GRA (Grammatical Range and Accuracy)

IELTS WRITING TASK 1 SENTENCE STRUCTURES

1. Introducing the chart

Structure: The [chart type] illustrates [what is measured] in [place] between [year] and [year].

Examples:

- The line graph illustrates the number of international students in Australia between 2010 and 2020.
- The bar chart compares the sales of three different products in the UK from 2015 to 2025.
- The pie charts illustrate the proportions of household expenditure on five categories in Canada in 2000 and 2020.
- The table presents information about the unemployment rates in six European countries in 2022.
- The line graph shows changes in the population of Dhaka between 2000 and 2020.

2. Giving an overview

Structure: Overall, [main trend], while [another major feature].

Examples:

- Overall, car ownership increased, while the use of public transport declined.
- Overall, the number of international students rose steadily, while domestic enrolment remained relatively stable.
- Overall, France recorded the highest sales, while Italy had the lowest figures.
- Overall, the proportion of people using the internet increased in all five countries, with the sharpest rise occurring in India.
- Overall, spending on housing accounted for the largest share of household expenditure, while entertainment represented the smallest proportion.

Tip: An overview should highlight the main trends, highest or lowest figures, or major differences without listing too many numbers.

3. Describing an increase or decrease

Structure: [Subject] + [rose/fell/increased/decreased] + [adverb] + from [starting value] to [ending value].

Examples:

- The number of visitors rose steadily from 20,000 in 2010 to 35,000 in 2020.
- Car sales increased sharply from 5,000 units in January to 12,000 units in June.
- The unemployment rate declined gradually from 10% in 2015 to 6% in 2020.
- The company's annual revenue grew significantly from $2 million in 2018 to $5 million in 2023.
- The percentage of households with internet access fell slightly from 85% in 2021 to 82% in 2022.

Useful adverbs include steadily, gradually, sharply, significantly, slightly, dramatically and rapidly. Choose one that accurately describes the size and speed of the change.

4. Describing change using a noun

Structure: There was a/an + [adjective] + [increase/decrease/rise/fall] + in [subject] + over [period].

Examples:

- There was a sharp decrease in car sales over the five-year period.
- There was a gradual increase in the number of university students between 2010 and 2020.
- There was a significant rise in household spending on transport over the decade.
- There was a slight fall in the unemployment rate between 2019 and 2020.
- There was a dramatic increase in online shopping during the period shown.

Compare the two grammatical patterns:

- Verb + adverb: The number of tourists increased dramatically.
- Adjective + noun: There was a dramatic increase in the number of tourists.

Both are correct, and varying these structures can make your writing less repetitive.

5. Comparing two figures

Structure: The [number/percentage] of [A] was [higher/lower] than that of [B].

Examples:

- The percentage of men using the internet was higher than that of women.
- The number of international students in Australia was greater than that in Canada.
- The unemployment rate in Spain was considerably higher than that in Germany.
- The proportion of households owning cars was slightly lower in 2010 than in 2020.
- The percentage of people using public transport in City A was almost twice that in City B.

More comparison examples:

- The figure for France was similar to that for Germany.
- Sales of Product A were twice as high as those of Product B.
- The proportion of people aged 18–25 was the highest among all age groups.
- Whereas electricity consumption increased in Country A, it declined in Country B.
- The number of female employees was slightly greater than the number of male employees.

Grammar tip: Use that of to avoid repeating a singular noun and those of to avoid repeating a plural noun.

- The population of City A was larger than that of City B.
- The sales figures for Company A were higher than those of Company B.

6. Comparing multiples

Structure: The number of [A] was [twice/three times] that of [B].

Use this structure to compare the size of two figures without describing them separately.

Examples:

- The number of visitors to Museum A was twice that of Museum B.
- The population of City A was three times that of City B.
- The sales of Product A were twice those of Product B.
- The number of international students in Australia was four times that in New Zealand.
- The company's revenue in 2020 was approximately twice its revenue in 2015.

Alternative structures:

- The figure for Museum A was twice as high as that for Museum B.
- Museum A attracted twice as many visitors as Museum B.
- Product A sold three times as many units as Product B.

Grammar tip: Use that of for a singular noun and those of for a plural noun.

7. Contrasting two trends

Structure: While [subject A + verb + details], [subject B + verb + details].

Use this structure when two categories follow different trends.

Examples:

- While train use increased from 20% to 35%, bus use fell from 40% to 25%.
- While the number of male students rose steadily, the number of female students declined slightly.
- While sales in France increased significantly, sales in Germany remained stable.
- While the proportion of people living in cities grew, the rural population decreased.
- While spending on food rose from $200 to $300, expenditure on clothing fell from $150 to $100.

Alternative linkers: Whereas, in contrast, by comparison, and conversely.

Remember that while and whereas can connect two contrasting trends within a single sentence.

8. Describing fluctuations

Structure: [Subject] fluctuated between [lower value] and [upper value] during [period].

Use fluctuated when a figure rises and falls repeatedly.

Examples:

- The price of coffee fluctuated between $4 and $6 per kilogram during the period.
- The unemployment rate fluctuated between 5% and 8% from 2010 to 2020.
- The number of visitors fluctuated between 2,000 and 4,000 throughout the year.
- Monthly sales fluctuated between 500 and 800 units during the first six months.
- The exchange rate fluctuated considerably between 1.2 and 1.5 over the period.

Alternative structures:

- The figure experienced considerable fluctuations throughout the period.
- Sales rose and fell repeatedly between January and June.
- The rate varied between 5% and 8%.

Tip: A single rise followed by a single fall does not always justify fluctuated. Describe the actual pattern accurately.

9. Describing a peak followed by a decline

Structure: [Subject] reached a peak of [value] in [year], before falling to [value] in [year].

Use this structure when a figure reaches its highest point and then decreases.

Examples:

- The number of tourists reached a peak of 80,000 in 2018, before falling to 60,000 in 2020.
- Oil production peaked at 2 million barrels per day in 2015, before declining to 1.5 million in 2019.
- The company's revenue reached a peak of $10 million in 2022, before dropping to $7 million the following year.
- The unemployment rate peaked at 12% in 2010, before decreasing steadily to 7% in 2015.
- The percentage of households using coal reached its highest point at 45% in 2000, before declining to 20% in 2020.

Alternative expressions:

- peaked at 80,000
- reached a maximum of 80,000
- attained its highest level in 2018
- subsequently declined to 60,000
- fell sharply after reaching a peak

Grammar tip: Use peak at for the value (“peaked at 80,000”) and reach a peak of for the noun structure (“reached a peak of 80,000”).

10. Reporting two figures with “respectively”

Structure: The figures for [A] and [B] were [value A] and [value B], respectively.

Use respectively to match two or more items with their corresponding figures in the same order.

Examples:

- The percentages of households owning cars in France and Germany were 60% and 75%, respectively.
- The populations of City A and City B were 2 million and 3 million, respectively.
- In 2020, the unemployment rates in Spain and Italy were 15% and 10%, respectively.
- The figures for male and female employees were 600 and 450, respectively.
- The average monthly expenditure on food and transport was $300 and $150, respectively.

How it works:

- France → 60%
- Germany → 75%

The word respectively tells the reader to match the figures in the order the categories appear.

Purpose	**Sentence pattern**
Compare multiples	A was twice that of B.
Contrast trends	While A increased, B declined.
Describe fluctuations	A fluctuated between X and Y.
Peak and decline	A peaked at X before falling to Y.
Match figures	A and B recorded X and Y, respectively.

IELTS WRITING TASK 2 SENTENCE STRUCTURES

1. Introducing two opposing views

Structure: Some people believe that [view A], while others argue that [view B].

Use this structure to introduce two different opinions about an issue.

Examples:

- Some people believe that university education should be free, while others argue that students should pay their own tuition fees.
- Some people think that children should start school at an early age, while others believe that they should begin formal education later.
- Some people argue that technology has improved communication, while others believe that it has weakened face-to-face relationships.
- Some people believe that governments should prioritise economic growth, whereas others argue that environmental protection should come first.
- Some people think that working from home increases productivity, while others believe that working in an office is more effective.

Alternative expressions:

- While some people argue that..., others believe that...
- Opinions differ as to whether...
- There is disagreement about whether...

2. Stating your opinion with reasons

Structure: I believe that [your opinion] because [reason 1] and [reason 2].

Use this structure to express your position and support it with reasons.

Examples:

- I believe that governments should invest in public transport because it can reduce traffic congestion and make travel more affordable.
- I believe that university education should be more affordable because it improves access to employment opportunities and reduces social inequality.
- I believe that children should learn digital skills at school because these skills are essential for modern workplaces and everyday life.
- I believe that governments should impose stricter environmental regulations because they can reduce pollution and protect public health.
- I believe that working from home should be encouraged because it can save commuting time and improve work-life balance.

More formal alternatives:

- In my view, ...
- I would argue that...
- I firmly believe that...
- From my perspective, ...

Tip: In an IELTS opinion essay, stating your position clearly is more important than using an elaborate phrase to introduce it. You can also state your opinion without using “I”.

3. Introducing a main argument

Structure: One major reason why [claim] is that [explanation].

Use this structure to introduce a key supporting point in a body paragraph.

Examples:

- One major reason why people move to cities is that urban areas offer a wider range of employment opportunities.
- One major reason why exercise is important is that it helps people maintain their physical and mental health.
- One major reason why public transport should be improved is that it can reduce dependence on private cars.
- One major reason why children should read regularly is that reading develops their vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- One major reason why renewable energy should be expanded is that it can reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Alternative structures:

- A key reason for this is that…
- One important factor is that…
- This is largely because…
- Another significant argument is that…

4. Explaining cause and effect

Structure: [Cause] can lead to [effect], which may [further consequence].

Use this structure to explain how one situation produces another result.

Examples:

- Excessive car use can lead to traffic congestion, which may increase the time people spend commuting.
- A lack of physical activity can lead to health problems, which may increase pressure on healthcare services.
- Rising housing costs can force families to move to cheaper areas, which may increase their commuting expenses.
- Excessive use of social media can reduce face-to-face interaction, which may weaken some personal relationships.
- Poor waste management can cause environmental pollution, which may threaten wildlife and human health.

Useful cause-and-effect expressions:

Function	Expressions
Cause	because, owing to, due to, as a result of
Result	therefore, consequently, as a result, thus
Cause leading to an effect	lead to, result in, contribute to, cause
Effect originating from a cause	result from, arise from, be caused by

Grammar examples:

- Private car use leads to congestion.
- Congestion results from excessive private car use.
- Poor planning results in higher costs.
- Higher costs arise from poor planning.

Remember: lead to and result in are followed by an outcome, whereas result from identifies the cause.

5. Acknowledging an opposing point

Structure: Although [opposing point], I believe that [your main argument].

Use this structure to recognise a counterargument while maintaining your own position.

Examples:

- Although online learning offers greater flexibility, I believe that classroom teaching provides more opportunities for face-to-face interaction.
- Although private cars are convenient, I believe that governments should invest more heavily in public transport to reduce congestion.
- Although tourism creates employment opportunities, I believe that it must be managed carefully to protect local environments.
- Although technology can make communication faster, I believe that excessive screen time may harm some personal relationships.
- Although examinations can measure academic knowledge, I believe that students should also be assessed through coursework and practical projects.

Alternative structures:

- While it is true that…, I would argue that…
- Admittedly, …; however, …
- Despite the fact that…, …
- Although this argument has some merit, …

Grammar note: “Although” and “but”

Do not use although and but together to connect the same two clauses.

Incorrect: Although online learning is convenient, but classroom learning offers more interaction.

Correct: Although online learning is convenient, classroom learning offers more interaction.

Also correct: Online learning is convenient, but classroom learning offers more interaction.

6. Giving an example

Structure: For example, [specific situation] can [illustration of your argument].

Use examples to support an argument you have already explained. A relevant example makes your reasoning clearer and more convincing.

Examples:

- Education: For example, students who live far from a university can attend online classes without relocating.
- Environment: For example, providing more recycling facilities can encourage households to produce less waste.
- Public transport: For example, commuters may choose buses over private cars if bus services are reliable and affordable.
- Health: For example, regular physical education at school can help children develop healthy habits.
- Technology: For instance, video-conferencing platforms allow employees in different countries to collaborate without travelling.

Useful alternatives:

- For instance, ...
- To illustrate, ...
- A clear example of this is...
- This can be seen in...

Tip: Explain your point first, then give an example, and briefly connect the example to your argument. Avoid inventing statistics or presenting unsupported claims as established facts.

7. Describing a possible solution

Structure: One effective way to address [problem] would be to [action].

Use this structure when discussing how a problem could be reduced or solved.

Examples:

- Traffic congestion: One effective way to address traffic congestion would be to improve the reliability of public transport.
- Air pollution: One effective way to reduce air pollution would be to enforce stricter emissions standards for vehicles and factories.
- Unemployment: One effective way to tackle unemployment would be to provide vocational training that matches employers' needs.
- Plastic waste: One effective way to reduce plastic waste would be to encourage reusable packaging and improve recycling systems.
- Childhood obesity: One effective way to tackle childhood obesity would be to promote physical activity and provide healthier school meals.

Useful alternatives:

- Governments could address this problem by…
- A practical solution would be to…
- This issue could be tackled through…
- One possible measure would be to…

Grammar tip: After by, use a noun or an -ing form.

Correct: The government could reduce congestion by improving public transport.

Incorrect: The government could reduce congestion by improve public transport.

8. Using a conditional

Structure: If [subject + present simple], [subject + may/can/will + base verb].

Use conditional sentences to explain possible outcomes, consequences or benefits.

Examples:

- Education: If schools provide more practical lessons, students may develop stronger problem-solving skills.
- Employment: If governments provide affordable childcare, more parents may be able to return to work.
- Environment: If people use fewer disposable plastics, the amount of plastic waste may decrease.
- Transport: If public transport becomes more reliable, fewer commuters may depend on private cars.
- Health: If people exercise regularly, they can reduce their risk of certain health problems.

Three useful conditional patterns

Type	Structure	Example
Real possibility	If + present simple, will/can/may + verb	If fares fall, more people may use buses.
Hypothetical situation	If + past simple, would/could + verb	If public transport were cheaper, more people would use it.
Past hypothetical	If + past perfect, would have + past participle	If the city had expanded its rail network earlier, congestion might have been reduced.

Common error: Do not normally use will in the if-clause of a standard first conditional.

Incorrect: If governments will invest in railways, congestion may decrease.

Correct: If governments invest in railways, congestion may decrease.

9. Comparing advantages and disadvantages

Structure: Although [topic] has some drawbacks, its benefits outweigh them because [main reason].

Use this structure when your position is that the advantages are greater than the disadvantages.

Examples:

- Working from home: Although working from home has some drawbacks, its benefits outweigh them because it gives employees greater flexibility and reduces commuting time.
- Online education: Although online education can limit face-to-face interaction, its advantages outweigh its disadvantages because it makes learning accessible to people in remote areas.
- Tourism: Although tourism can place pressure on local environments, its benefits can outweigh its drawbacks when it is managed sustainably.
- Technology: Although increased reliance on technology creates privacy concerns, its benefits can outweigh its disadvantages because it improves efficiency and access to information.
- Public transport: Although public transport systems can be expensive to develop, their long-term benefits may outweigh the costs by reducing congestion and pollution.

Alternative structures:

- The advantages of X outweigh its disadvantages because...
- Despite certain drawbacks, X offers several significant benefits.
- On balance, I believe the benefits of X are greater than its limitations.

Important: Do not automatically argue that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Your conclusion must reflect your actual position and the arguments you develop.

10. Writing a conclusion

Structure: In conclusion, I believe that [restate your position], mainly because [summarise your reasons].

Use the conclusion to restate your position and summarise your main arguments without introducing a new major point.

Examples:

- Public transport: In conclusion, I believe that governments should prioritise public transport, mainly because it can ease congestion and improve access to employment.
- Education: In conclusion, I believe that university education should be more affordable because it can expand educational opportunities and reduce inequality.
- Technology: In conclusion, I believe that technology has improved people's lives overall, particularly by making communication and information more accessible.
- Environment: In conclusion, I believe that governments and individuals must work together to protect the environment by reducing pollution and conserving natural resources.

- Working from home: In conclusion, I believe that working from home should remain an option for suitable jobs because it offers greater flexibility and can improve work-life balance.

Useful alternatives:

- To conclude, ...
- Overall, I would argue that...
- For these reasons, I believe that...
- In summary, ...

Tip: A conclusion is usually one or two sentences. Do not copy your introduction word for word, and do not add a new argument that you have not discussed in the essay.