



Using commas in IELTS Writing

This worksheet will help you:

- understand different reasons for using commas
- identify where to put commas in IELTS Writing

Exercise 1

Read the IELTS Writing Task 2 below from IELTS Trainer 2 and complete the following sentence by crossing out the incorrect word(s).

- The Writing Task has two questions and you need / don't need to answer both of them.

Writing Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

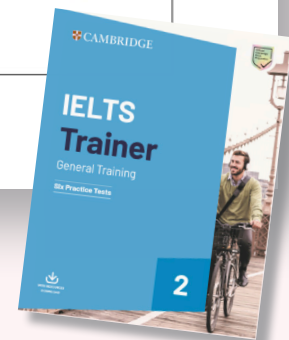
Many people believe that a university education is necessary for a good career.

Do you agree or disagree?

What other factors can contribute to a good career?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.



Writing exercise from page 98 of
IELTS Trainer 2 General Training.



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Exercise 2

Read the sample answer below and tick (✓) or cross (✗) each of the following statements.

- The writer says if he/she agrees that a university education is necessary for a good career
- The writer explains other factors that can contribute to a good career

In today's competitive environment, it is often said that people need to go to university in order to make progress in their careers. However, this essay will argue that in many fields, work experience and personal qualities get people further in their working lives.

In some careers such as medicine and law, a university education will always be a prerequisite to practising in those lines of work. In many companies and government departments today, employers expect recruits to be university educated, so people need to have graduated from university just to get their foot in the door. However, in some fields the internet has opened up a world of opportunity for people to take short, specific courses to get the skills and knowledge they need. For those who want to start their own business, it may not be necessary to go to university. Likewise, tradespeople, for example electricians and hairdressers, can have successful working lives without going to university.

There are several other factors that may lead to a successful career. Being in the right place at the right time always helps, as does having a positive outlook and a hardworking, ambitious personality. In most jobs, it is experience in the field that helps people get ahead. This is what helps people develop professionally, make contacts and deal with challenges.

In conclusion, it seems that while a university education is still required in some fields of work, in many other fields going to university is not essential. Whether people go to university or not, experience, attitude, personality and luck are all ingredients for career success.

Word count: 265



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Exercise 3

Without looking back at the essay, place a comma in the correct position in the following sentences where a comma has been removed. (In one of the sentences, three commas have been removed).

- However this essay will argue that in many fields, work experience and personal qualities get people further in their working lives.
- However in some fields the internet has opened up a world of opportunity for people to take short, specific courses to get the skills and knowledge they need.
- Likewise tradespeople for example electricians and hairdressers can have successful working lives without going to university.
- In conclusion it seems that while a university education is still required in some fields of work, in many other fields going to university is not essential.

Now look back at the essay to check your answers.

Exercise 4

Match the reasons for using a comma in the table below with the examples given.

Reasons for using a comma	Examples
A. To separate a list of similar words (e.g. adjectives or nouns)	i. ... for people to take short, specific courses to get the skills and knowledge they need
B. To separate a list of similar phrases	ii. In today's competitive environment, it is often said that ...
C. To separate a prepositional phrase at the beginning of a sentence from the subject of the sentence - a prepositional phrase is one that starts with a preposition and contains a noun (e.g. in most jobs)	iii. ... employers expect recruits to be university educated, so people need to have graduated from university just to get their foot in the door.



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Exercise 4 (continued)

Reasons for using a comma	Examples
D. To separate two parts of a sentence when the first part is not a complete sentence on its own, i.e. when the first part is a dependent clause	iv. This is what helps people develop professionally, make contacts and deal with challenges.
E. To separate two parts of a sentence when the second part explains the result of the first part, i.e. when the second part is a clause of result	v. ... while a university education is still required in some fields of work, in many other fields going to university is not essential.

Exercise 5

Without looking back at the essay, place a comma in the correct position in the following sentences where a comma has been removed. (In two of the sentences, more than one comma has been removed).

- In some careers such as medicine and law a university education will always be a prerequisite to practising in those lines of work.
- In many companies and government departments today employers expect recruits to be university educated so people need to have graduated from university just to get their foot in the door.
- For those who want to start their own business it may not be necessary to go to university.
- Being in the right place at the right time always helps, as does having a positive outlook and a hardworking ambitious personality.
- In most jobs it is experience in the field that helps people get ahead.
- Whether people go to university or not experience attitude personality and luck are all ingredients for career success.

Now look back at the essay to check your answers.



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ANSWERS

Exercise 1:

The Writing Task has two questions and you need to answer both of them.

Exercise 2:

- The writer says if he/she agrees that a university education is necessary for a good career ✓
- The writer explains other factors that can contribute to a good career ✓

Exercise 3:

- However, this essay will argue that in many fields, work experience and personal qualities get people further in their working lives. When you start a sentence with 'however' to contrast information/ideas with the previous sentence/paragraph, you should put a comma after the word.
- However, in some fields the internet has opened up a world of opportunity for people to take short, specific courses to get the skills and knowledge they need. When you start a sentence with 'however' to contrast information/ideas with the previous sentence/paragraph, you should put a comma after the word.
- Likewise, tradespeople, for example electricians and hairdressers, can have successful working lives without going to university. When you start a sentence with 'likewise', you should put a comma after the phrase. When you introduce examples within a sentence using 'for example', you should put a comma before the linking phrase and a comma after the examples if the sentence continues.
- In conclusion, it seems that while a university education is still required in some fields of work, in many other fields going to university is not essential. When you start a sentence with 'in conclusion', you should put a comma after the phrase.

Exercise 4:

A) i, B) iv, C) ii, D) v, E) iii



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ANSWERS

Exercise 5:

- a. In some careers such as medicine and law, a university education will always be a prerequisite to practising in those lines of work.
See reason C in Exercise 4.
- b. In many companies and government departments today, employers expect recruits to be university educated, so people need to have graduated from university just to get their foot in the door.
See reason C and E in Exercise 4.
- c. For those who want to start their own business, it may not be necessary to go to university. See reason C in Exercise 4.
- d. Being in the right place at the right time always helps, as does having a positive outlook and a hardworking, ambitious personality.
See reason A in Exercise 4.
- e. In most jobs, it is experience in the field that helps people get ahead.
See reason C in Exercise 4.
- f. Whether people go to university or not, experience, attitude, personality and luck are all ingredients for career success.
See reason D and A in Exercise 4.