دلایلی برای نظر خود بیان می کند. در ادامه به نظر یکی از دو دانشجو (Andrew) اشاره می کند و توضیح می دهد چرا با نظر او مخالف است. دقت کنید که نظر Andrew صرفاً تکرار نمی شود. نویسنده دلیل خود برای رد نظر Andrew را بیان می نماید.

Sample Question 2

Your professor is teaching a class on sociology. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.

- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

Dr. Diaz

This week we will be studying trends in food shopping. One of them is meal-kit websites. On these sites, the customers first select one or more meals, and then the companies deliver to their homes the cooking instructions plus just enough grocery ingredients to prepare the selected meals. The customers then prepare their meals at home. Do you think this is a positive trend? Explain why or why not.

Andrew

It's especially positive if you don't have any kitchen skills. I've tried that kind of service, and even though I'm not a good cook, the meal came out tasting pretty good. I think I'm learning how to cook! It's probably especially helpful for younger people, who might not even know how to choose the best ingredients at grocery stores.

Claire

It might be convenient, but this is definitely not a positive trend. Think of the effect on the environment of all the trucks delivering packaged groceries for just a few meals to all those houses, week after week, all over the city! We really have to stop favoring convenience over environmental impacts.

Topic Notes

In this prompt, the professor asks for student opinions about whether meal-kit delivery is a positive trend, and to explain their view. The first student, Andrew, thinks it is positive, because it can help young people learn how to cook, which has in fact helped him. Claire agrees that it is convenient but worries about the environmental impact of the package delivery to multiple households, so she thinks it is a negative trend. **Test takers are expected to contribute their own opinion on the topic, either by coming up with completely new ideas, by engaging with or expanding on Claire's or Andrew's opinions, or by giving a mixed opinion.** They could say, for example, that, overall, it is a positive trend and explain why, then note some comparatively negative minor drawbacks.

Sample Response 2

Meal-kit websites have started an interesting trend—on the one hand, they try to ensure a healthy home-cooked meal and on the other hand there is a concern of additional truck traffic on the roadways hurting the environment. The important part is to strike the right balance, which is always hard to achieve. The advantages of this trend, however, might outweigh the negatives. It enables families that are busy to relax and enjoy a home-cooked meal—it can also bring families together since cooking together at home can be fun. One needs to understand that the alternative would be for individuals to potentially still get in their vehicles and drive to the grocery stores and purchase ingredients themselves, or to order delivery or pick-up food, or eat out. All of these actions also result in additional vehicle trips that affect the environment. Ultimately, it is important for individuals to ensure the right balance but overall, meal-kit websites seem to present a positive trend.

163 words

Rater Comments

This high-level response makes a fully successful, relevant and clearly expressed contribution to the discussion board. The response notes the opposing viewpoints represented by Andrew and Claire (“... try to ensure a healthy homecooked meal” versus

“additional truck traffic on the roadways”) and then goes on to say that the advantages of the meal-kit trend outweigh the disadvantages, followed by plenty of elaboration supporting this view. The response uses a variety of grammatical structures and precise, effective word choices, with few errors in either vocabulary or grammar.

نویسنده با اشاره کوتاه به نظرات دو دانشجو پاسخ خود را آغاز و سپس دیدگاه خود را به وضوح اعلام می کند. اینکه علیرغم معایبی که وجود دارد، meal-kit websites ایده خوبی است.

Sample Question 3

Your professor is teaching a class on ecology. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.

- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

Dr. Gupta

Today, there is debate over how we should treat natural ecosystems, meaning wilderness areas that are basically untouched by human activity. These natural ecosystems were once seen purely as resources to be exploited, but many people now believe that wilderness areas should be protected from any human use or interference so that they continue developing completely naturally. To what extent do you support protecting and preserving natural ecosystems? Should some wilderness areas be totally protected from human use?

Andrew

People who are already struggling to feed their families are the ones most likely to be affected by, for example, a ban on mining in a wilderness area. We cannot prohibit human activities in natural ecosystems without economic consequences. I believe humans have a fundamental right to use natural resources for survival and to build wealth.

Kelly

There are very few truly wild places left on Earth, and once they're gone, we can never get them back. I believe we need to protect our remaining natural ecosystems from human interference. Not only will the animals and plants in those places benefit, but so will we humans because our own survival depends on the health of our planet.

Sample Response 3

All living things are entitled to live on this earth. Humans are the only species that can globally affect other species and make them extinct by altering nature and affecting the lives of other species. I do agree with Kelly that we should try our best to preserve nature as much as possible. Designating areas to be preserved from human living is good. Places like national parks where people are allowed to visit but not allowed to live in, should be an adequate solution. We should still be able to enjoy the nature but not to destroy them. It is also critical to the overall survival of this world.

109 words

Rater Comments

The response is a relevant and very clearly expressed contribution to the online discussion, and it demonstrates consistent facility in the use of language. The writer takes the position of preserving the wilderness because "All living things are entitled to live on this earth." The writer, while agreeing with Kelly's position ("I do agree with Kelly that we should try our best to preserve nature as much as possible"), goes on to recommend a solution for the issue by suggesting that "designating areas to be preserved from human living is good. Places like national parks where people are allowed to visit but not allowed to live in, should be an adequate solution." The relevant and well-elaborated explanations, together with the presence of few lexical or grammatical errors, warrant a high score for this response.

Sample Question 4

Your professor is teaching a class on psychology. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.

Express and support your opinion.

Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

Dr. Diaz

This week we've been looking at research on human happiness. One expert has two pieces of advice that may seem contradictory: "To make yourself happier, focus on making other people happy. One of the best ways to make other people happy is to focus more on your own happiness." To increase your own happiness, do you think it is more effective to focus on both of these things or on only one? Why?

Andrew

I believe both of these ideas are true. It seems obvious to me that there is joy in helping others. At the same time, if a person doesn't focus on making himself or herself happy, that person will never be able to contribute much to society, because they will lack the energy and enthusiasm needed to do so.

Claire

I would argue that it is better to focus only on making others happy. To me, that advice about focusing more on your own happiness is a step toward selfishness and to seeing one's own interests as separate from and maybe even conflicting with the interests of everyone around you, and that is not something I'd recommend for anybody trying to reduce unhappiness.

Topic Notes

The question and the discussion should come across clearly to the test takers. The setup is engaging and relevant to test takers, so it should elicit clear and ample opinions and

contributions on both sides of the issue. The professor's central question is whether it is better to focus both on your own happiness as well as on making others happy, or whether you should focus on just one of them.

Andrew argues that the focus should be on both, while Claire thinks it is better to focus only on making others happy.

Test takers can contribute to the discussion in a number of ways. They can expand on Andrew's ideas that both are important, they can agree with Claire that one should focus only on making others happy, or they could take an entirely different view—that people should only worry about making themselves happy, for instance (perhaps even adding that this does not conflict with making others happy). Regardless of their viewpoint, test takers should provide a clear explanation for their opinion.

Sample Response 4

I agree with Andrew's point that we need to focus on making ourselves happy. Happy persons are more able to help people around them. But I think Claire is right too, when she suggests that selfishness may be a risk in looking too close for your own happiness.

In avoiding this danger, a good strategie could be helping others not in the way we would like to be helped, but in the way they would like to be helped. Then your happiness would not only be the condition for the happiness of people around you, but also something you owe to them (and in the measure your happiness helps them).

110 words

Rater Comments

This high-level response makes a fully successful, relevant and clearly-expressed contribution to the discussion board. The writer takes a mid-position by agreeing with both Andrew ("I agree with Andrew's point that we need to focus on making ourselves happy") and Claire ("But I think Claire is right too, when she suggests that selfishness may be a risk in looking too close for your own happiness"). The writer then goes on to add their own contribution to the discussion by stating that the best way to help people is "helping others not in the way we would like to be helped, but in the way they would like to be helped." The writer ends their response by stating how one's happiness "would

not only be the condition for the happiness of people around you, but also something you owe to them.” Given the consistent language facility and very clearly expressed contribution to the online discussion, this illustrates a high-level response.

در نمونه سوال زیر از داوطلب خواسته شده بین سه گزینه، یکی را انتخاب نماید.

Section 1 of 1


00:09:46 Hide Timer

write a post responding to the professors question.

In your response, you should do the following.


- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.




Doctor Gupta

Let's discuss how teachers' job performance is assessed or evaluated. Regular evaluations of teachers help to ensure that students receive high-quality instruction, that good teachers are rewarded, and that struggling teachers receive help to improve. But what is the best way to evaluate teachers? Should teachers be evaluated based on their students' test scores? Should more-experienced teachers evaluate less-experienced teachers? Should students' feedback be considered? Which approach is best, and why?



Andrew

I think experienced senior teachers are the best source of information for teacher evaluations. School leaders can assign experienced teachers to observe their fellow teachers periodically during class, and these senior teachers can then provide feedback on their colleagues' performance. An experienced teacher has the knowledge to determine what other teachers are doing well and what needs improvement.



Kelly

I'm not convinced that any one person's occasional visits to a classroom would provide accurate information. I'd like a more objective, fairer source of data, so I'd prefer to rely on test scores to inform teacher evaluations. If all students take the same test, and some classes perform better than others, then we know which teachers have been most successful.

Cut Paste Undo Redo

Hide Word Count 0

More Sample Responses

نمونه پاسخ های زبان آموزانی که نمره بالا در آزمون کسب نمودند.


Section 1 of 1 00:09:44 Hide Timer

to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.


- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.




Doctor Achebe

In our discussion on the importance of workplace mentoring, we learned that mentoring (training or guiding someone) is typically associated with senior employees—that is, workers who have been at a company for a long time and mentor younger colleagues. However, at some companies, especially those that use innovative technology, younger employees sometimes train or guide senior colleagues. Do you think that it is a good idea for companies to encourage younger employees to mentor senior coworkers? Why or why not?



Claire

I support the idea of having younger employees mentor senior ones. Technology is developing so rapidly these days, and young people are much more skilled in dealing with technology than older employees are. It's the ideal way for senior employees to learn new digital skills.



Kelly

Claire makes a good point, but technology aside, I do not think that younger employees make good mentors right away. When younger employees join companies, they often lack the experience needed to be fully effective in their roles. They should be mentored by senior coworkers who have achieved a high level of expertise in their work.

Cut Paste Undo Redo Hide Word Count 0

Sample Response:

I strongly believe that younger employees are not qualified enough to mentor their senior colleagues. Therefore, companies should not encourage them to take on this task. First off, since training other people requires extensive experience in the relevant area of the company, these junior employees could not accomplish this task well. Although, as Claire mentioned, keeping up with the latest technology is important, it is not sufficient for the crucial task of mentoring. Having experience as senior employees lets them know the ways of training other people effectively and consequently, they will employ the best plan to guide them. Moreover, due to senior coworkers' years of experience and hard work, they may be reluctant to accept pieces of advice or learning materials from junior colleagues. As a result of this reluctance, conflicts might occur between coworkers and indeed, this is not beneficial for the company's future achievements.

Section 1 of 1


00:09:52 Hide Timer

your professor is teaching a class on sociology. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.


- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.




Doctor Gupta

This week, we'll be looking into family dynamics. One common concern in our field is that due to busy schedules, many families have limited time to spend together, so connections within families may grow weaker over time. Let's begin by discussing the following viewpoint: the best way for a family to strengthen family bonds is to work on something together, for example, cooking, gardening, or working on a craft project. Do you agree or disagree with this viewpoint? Why?



Andrew

I agree. Families feel more connected while working together rather than while doing passive activities, such as watching TV. While working together, family members have an opportunity to engage in an in-depth discussion and share their thoughts and feelings. Working toward a common goal, such as planting a garden, helps families create happy memories and feel a sense of accomplishment.



Claire

I don't think working together is the best way for every family to strengthen family bonds because every family is different and even within one family, it is difficult to find tasks that are interesting to everyone. While working together, family members may disagree about how to best accomplish tasks, which may result in an argument.

Cut Paste Undo Redo

Hide Word Count 0

Sample Response:

I do agree that one of the best ways to fortify family bonds is doing activities such as cooking, storytelling and playing games together. Although such activities may cause conflicts at times, as Claire rightly pointed out, they all serve to help family members learn how to resolve conflicts and spend quality time with each other, which in turn will improve family ties. Through such activities, not only do family members especially the young ones learn how to talk through problems and express their concerns, but also they develop conflict resolution skills. Back in my childhood, I used to have arguments with my siblings, but doing simple activities like cooking and dancing with my family members taught me how to be caring and responsible in my relationships. To put it differently, I learned how to sympathize with others and develop a deep relationship with them. Had I not done these activities with my family, I would not be able to count on my family members whenever I encounter difficulties. In short, doing activities together is by far the most practical way to strengthen family ties.

منابع:

The Official Guide to the TOEFL iBT Test, Seventh Edition

www.ets.org