

## LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

When responding to IELTS Task 2 questions, whether it is the academic or general training module, it is important to present a well-focused and well-developed essay in which all aspects of the task are addressed.

In building an argument, it is necessary to support your position, opinions or ideas with **facts, explanations, contrasts, reasons, suggestions** etc.

These are some of the different **functions of sentences** which support and connect your ideas meaningfully, and make your writing more convincing and interesting.

### STUDY TIPS

It is important to be in command and aware of a range of sentence functions in English. This helps you build your argument and form coherent paragraphs.

In IELTS and academic writing it is necessary to extend and expand your ideas with reasons, arguments and examples, which should also be appropriate and relevant.

## Sentence functions

Sentences have a range of functions, which, if used effectively, support ideas, opinions or viewpoints. Being aware of the meaning of sentences is helpful in shaping your ideas and developing your writing skills.

Consider the following excerpt from an essay. Note how it is constructed, using a range of functions.

Text	Function
<p>1. Advances in technology, though providing numerous benefits, have also created some serious problems. 2. First, one of the most harmful effects has been environmental pollution. 3. The increase in the number of motor vehicles on the roads 4. has caused an increase in air and noise pollution. 5. Second, natural resources are being depleted. 6. The demand for electricity to power new technology has reduced oil and fossil fuel reserves. 7. Many countries began to experience these shortages many decades ago.</p>	<p>1. statement of fact (topic sentence)                  2. stating the first problem                  3. stating a cause                  4. stating a result                  5. stating the second problem                  6. giving an explanation                  7. stating a fact as an example</p>

The text begins with a statement of fact, namely *Advances in technology, though providing numerous benefits, have also created some serious problems*. This argument is built successively and supported with different functions:

	Functions	Text
2	stating the first problem	<i>one of the most harmful effects has been environmental pollution</i>
3	stating a cause	<i>increase in the number of motor vehicles on the roads</i>
4	stating a result	<i>has caused an increase in air and noise pollution</i>
5	stating the second problem	<i>natural resources are being depleted</i>
6	giving an explanation	<i>demand for electricity to power new technology has reduced oil and fossil fuel reserves</i>
7	stating a fact	<i>many countries began to experience these shortages many decades ago</i>

Here is a list of some of the more common sentence functions with examples in *italics*.

Functions	Examples
<b>fact</b>	<i>Population growth is increasing in all developing countries.</i>
<b>opinion</b>	<i>Losing one's driving licence for a drink driving offence is a completely unacceptable punishment.</i>
<b>cause</b>	<i>Crime rates are increasing due to rising unemployment.</i>
<b>recommendation</b>	<i>It is essential that safety procedures be implemented immediately to avoid further risks to workers.</i>
<b>suggestion</b>	<i>The school administration should ban junk food from its cafeteria.</i>
<b>obligation</b>	<i>Motorists are required by law to report accidents within 24 hours.</i>
<b>explanation</b>	The number of reported HIV positive cases has decreased: <i>educational programs have made a significant difference.</i>
<b>example</b>	Other factors impacting on student performance <i>include: stress, peer pressure and drugs.</i>
<b>reason</b>	<i>Knowing the dangers of second-hand smoke,</i> the government needs to address the problem.
<b>problem</b>	<i>One of the most harmful effects on the environment has been global warming.</i>
<b>solution</b>	<i>Renewable and inexpensive sources of energy need to be developed.</i>
<b>result</b>	No maintenance has been carried out on roads in the last five years. <i>Consequently, roads have deteriorated significantly.</i>
<b>effect</b>	<i>No maintenance has been carried out on roads in the last five years.</i> Consequently, roads have deteriorated significantly.
<b>general statement</b>	<i>Six hundred students have enrolled in the MBA program.</i>

Functions	Examples
<b>proposal</b>	<i>Fees for school excursions could be increased to cover the debt.</i>
<b>prediction</b>	<i>Enrolments in the English language program will drop significantly in Term 2 with students leaving to begin their university program.</i>
<b>expectation</b>	Knowing the threat to the environment, <i>the company ought to have taken precautionary measures.</i>
<b>contrast</b>	Though prices were reduced on all stock, <i>sales still remained sluggish.</i>
<b>concession</b>	<i>Though prices were reduced on all stock,</i> sales still remained sluggish.
<b>condition</b>	<i>Unless safety measures are put in place,</i> an accident is bound to happen.
<b>conclusion</b>	Despite the coronial inquiry into the tragedy, <i>no further action could have been taken.</i>

