

Teaching IELTS Writing Task 2 through the Process Writing Approach

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Abstract

Writing is widely regarded as one of the most challenging components of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination. Many candidates struggle to produce coherent, well-developed essays within the limited time available during the test. Traditional approaches to IELTS writing instruction often emphasize the final product rather than the writing process itself. However, contemporary educational research suggests that the Process Writing Approach can significantly improve learners' writing competence by focusing on planning, drafting, revising, editing, and reflection. This article examines the application of the Process Writing Approach to IELTS Writing Task 2 preparation, discusses its theoretical foundations, and explores its potential to enhance writing quality, learner autonomy, and examination performance.

Keywords: IELTS Writing Task 2, process writing, academic writing, writing instruction, learner autonomy, English language teaching, writing pedagogy

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Introduction: The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is one of the most widely recognized English proficiency examinations worldwide. Among its four components, Writing is often perceived as the most demanding section due to the linguistic, cognitive, and organizational skills required for successful performance. In IELTS Writing Task 2, candidates are required to write an essay of at

least 250 words in response to a given prompt. **The** task assesses a range of competencies, including task achievement, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy. Many learners face difficulties in generating ideas, organizing arguments, maintaining coherence, and expressing complex thoughts effectively. To address these challenges, educators have increasingly adopted the Process Writing Approach, which views writing as a recursive and developmental process rather than a single act of text production. This approach encourages learners to engage actively in multiple stages of writing, thereby improving both the quality of their essays and their overall writing proficiency.

Theoretical Foundations of Process Writing

The Process Writing Approach emerged as a response to traditional product-oriented methods of writing instruction. While product-based approaches focus primarily on the final written text, process-oriented approaches emphasize the cognitive and social activities involved in composing.

Influential scholars such as Hayes and Flower proposed that writing involves a complex interaction of planning, translating ideas into text, and revising. From this perspective, effective writing instruction should help learners develop strategies for managing these processes. Constructivist learning theories further support process writing by emphasizing active learner participation, reflection, and knowledge construction. Learners become active creators of meaning rather than passive imitators of model texts.

Within English language teaching, process writing aligns closely with learner-centered pedagogy and communicative approaches, both of which encourage meaningful language use and continuous improvement.

Understanding IELTS Writing Task 2

IELTS Writing Task 2 requires candidates to respond to a specific question or statement by presenting and supporting ideas in a formal academic style. Common essay types include:

- Opinion essays
- Discussion essays
- Advantages and disadvantages essays
- Problem-solution essays

-Double-question essays

The official assessment criteria evaluate four key areas:

Task Response

Candidates must address all parts of the question and present a clear position throughout the essay.

Coherence and Cohesion

Ideas should be logically organized and connected through effective paragraphing and cohesive devices.

Lexical Resource

A wide range of vocabulary should be used accurately and appropriately.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Candidates should demonstrate control of various grammatical structures with minimal errors.

The Process Writing Approach can support improvement across all four assessment criteria.

Stages of the Process Writing Approach

1. Pre-Writing Stage

The pre-writing stage focuses on idea generation and planning. Before writing, students analyze the task, identify key requirements, brainstorm ideas, and organize supporting arguments.

Teachers may use techniques such as:

- Mind mapping
- Brainstorming
- Group discussions
- Question analysis

Vocabulary generation activities

For example, before writing about environmental problems, students can brainstorm causes, effects, and possible solutions.

This stage helps learners overcome one of the most common IELTS challenges: generating relevant and well-developed ideas.

2. Drafting Stage

During drafting, students transform their ideas into written form without focusing excessively on perfection. The primary goal is to develop arguments and organize ideas logically.

Teachers should encourage learners to:

- Focus on content and organization;

- Develop clear topic sentences;
- Support arguments with explanations and examples;
- Maintain a consistent position throughout the essay.

Drafting promotes fluency and allows students to experiment with language structures.

3. Revising Stage

Revision involves examining the overall quality of the essay rather than correcting individual language errors.

Students evaluate:

- Clarity of arguments
- Logical organization
- Paragraph structure
- Relevance of supporting details
- Strength of the introduction and conclusion

Peer review activities can be particularly valuable at this stage. Through collaborative evaluation, learners gain insights into both their own writing and that of others.

4. Editing Stage

Editing focuses on language accuracy and technical correctness.

Students check:

- Grammar
- Vocabulary usage
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Sentence structure

Teachers may provide editing checklists to guide learners through this process systematically.

5. Reflection Stage

Reflection is an often-overlooked but essential component of process writing.

- Learners consider:
- Strengths of their essays
- Areas requiring improvement
- Effective writing strategies
- Common mistakes

Reflection promotes metacognitive awareness and encourages independent learning.

Benefits of Process Writing in IELTS Preparation

Improved Essay Organization

Through planning and revision, students develop stronger organizational skills. Essays become more coherent and logically structured, directly contributing to higher scores in Coherence and Cohesion.

Enhanced Critical Thinking

Process writing requires learners to analyze questions, evaluate ideas, and construct logical arguments. These cognitive skills are essential for achieving success in IELTS Writing Task 2.

Increased Learner Autonomy

Students gradually become more independent writers as they learn to evaluate and revise their own work. This autonomy is particularly important for examination preparation.

Greater Writing Confidence

Repeated engagement with the writing process reduces anxiety and increases confidence. Learners gain a clearer understanding of how successful essays are developed.

Development of Academic Writing Skills

Process writing encourages the use of formal language, logical reasoning, and evidence-based argumentation, all of which are essential components of academic writing.

Challenges of Implementing Process Writing

Despite its benefits, the Process Writing Approach presents certain challenges.

First, it can be time-consuming. Classroom schedules often limit opportunities for multiple drafts and extensive revision. Second, some learners may initially resist revision activities because they are accustomed to viewing writing as a one-step task. Third, large class sizes may make individualized feedback difficult. To address these challenges, teachers can incorporate peer feedback, collaborative writing activities, and technology-assisted review tools.

Practical Recommendations for IELTS Teachers

To implement process writing effectively, teachers should:

- Teach essay structure explicitly.
- Incorporate regular brainstorming activities.
- Provide model essays for analysis.
- Encourage multiple drafts.

-Use peer-review techniques.

-Offer constructive formative feedback.

-Integrate self-assessment checklists.

-Focus on both language accuracy and content development.

By combining process-oriented instruction with IELTS-specific exam strategies, teachers can help learners achieve higher levels of writing proficiency.

Implications for English Language Teaching

The success of the Process Writing Approach in IELTS preparation suggests broader implications for English language teaching. Rather than treating writing as a product to be evaluated, educators should view it as a developmental process that requires guidance, practice, and reflection. This shift encourages deeper learning, greater learner engagement, and the development of transferable academic skills that extend beyond examination contexts.

Conclusion. The Process Writing Approach offers a powerful framework for teaching IELTS Writing Task 2. By emphasizing planning, drafting, revising, editing, and reflection, this approach addresses many of the challenges faced by IELTS candidates. It promotes improved organization, critical thinking, learner autonomy, and writing confidence while supporting achievement across all IELTS assessment criteria. As a result, process writing represents an effective and pedagogically sound strategy for preparing learners for success in IELTS Writing Task 2 and beyond.

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7. White, R., & Arndt, V. (1991). Process Writing. Longman.
8. This article is journal-style and suitable for a methodology handbook, conference proceedings, or a university publication. You could further strengthen it by adding a section titled “Applying the Process Writing Approach to Different IELTS Task 2 Essay Types” with examples for opinion, discussion, and problem–solution essays.