English Coaching Studio

IELTS WRITING PRACTICE GUIDE

10 common IELTS writing mistakes

Use these examples and corrections to review your next practice response.

1 Answering only part of the question

EXAMPLE The prompt asks for causes and solutions, but the essay only lists causes.

FIX Mark both parts of the prompt and plan a paragraph for each.

2 Leaving your position unclear

EXAMPLE "There are many opinions about public transport."

FIX If asked for your view, state it clearly in the introduction and keep it consistent. "I agree that fares should be lower, but not that travel should be free for everyone."

3 Listing ideas without developing them

EXAMPLE "Libraries help students, improve communities, and save money."

FIX Explain one central idea and give a concrete example that supports it.

4 Leaving out the overall trend

EXAMPLE A chart response lists individual figures without describing the main pattern.

FIX Identify the main trends or contrasts and summarise them in an overview.

5 Using a verb that does not agree with its subject

EXAMPLE "The number of commuters have increased."

FIX The head noun, "number", is singular, so use "has". "The number of commuters has increased."

6 Using an awkward word combination

EXAMPLE "The council should do an effort to reduce traffic."

FIX Use the natural collocation "make an effort". "The council should make an effort to reduce traffic."

7 Using an awkward comparative form

EXAMPLE "The online system makes booking more easy."

FIX Use "easier". If the comparison is unclear, say what you are comparing. "The online system makes booking easier than queuing at the counter."

8 Joining independent clauses with only a comma

EXAMPLE "More people cycle to work, the roads are safer."

FIX Show the intended relationship. "More people cycle to work because the roads are safer."

9 Using linking phrases without a logical connection

EXAMPLE "The town added buses. However, it expanded the metro."

FIX Use "also" for another related action. Save "however" for a genuine contrast. "The town added buses. It also expanded the metro."

10 Changing tense without checking the time frame

EXAMPLE "In 2010, the figure rises to 30%."

FIX Use the past tense for an event at a specified time in the past. "In 2010, the figure rose to 30%."

WRITING TASK 2 PRACTICE

Try an opinion essay

> **Some people think public transport in cities should be free for everyone. To what extent do you agree or disagree?**

PLAN YOUR ANSWER

1. Decide how far you agree and put your position in one sentence.
2. Explain a reason someone might support free travel.
3. Explain what you would prioritise and how it would work.
4. End with a conclusion that restates your position.

WORKED ANSWER

Making public transport free could make daily journeys easier for people who struggle to pay for them. I only partly agree with this idea: cities should cut fares for passengers who need help, but I would prioritise reliable services and targeted discounts over free travel for everyone.

Position in one sentence

One argument for removing fares is that transport costs build up over time. For example, a person who takes two buses to work each day may spend a large part of their weekly budget on travel. Even a modest fare, paid four times a day, soon becomes a significant monthly expense. Removing or reducing fares would leave them more money for necessities and make it easier to accept a job farther from home. Students and people looking for work might benefit in the same way.

Reason + example

However, cost is only one factor in how people choose to travel. Free bus travel is of little help if buses run infrequently or the last bus leaves before a passenger's shift ends. Cities could spend part of the transport budget on more frequent buses at busy times, better links to neighbourhoods with few services, and schedules that cover early and late shifts. At the same time, discounts could make tickets affordable for people who struggle to pay the full price. Together, these measures would address both the cost of a journey and the practical difficulty of making it.

Contrast + solution

In conclusion, cheaper fares can remove a real barrier, but free travel for everyone would leave problems of frequency and coverage unresolved. I would combine targeted discounts with better services, so that more people can both afford public transport and rely on it every day.

Restate the position

WHY IT WORKS

The position is stated in one sentence in the introduction and stays the same to the end. Each body paragraph develops one main idea with a concrete example, and linking words such as "For example", "However" and "At the same time" show how the ideas connect. At 276 words, the answer is comfortably above the 250-word minimum.

Want feedback on your own essay?

Book a free 30-minute demo with Jeevitha at English Coaching Studio.