

Example marked candidate responses

Integrated Skills in English – ISE II

Reading & Writing exam

Task 3 – Reading into writing

Task 4 – Extended writing

Task 3 – Reading into writing

Use the information from the four texts you read in Task 2 to write a report (150-180 words) for your teacher on young people's TV watching habits and what the benefits and disadvantages are.

You should plan your report **before** you start writing. Think about what you want to say and make some notes to help you in this box:

Planning notes

(No marks are given for these planning notes)

Now write your report of 150-180 words on the lines below. Try to use your own words as far as possible – don't just copy sentences from the reading texts.

For the purpose of this document, the relevant texts are reprinted below.

Text A

TV in small doses can be an excellent educator and entertainer of young children. Pre-schoolers can get help learning things like the alphabet on television and older schoolchildren can learn about wildlife on nature shows. But despite its advantages, too much television can be harmful both physically and mentally. Research consistently shows that violent and other bad behaviour on screen negatively affects those children who experience it.

Child psychologists recommend that babies under 2 years old should not watch any TV and that those older than 2 watch no more than 1 to 2 hours a day of quality programming. The first 2 years of life are considered a critical time for brain development and function. TV and other electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others, all of which encourage learning and healthy physical and social development.

Text B

Parents – it's your responsibility to monitor and limit the time your child spends playing video games, watching TV, and on the computer and the internet.

- ✓ Treat TV and other screen time as a privilege, not a right they are entitled to.
- ✓ Make it a reward for finishing their homework, clearing the dinner table or doing other jobs.
- ✓ Turn off TV during meals and ban it from children's bedrooms.
- ✓ Stock the TV room with books, board games, toys and puzzles, to encourage children to do other activities.
- ✓ Check which programmes are suitable for you to watch together as a family and try not to leave children alone in front of the TV.
- ✓ Try a weekday ban on TV and do physical activities with your children in the evenings.
- ✓ Talk to your children about what they see on TV and try to share your own beliefs and values of what's good and bad with them.

Text C

Melanie's blog

November 10, 2014

I'm completely fed up with 'experts' telling us what we can and can't watch on our screens. Give us young people a little credit, will you?

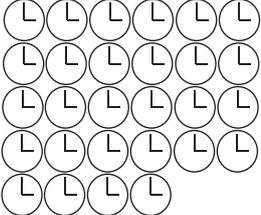
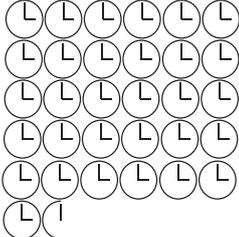
Life's about making decisions, so the sooner you start, the better. We'll learn positively from being trusted to know what TV is 'good' or 'bad' for us.

It's about time our parents listened to our views rather than laying down laws about where, what and how we entertain ourselves.

It's not realistic to prevent us from watching violence and crime. It's also not helpful. We need to learn about the big world out there, so don't stop us from finding out about it!

I'm not talking about really little kids, obviously, but teenagers? Trust us! Plus, these days, when digital devices are so common, how are adults going to be able to keep control over what we watch anyway?

Text D

Kids aged 6-11 watch about 4 hours per day		And the average pre-schooler watches even more. About 4.5 hours a day		Even when they're not watching, the average child is exposed to 4 hours of background TV per day
A total of 28 hours a week		A total of 31.5 hours a week		

Note: For the purpose of this document, candidates' planning notes are left out as they are not part of the assessment.

Sample response – Candidate A

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate young people's TV habits and look at advantages and disadvantages of TV.

TV Habits of Children

According to statistics children aged 2-6 watch 31.5 hours of TV a week and children aged 6-11 watch 28 hours a week. That means 4.5 and 4 hours a day respectively.

Benefits of watching TV

Watching TV can educate and entertain children, which can be very useful for children's development. Having a TV also means that it is possible to watch programmes as a family and afterwards parents have the opportunity to discuss with their children the values of TV programmes. They can teach them what is right and wrong. Teenagers then may be able to make good selections of the programmes to watch, may be avoiding violence and crime, when they are alone.

Disadvantages

However, child psychologists say that children shouldn't watch any TV before children are 2 years old, and even exposure to TV can be harmful. TV can affect their physical and mental development. For example, bad behaviour on TV (eg violence) can have negative effects. Children should not watch a lot of TV but explore and do physical activities which are good for their body.

Word count: 202

Breakdown of score:

Reading for Writing – 4

Task Fulfilment – 4

Organisation and Structure – 4

Language Control – 4

Rationale:

Reading for Writing – The candidate demonstrates a full and accurate understanding of the essential meaning of all of the source materials, clearly referring to all four texts. There is an appropriate and accurate selection of relevant content from the source materials with an excellent ability to identify common themes and links across the texts. The candidate has selected and adapted the material well to suit the purpose for writing. There is also evidence of some excellent paraphrasing, eg 'That means 4.5 and 4 hours a day respectively.'

Task Fulfilment – There is an excellent achievement of the communicative aim, with all three segments of the task clearly and comprehensively answered in the style of a report as instructed. There is an excellent awareness of the reader-writer relationship, style and register. All requirements of the task (eg genre, topic, purpose) are completely met.

Organisation and Structure – The organisation of the text is very effective and the writing is easily read. The writing is clearly presented with three logically developed paragraphs. Ideas and arguments have been supplied with some supporting detail. The format is appropriate throughout the text. The signposting is effective, eg 'however', 'for example'.

Language Control – There is both a wide range of grammatical and lexical items related to the task, expressed with a high degree of accuracy and complexity. There are only occasional slips and errors in word choice, eg 'effect/affect', but these errors are non-impeding. There is very good spelling and punctuation throughout.

Overall outcome: Distinction

Sample response – Candidate B

It is known that children aged 2-6 watch 4.5 hours of TV a day (31.5 hours a week) and children aged 6-11 watch 4 hours a day (28 hours a week).

Advantages

Research has shown that children get a lot of information and knowledge from watching TV. If children watch TV, they can get involved in a fantastic world of adventure where they will learn and acquire comprehensive knowledge about different topics such as wildlife on nature shows, the alphabet or different songs that are so funny to children. Moreover parents can share and spend time with their children in discussing about what are good and bad TV programmes.

Disadvantages

On the other hand, child psychologists believe there are negative things too. They recommend that babies should not watch any TV programmes. The first two years in a child's life is an important time for the brain and so we should avoid our children watching TV at that age. Too much TV can be harmful both physically and mentally for babies and young children. It is better for children to explore and interact with other children.

To sum up we have to be conscious about the effects that TV has in our daily lives.

Word count: 204

Breakdown of score:

Reading for Writing – 3

Task Fulfilment – 3

Organisation and Structure – 3

Language Control – 4

Rationale:

Reading for Writing – Full and accurate understanding of most source materials is demonstrated, although there is no reference to Text C. The candidate has selected relevant content although there are some additional details not mentioned in the texts. The themes across the texts have been identified and adapted to suit the purpose for writing. Although there are some phrases lifted verbatim from the texts, there are also some good examples of paraphrasing, eg 'parents can share and spend time with their children...'

Task Fulfilment – There is a good achievement of the communicative aim in that the writer has clearly addressed all three parts of the task and written in the style that is easy to follow. Most requirements concerning genre, topic, reader and purpose have been appropriately met.

Organisation and Structure – There is a good organisation of the text with clear paragraphing and an appropriate opening and closing. Ideas and arguments are clearly presented and logically developed with sufficient supporting detail. The headings and signposting help the reader to navigate easily through the report.

Language Control – There is a wide range of grammatical and lexical items relating to the task with a good level of accuracy. The rare errors do not impede understanding. The candidate demonstrates an excellent control over spelling and punctuation despite very occasional omissions of commas.

Overall outcome: Merit

Sample response – Candidate C

Introduction

The aim of this report is to show how TV is watched nowadays and what benefits and disadvantages there are.

TV habits

- *Children from 6 to 11 watch 4 hours a day.*
- *Children before school watch 4.5 hours a day.*
- *Teenagers watch good and bad programmes for example educational and violent crime programmes.*

Benefits

On the one hand TV can have a lot of benefits like:

- *Alphabet can be learned and other educational things, which are very important for pre-schoolers.*
- *TV can be an excellent educator for young people.*
- *Sometimes TV programme can transmit important values for children.*

Disadvantage

However, there are some disadvantages which parents should know.

- *Violence is learned with some TV programmes.*
- *Nowadays children do not read books, because of new technologies like TV, videogames, laptop and internet.*
- *Experts say children do not practice exercise because of new technologies like TV.*

Conclusion

TV has been having an important role in this society, nevertheless parents should educate young people to teach that TV is not very important. Plenty of old people say: If TV had not existed, this society would have had more values.

Word count: 187

Breakdown of score:

Reading for Writing – 2

Task Fulfilment – 2

Organisation and Structure – 2

Language Control – 2

Rationale:

Reading for Writing – The candidate shows some understanding of all texts, albeit somewhat minimally. The content is generally relevant and an acceptable selection of material has been selected for the purpose of writing. Within the bullet points, the candidate demonstrates some paraphrasing skills.

Task Fulfilment – The writer has clearly addressed all three parts of the task and therefore there is an acceptable achievement of the communicative aim. Most requirements, eg genre (a bullet-pointed report is sufficient for this genre), topic, reader and purpose have been acceptably met.

Organisation and Structure – As a bullet-pointed report, this is an acceptable way of organising the text. Presentation and development of ideas is clear and logical through use of headings. The inappropriate use of signposting and rather limited use of supporting sentences is a result of the candidate's choice to present ideas in bullet points. However, overall, the writing is acceptably organised.

Language Control – There is evidence of an acceptable grammatical and lexical range and accuracy. Errors generally do not impede understanding although there is some unnatural use of complex structures, which do not mean what the writer intends, eg in the final sentence, the third conditional is inappropriately used. Similarly, the use of the present perfect continuous in the same conclusion is inappropriate. Spelling and punctuation are acceptable.

Overall outcome: Pass

Sample response - Candidate D

The purpose of this report is to show you young people's TV watching habits and what negative and positive points it makes.

Young People TV Habits

Children age 6 to 11 watch 28 hours of TV a week. Children under 6 watch 31.5 hours. Some people think is too much.

Disadvantages

Firstly its depend on the age but teenagers and kids need to explore other different things apart from TV if they want to be in contact with real life: sometimes it's not so realistic. TV can effect brain development and function so to help a good mental process and skills in young minds they need to take own experience playing games, having interesting and educative conversations between a group of people, going to visit monuments ... so sitting in front of a TV they don't do it and they don't make exercise/sport.

Benefits

Nevertheless if educators (at home/at school) advice teenagers and teach them to take control of free time it could be great. Watching cartoons in others languages can educate and entertain, and talking about TV series of teenagers life with parents should make effects on teenagers behaviour: always with the best values and being glad of opportunities.

Word count: 200

Breakdown of score:

Reading for Writing – 2

Task Fulfilment – 2

Organisation and Structure – 2

Language Control – 1

Rationale:

Reading for Writing – The candidate demonstrates some understanding of aspects of all texts. However, references are minimal and not detailed. The content is relevant and an acceptable selection has been used even though there is some use of the writer's own ideas which are irrelevant, eg 'watching cartoons in other languages'.

Task Fulfilment – There is an acceptable achievement of the communicative aim in that the writer has clearly addressed all three parts of the task. Most requirements, eg genre (a report as required), topic, reader and purpose have been acceptably met.

Organisation and Structure – There is an acceptable organisation of the text. Presentation and development of ideas is not always clear and logical but there is nevertheless a sense of coherence and logic with some relevant supporting detail. It is structured as a report, which is an appropriate format. The rather limited signposting in terms of cohesive devices is balanced with the presence of topic and supporting sentences.

Language Control – There is inadequate evidence of grammatical and lexical range and accuracy at and even below the level. As a result, errors frequently impede full understanding, eg the final sentences of both paragraphs 2 and 3. There is poor spelling and punctuation throughout.

Overall outcome: Fail

Task 4 – Extended writing

Write an essay (150-180 words) for your teacher answering the question, 'Is it better for school students to focus on two or three subjects or to study a wide range of subjects in less detail?' giving reasons for your opinions.

You should plan your essay **before** you start writing. Think about what you want to say and make some notes to help you in this box:

Planning notes

(No marks are given for these planning notes)

Now write your essay of 150-180 words on the lines below.

For the purpose of this document, candidates' planning notes were left out as they are not part of the assessment.

Sample response – Candidate A

"Jack of all trades, master of none", they say; something that I personally believe. I therefore opine that allowing students to focus on about two to three subjects, rather than dabbing their fingers into a wide range of subjects, can be significantly more beneficial.

Shallow and 'half knowledge' of any subject is surely undesirable, as may be caused by studying a lot of subjects with less detail. However, students can fully understand, digest and relate to the few subjects of their preference; for 'depth' of knowledge is definitely more important than shallow breadth.

Secondly, it's utterly redundant for students to acquire information of several subjects, with minimal detail and lesser focus, as they would ultimately forget it in the due course of time, rendering their efforts a waste.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that school students must be encouraged to select a few subjects of their liking and focus on acquiring maximum knowledge of the same, thus helping them retain their information and aid them in choosing career paths in the future.

Word count: 172

Breakdown of score:

Task Fulfilment – 4

Organisation and Structure – 3

Language Control – 4

Rationale:

Task Fulfilment – There is an excellent achievement of the communicative aim, with the writer's position clearly expressed. There is an excellent awareness of the reader-writer relationship, style and register. All requirements of the task (eg genre, topic, purpose) are completely and appropriately met.

Organisation and Structure – The text is clearly organised into connected paragraphs. Ideas are for the most part developed in a logical way and the writing is generally easy to follow. Most topic sentences are developed well with supporting sentences though there are occasions when it might be better to shorten sentences to make ideas a little clearer. The signposting is good.

Language Control – There is a wide range of grammatical items, and lexis is of a particularly high standard at this level. The minor errors that occur, for example, in slightly awkward sounding word combinations, eg 'dabbing their fingers' and 'utterly redundant', do not impede understanding in any way. Spelling and punctuation are excellent throughout.

Overall outcome: Distinction

Sample response – Candidate B

I will discuss which is better for my school – to study two or three subjects or to study a wide range of subjects but in less detail.

Us students are always complaining about the excessive amount of homework that we get, or about how some subjects seem 'unnecessary'. What if we only had two or three?

Generally, secondary students have a range of ten subjects or more. As a result this means having to learn multiple topics or skills completely different from each other.

On the other side, it also means having basic knowledge of more aspects of life, which may be useful when we graduate.

Having two or three subjects only would be a big difference. First of all, we would study those topics in much more depth than we do now. However, a consequence would be that students would lack basic knowledge about other matters.

Taking all this into the account, I think having seven or eight subjects would be ideal. Two or three of them should be obligatory, and the rest should be for the person to choose.

Word count: 181

Breakdown of score:

Task Fulfilment – 3

Organisation and Structure – 3

Language Control – 4

Rationale:

Task Fulfilment – There is a good achievement of the communicative aim but the focus is not consistent throughout. In the first two paragraphs the focus is on the personal, whereas this then changes to become more generalised. The writing is presented appropriately as an essay with a good awareness of the reader. Most requirements of the task have been appropriately met.

Organisation and Structure – The text is well organised in general terms. However, it would have benefited from consisting of fewer paragraphs and more support of significant points in topic sentences. Signposting is good but not always wholly effective throughout the text, mainly as a result of the overuse of paragraphing.

Language Control – There is a wide range of grammatical items, for example, the gerund, conditional forms and other complex sentences. Lexis is also wide-ranging with good use of collocation, eg 'exces(s)ive amount', '(lack) basic knowledge'. Any minor errors do not impede understanding. Spelling and punctuation are generally excellent with only minor slips, eg 'excesive' and '(k)now'.

Overall outcome: Merit

Sample response – Candidate C

In this essay I am going to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of studying few subjects in detail and studying a range of subjects in less detail. Then I am going to give my opinion about it.

One advantage of studying only a few subjects is that it helps you to concentrate in one specific thing and not in other stuff that is less important. However, when you study a range of subjects it can be better for your future because when you enter a university you will know a little bit about everything.

Another point in favour of focusing in less subjects is that you could have more time for extracurricular activities like sports. This is good for your health.

One point against of doing few subjects is that maybe you could choose the subjects that you like now but in the future they don't help you in the university. However, if you study many subjects, it can help you choose a subject at university.

In conclusion if I had to choose one option I will choose to study a wide range of subjects because I think it outweighs the advantages of studying only two or three subjects.

Word count: 200

Breakdown of score:

Task Fulfilment – 2

Organisation and Structure – 2

Language Control – 2

Rationale:

Task Fulfilment – There is acceptable achievement of the communicative aim in that the candidate has discussed both sides of the issue and come to a personal conclusion. Most requirements of the task have been acceptably met.

Organisation and Structure – Overall there is an acceptable organisation of the text although the ideas and arguments could have been more logically and simply presented by going through pros and cons in their own paragraphs. Sentences generally follow on from each other in an acceptable, if not always logical manner. Signposting is acceptable but somewhat repetitious.

Language Control – There is acceptable use of grammar and lexis related to the task. However, the range of both grammar items and lexis used is rather limited for the level. There is not a great deal of complexity in the writing. Errors are generally non-impeding and spelling and punctuation are generally acceptable.

Overall outcome: Pass

Sample response – Candidate D

In today's world, there are lots of doubts about what parents consider the best option for their children. All of us are afraid of giving to children a low education and the quantity of subjects is one of the major concerns.

On the one hand, a wide range of subjects could be a good idea because they would know about everything and later, they could choose about what they really liked. Furthermore, it is true that young people can learn more and faster than elderly people so we have to keep advantage of that.

On the other hand, another idea would be to concentrate children on the aspects they will really need in the future because there are subjects less useful than others. That is why students feel bored at schools.

As far as I'm concerned, I would say that the best option for them is to start learning a big variety of subjects and when they were older, they could study only the subjects that they really wanted.

Word count: 169

Breakdown of score:

Task Fulfilment – 1

Organisation and Structure – 1

Language Control – 2

Rationale:

Task Fulfilment – There is poor achievement of the communicative aim because what the writer wants to say is difficult to follow, despite re-reading. It is therefore unconvincing for the reader even though some ideas can be worked out.

Organisation and Structure – Although ideas are put into paragraphs in an acceptable way, within the paragraphs the ideas and arguments lack coherence and do not progress logically. For example, the last sentences of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 do not follow on logically from what precedes them. The relationship between topic and supporting sentences is confusing and signposting, although present, on closer inspection is not very helpful.

Language Control – There is an acceptable range of grammatical and lexical use at the level. Errors sometimes impede understanding (although the main reason for this is illogical development of ideas). Spelling is acceptably accurate as is punctuation.

Overall outcome: Fail