



IELTS Focus Writing Correction Service

Colour Coding:

Red = General corrections / vocabulary or grammar additions

Blue = My Comments and advice

Black = Your original writing

Crossed-out = Not needed or a mistake

Task Question:

Some people think that the best way to reduce crime is to give longer prison sentences. Others, however, believe there are better alternative ways of reducing crime. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

Your Essay with comments and corrections:

While some citizens claim that longer imprisonment is the best solution to reducing crime, others believe various other measures can be more effective in bringing the crime rate down. I am of the opinion that the government ought to ~~take more practices to crack down crimes~~ *<-(collocation error)* implement measures to crack down on crime rather than only on giving longer prison sentences

Good paraphrasing here and the thesis statement clearly shows your opinion but there is a problem with the collocation which I changed in red. Grammar issues here are gerunds (-ing) articles (the,a,an) and plurals.. 'prison sentences'

~~It is true~~ it is a commonly held belief that longer prison sentences ~~is~~ are a good way to reduce crime. One reason for this view is that Imprisonment acts as a deterrent to criminals in the way that it separates offenders from their families and restricts their freedom. So before committing a crime, offenders might think about the consequences their actions would bring and probably give up their actions because of the fear of punishment. *<-(good topic sentence and supporting sentences, but the following information is not necessary, too many examples)* >Moreover, in some countries, prisoners are ~~obligated~~ obliged to attend some education programs which teach them how to be a law-abiding citizen. Finally, ~~statis~~ statistics shows *<-(too general, quote a percentage)* that most criminals ~~repeat crimes~~ reoffend after being released from prison. This is to say that the longer we keep them in prison, the safer our community will be.

The start of this paragraph was very good there was a clear topic sentence and supporting sentences but then it went off into other examples...stay on one central topic, after line 5 you should give a specific example such as 'a recent report in the times newspaper stated that 39% of inmates said that they thought long jail terms would prevent them from reoffending' You will notice I have made additions in red which are key phrases to show it is a discussion essay here are more examples:

- Many people hold the view that..... they feel this way because..
- It is a commonly held belief that..... one reason for this view is...
- Some argue that.....they believe this because....

On the other hand, although some argue that longer prison sentences ~~does do~~ help ~~crack down crimes~~ *<(this phrasal verb doesn't fit here)* the reduction of criminal activity, there are several other better ways to tackle this problem. The High crime rate is always associated with a high unemployment rate. So, to solve this problem *<(it's a discussion essay not problem solution essay)* from the beginning, the government could ~~take various ways to~~ *<-(collocation error)* stimulate the employment. For example, city councils could encourage employers to hire those unemployed or disadvantaged by subsidizing their businesses or offer those job seekers career preparation programs so that they can be more competent when applying for jobs. Another solution that might help is improving education. It is noticeable that in most countries there has been a huge increase in crime among teenagers who drop out of school earlier. If more student loans can be made available to those students whose families ~~assume~~ *<-(wrong word choice)* take on a huge financial burden sending their children to schools, there will be less teens ~~roaming on the streets~~ *<-(collocation error)* out on the streets and recruited by gangs.

Again this paragraph has too many ideas, just choose one central theme and support it with a specific example, here there are ideas about government stimulating employment, improving education, student loans, teens being recruited by gangs. This will score low on task response and coherence by the examiner. Check my model answer to see how I have done it. Also I have underlined some sentences that make it look like a problem solution essay. In this essay you need to **give other peoples opinions** on the 1st issue which is 'longer prison sentences', and the 2nd paragraph **gives others views** on the 2nd issue 'an alternative way to reduce crime'. Also you need to restate your opinion in the body paragraphs.

In conclusion, some people argue ~~it is undeniable~~ that putting criminals in prison for longer ~~time~~ does help reduce crime, however others feel that alternative methods are more effective. I agree with this, ~~various~~ other measures such as increasing the employment rate and improving education are also effective ways to mitigate the problem.

I have restated other people views and then restated your opinion using the added sentences in red, this is important for a discussion essay conclusion. It was a good attempt at a conclusion but needed the sentences in red to indicate it as a discussion essay.

Examiners Report

Overall the original essay was quite long at 348 words, 270 to 290 words is enough. The essay had too many ideas especially in paragraph 2 and became unfocused as a result, this will score low by the examiner. Each paragraph must have one central theme. You must also restate your view in the body paragraph as well as the conclusion clearly. There are some issues with collocation and word formation, in many places grammar was good apart from some issues with (the, a, an) plurals, subject verb agreement, gerunds.

The essay was answered like a problem solution essay in paragraph 2, it needed phrases to indicate its a discussion essay (there are 5 essay types in IELTS) There was also a little too much repetition with the word 'prison' 6 times ... useful synonyms:> incarceration, jail, behind bars

Task response - Band score 5.5

Comments:

The thesis statement in the introduction was clear and gave an opinion, the issues were written about and not just the general topic, this is good. Ideas were explained well in paragraph one to begin with, but because of too many ideas in the paragraphs it became unfocused. It looks like a problem solution essay especially in paragraph 2. Most importantly the opinion was not included in the main body paragraphs or conclusion. There was a clear opinion in the introduction but your opinion must be clearly stated throughout the essay with phrases like: I think... I believe... I would argue that... I agree with this because ...also it needed language to show it was a discussion essay , check useful links section on page 4 here.

Coherence and Cohesion - Band Score 5.5

Comments:

The introduction was effective and points in the essay were linked to this, but due to having too many ideas in the paragraphs especially paragraph 2, it scores lower, There should be only one central idea per paragraph. Too many ideas and the band score goes right down. Added to this it looks like the question is being answered as a problem solution essay, a discussion essay has a different structure. Cohesive devices (linkers) were fine, they were not over or underused. Overall, the reader was able to understand your points without too much confusion.

Lexical Resource - Band Score 6

Comments:

There were attempts to use less common vocabulary but there was inaccuracy with collocations and phrasal verbs. (take more practices to crack down crimes, repeat crimes after released, crack down crimes, take various ways to stimulate the employment, drop out school, roaming on the streets) Some problems with word formation also. In some case a gerund (-ing) should have been used. There was also a little too much repetition of the word 'prison'. Some repetition is ok, but too much shows weak vocabulary. The issues with vocabulary did not cause too many problems for the reader though. Paraphrasing in the introduction was done well.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy - Band Score 6.5

Comments:

There was a mix of complex and simple sentences and in some areas the grammar was good, however, some noticeable errors with articles (the, a, zero article) and also plurals / subject verb agreement. Due to issues with collocation and vocabulary, the grammar suffered. If you can work on these grammar issues you can score band 7 in this part of the criteria.

Summary of Band scores.

This Band score is not a guarantee that you will get the same score in the IELTS exam because examiners can only score you on what you wrote in each test. You can only get a certified IELTS level by taking the IELTS test at an official IELTS Test Centre.

IELTS Assessment Criteria	Band Score
Task Response	5.5
Coherence and Cohesion	5.5
Lexical Resource	6
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	6.5
Overall	Band 6

Add all band scores together and divide by 4 to get your Band. The score is rounded up or down to the nearest whole or half band.

Recommended Links

Click the links for each lesson.

Language for expressing other peoples opinion in a Discussion essay.

<https://ieltsfocus.com/2017/03/21/ielts-essays-expressing-general-opinion/>

Identifying the 5 types of IELTS essays.

<https://ieltsfocus.com/2017/01/23/identifying-types-ielts-task-2-writing-questions/>

When do I write my opinion?

<https://ieltsfocus.com/2017/09/30/when-should-i-write-my-opinion/>

2 Common grammar mistakes

<https://ieltsfocus.com/2017/06/21/ielts-two-grammar-mistakes/>

Collocations lesson

<https://ieltsfocus.com/2017/08/02/collocations-ielts/>

2 Structures for Discussion Essays

Introduction:

Paraphrase the question / state both views
Thesis statement with your opinion

Main body 1:

Topic sentence (first viewpoint)
Explain with specific example
Opinion: why you agree or don't agree

Main body 2:

Topic sentence (second viewpoint)
Explain with specific example
Opinion: why you agree or don't agree

Conclusion:

Summarise the 2 viewpoints
Restate your opinion

3 Main body paragraphs version

(some students find this easier to write)

Introduction:

Paraphrase the question / state both views
Thesis statement with your opinion

Main body 1:

Topic sentence (first viewpoint)
Explain in detail (supporting sentences)
Discuss 1st point

Main body 2:

Topic sentence (second viewpoint)
Explain in detail (supporting sentences)
Discuss 2nd point

Main body 3:

Give your opinion clearly and an example

Conclusion:

Summarise the 2 viewpoints
Restate your opinion

Model Answer 1

Some people think that the best way to reduce crime is to give longer prison sentences. Others, however, believe there are better alternative ways of reducing crime. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

It is often said that longer jail terms are the most effective way to decrease crime. Others, however, think that it is possible to reduce criminal offences using different methods. I believe that criminals should serve longer prison time because heavier punishment makes them think seriously about their wrongdoing.

On the one hand, some people believe that strict punishment is necessary, such as prolonged incarceration in order to decrease the crime rate because it gives criminals an opportunity to consider their guilt and regret their offences in the case of murder or manslaughter. For instance, data from a London police think tank showed that crime rates of countries which have very strict prison sentences, or the death penalty, are 38% lower than those which do not. In my opinion, I believe that heavy punishment makes offenders consider their guilt and it is the most important factor in reducing crime.

On the other hand, others think that relying on sentencing to longer time behind bars is not effective in reducing crime and we should find other ways. A recent study from the UK Government showed more than 40% of criminals tend to reoffend because they cannot integrate back into society. Hence, they need support such as education and job training to rebuild their life rather than spending years in jail. I think that helping them is essential to stop them reoffending, however, heavier penalties in serious cases must not be overlooked.

In conclusion, some people think that long jail terms are necessary to decrease serious offences while others believe that we ought to approach the issue in other ways. In my opinion, I hold the view that longer prison time is essential for serious criminals so they can consider their guilt and their terrible actions.

(293 words)

Model answer 2 (3 main body version)

Some people think that the best way to reduce crime is to give longer prison sentences. Others, however, believe there are better alternative ways of reducing crime. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

While some people claim that longer imprisonment is the best solution to reducing crime, others believe various other methods can be more effective in bringing the crime rate down. I think that the government ought to implement rehabilitation measures to reduce crime rather than on only giving longer prison terms.

It is a commonly held belief that longer prison sentences are an efficient way to reduce crime. One reason for this view is that imprisonment acts as a deterrent to criminals as it separates offenders from their families and restricts their freedom. Therefore, before committing a crime, offenders might think twice because of the fear of punishment. To illustrate this, a recent report in the Guardian newspaper which interviewed over 300 ex-inmates stated that the fear of going back to jail was a deciding factor in not reoffending again.

On the other hand, there are some who argue that long periods behind bars is not an effective method in reducing crime. They believe this because the rates of reoffending among previous inmates is now at an all time high. For instance, in Norway there is a program of counselling and rehabilitation that is funded by the government to help criminals to stop reoffending and integrate them back into society. Prior to this initiative, the incarceration rate in Norway was among the highest in northern Europe.

In my view however, relying on lengthy jail terms is not the best answer to this issue. I hold the view that well funded government initiatives, like the one in Norway, can help people who have been involved in criminal activity. This is a much better idea than just depending on the old system of lengthy prison terms.

In conclusion, some people argue that putting criminals in jail for longer helps reduce crime, however, others feel that alternative methods are more effective. I agree with this, other measures such as Government initiatives of counselling and rehabilitation are effective ways to mitigate the problem.

(329 words... still it's a little bit long)