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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Punctuation

COMMAS (part 1)

EXPLANATION

- **PUNCTUATION** is a key feature of your writing.
- Using **PUNCTUATION** correctly can improve your **GRAMMAR**.
- It also shows the reader how your writing is connected, which makes your writing more coherent and cohesive.
- Understanding **PUNCTUATION** helps you to understand reading texts more quickly and more fully.
- IELTS examiners often see errors with **COMMAS**.
- We can use **COMMAS** in several ways. They are often used with **adverbs and adverbial phrases**.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas after adverbs at the beginning of a sentence, when adverbs connect your sentence to the rest of your writing:

- **First and foremost**, it is necessary to say that having an army is essential to a country's security.
- **Secondly, /Thirdly**, experts believe that this approach can actually damage the environment.
- Giving newspapers the freedom to publish any story can damage individuals. **Furthermore**, allowing media organisations to print exactly what they want is detrimental to society as a whole.
- Mothers and fathers make financial contributions to their children's schooling. **In addition, /Additionally**, it is usually parents who end up having to pay for their child's higher education. Prepare for {IELTS}

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas after adverbs at the beginning of a sentence, when adverbs connect your sentence to the rest of your writing:

- Nationalised rail services are beneficial. **Nevertheless,/However,** governments seem unwilling to invest in public transport networks.
- Socially, a better connected world benefits us. **In contrast,** a large swathe of the population suffers economically from globalisation.
- Formal schooling can be irrelevant. **For example,/For instance,** many of the world's most successful entrepreneurs left school without qualifications.
- **In conclusion,** I am strongly of the opinion that the government should provide free childcare for all parents.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas after adverbs at the beginning of a sentence, when these adverbs comment on a sentence or tell us about the focus or viewpoint:

- **Almost unbelievably,** it is still common to find individuals who think that all immigrants should be 'sent back to where they came from'.
- **Somewhat worryingly,** deaths from preventable diseases are on the rise.
- **From an economic perspective,** the decision makes sense.
- **As far as teachers are concerned,** testing is often a waste of time.
- **Generally speaking,** youngsters are more adept at using technology.
- **Especially amongst the young,** drug use is rife.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas around adverbs in the middle of a sentence when these adverbs would be used with a comma at the start of a sentence:

- The number of visitors from America, **however**, fell sharply.
- Ice-cream sales for April were high. The amount sold in March, **on the other hand**, was extremely low.
- The number of holiday-makers taking flights to exotic locations remains high. The number of people choosing to take a vacation in their own country, **in contrast**, has decreased markedly.
- I believe that, **as a consequence**, things must change.
- We could argue that, **from the perspective of children**, cutting the level of homework makes sense.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas after adverbs at the beginning of a sentence, when these adverbs and adverb phrases indicate time or place:

- **Over the past few decades,** debate over whether children should wear a school uniform has intensified.
- **Recently,** the issue of racial and sexual discrimination has been debated on television and radio programmes.
- **Since the beginning of this century,** the number of people fleeing wars and persecution has rocketed.
- **In parts of Africa,** life expectancy is still incredibly low.
- **Globally,** there has been a notable rise in life expectancy.
- **In Mexico,** the situation has been particularly bad.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas when complex sentences start with a subordinating conjunction which describes the cause:

- **Because** so many commuters choose to drive to work instead of taking public transport, congestion has become a massive problem during the morning and evening rush-hours.
- **As** house prices have risen, the number of people moving to the city has fallen.
- **Since** police officers carry guns, criminals are more likely to be armed.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas with other types of sentences which describe a cause followed by a result:

- **Due to / Owing to** the unprecedented rise in the use of smartphones, the whole world now feels connected.
- **As a result of** climate change, rainfall in some regions is on the rise.
- **Thanks to** improved economic conditions, levels of infant mortality have fallen.
- **Because of/As a direct consequence of** the increase in corporation tax, many companies have decided to re-locate their headquarters.
- **On account of** increased levels of prosperity, more individuals now buy items which would have been considered luxuries in the past.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas with complex sentences which start with a subordinating conjunction which describes a condition:

- **If** we behave selfishly, we cannot expect those around us to treat us with much respect.
- **If** the governments of the world had taken global warming seriously in the past, the situation would not have become so grave.
- **If** technological advances continue to be made, it will not be long before humans are relying on microchips to enhance their memory and other cognitive functions.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas with complex sentences which start with a subordinating conjunction which describes a condition:

- **As long as** children eat nutritious food most of the time, they should be allowed to have the occasional unhealthy treat.
- **Provided that** there is some adult supervision, I believe young children should be allowed to use the internet.

We do not use commas if we start the sentence with the result clause:

- Police officers should not carry guns **unless it is absolutely necessary**.
- You should take your umbrella **in case it rains**.
- Children should be allowed to have the occasional unhealthy treat **as long as they eat nutritious food most of the time**.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas with complex sentences which start with a subordinating conjunction which describes time:

- **After** having considered the matter in detail, I have reached the conclusion that prison is an ineffective strategy.
- **Before** we can reach a conclusion, we need to consider both the economic and social aspects of this question.
- **When** the ice-cream reaches the appropriate temperature, it is cut into blocks and packed for delivery to supermarkets.
- We should not rest **until we have eliminated child poverty.** (There is no comma in this sentence because the dependent clause is not at the beginning of the sentence)

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas with complex sentences which start with a subordinating conjunction which describes concession:

- **Although** some believe that making children wear a school uniform makes sense, a growing number of parents oppose this approach, largely due to the cost.
- **Even though** the government provides financial support for unemployed people, their lives tend to be extremely difficult.
- **Though** having a spacious home in the suburbs can be very pleasant, many younger professionals would prefer a city-centre apartment.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas with other types of sentences which start with a phrase to indicate concession:

- **Despite** the fact that house prices are exorbitantly high, millions of individuals are keen to buy a property.
- **Despite** the dreadful weather, the match went ahead as planned.
- **In spite of** the economic recession, spending on luxury items has probably never been higher.
- **In spite of** the fact that I hardly ever like fish, the salmon you cooked was amazing.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Punctuation

COMMAS (part 2)

EXPLANATION

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- Understanding **PUNCTUATION** helps you to understand reading texts more quickly and more fully.
- **IELTS** examiners often see errors with **COMMAS**.
- We can use **COMMAS** in several ways. They can be used in **compound sentences**, in **lists**, and when we give **extra information**.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas after coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences:

- Visitor-friendly museums have opened, **and** out-of-date older ones have closed.
- Many are happy living in the countryside, **but** some wish to leave.
- Cars have become more expensive, **yet** people still want them.
- Youngsters get bored, **so** some of them get into bad habits.
- Dogs are wonderful pets, **for** they are loyal and friendly.
- We could meet at your office, **or** we could meet in the bar.
- Many people have no savings in the bank, **nor** do they have well-paid jobs.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We do not always use commas in this situation. We often leave commas out if the subject and verb of the two clauses are the same:

- **Visitor-friendly museums have** opened **and** agreed to allow tourists to enter without paying.
- **Many are** happy to live in the countryside **but** sad that their children have migrated to the city.
- **Pensioners often** feel lonely **so** become depressed.
- **Youngsters can often only find jobs in** shops **or** offices when they leave school.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas in a list of nouns, noun phrases, verbs and adverbs:

- **Sweets, chocolates, biscuits, soft drinks and hamburgers are all responsible for the rise in levels of obesity.**
- **Global warming has led to drought, famine, poverty, mass migration and warfare.**
- **Governments use statistics such as the cost of living, the standard of living, life expectancy, birth rates and mortality rates to help them.**
- **I love to sing, dance, sculpt, play the flute and paint.**
- **The work needs to be done quickly, efficiently, effectively and accurately.**

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas in a list of longer items (sometimes with a comma before the final **and**):

- Divorce is probably more common than it has ever been. This is largely thanks to the ease of the legal process, the fact that separation is now socially acceptable in many countries, positive portrayals of divorce in the media, **and** the high expectations which married life does not always live up to.
- People get divorced for a number of reasons such as incompatibility, the fact that one partner has been unfaithful or that one partner suspects the other of having an affair, **and** financial matters.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas in a list of coordinate adjectives:

- I hope to meet a **tall, dark, handsome** stranger.
- I am scared of **huge, hairy** spiders!
- **Bright, hard-working, committed** teachers should be paid higher salaries than their colleagues who are **lazy, uninspiring** and **incompetent**. (lists of adjectives before nouns do not need **and**)

But we do not use commas in a list of cumulative adjectives:

- I am looking for an **expensive Italian leather** jacket.
- I bought an **impressive Spanish grammar** book.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas when we are giving extra information in a non-defining relative clause:

- Sports like paragliding, mountaineering and rock-climbing, **which are potentially life-threatening**, have become increasingly popular over recent years.
- The richest members of society, **who have literally millions of dollars in their bank accounts**, often find ways of avoiding taxes.
- The level of unemployment, **which is often a good indicator of economic prosperity in a country**, has fallen recently.
- I love the sport of rugby, **which has recently been included in The Olympics**.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

We can use commas when we are giving extra or non-essential information in other ways:

- My brother, a professional footballer, takes nutrition very seriously.
- Dogs, unlike cats, regard their human owners as protectors and leaders.
- Many people, including university-educated ones, find themselves either unemployed or having to do low-skilled work for a tiny salary.
- Teachers, especially more experienced ones, know how to control a class.
- He brought me some pizza, my favourite food.

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

At the beginning and the end of a letter:

- Dear sir/madam,
- Dear Editor,
- Dear Mr.Turner,
- Hi George,
- Yours sincerely,
- Yours faithfully,
- Warmest wishes,
- Best wishes,
- All the best,

PUNCTUATION

COMMAS

At the beginning and the end of a letter:

- Dear sir/madam,
- Dear Editor,
- Dear Mr.Turner,
- Hi George,
- Yours sincerely,
- Yours faithfully,
- Warmest wishes,
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- All the best,



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Punctuation

CAPITAL LETTERS AND FULL-STOPPS

EXPLANATION

- **PUNCTUATION** is a key feature of your writing.
- Using **PUNCTUATION** correctly can improve your **GRAMMAR**.
- It also shows the reader how your writing is connected, which makes your writing more coherent and cohesive.
- Understanding **PUNCTUATION** helps you to understand reading texts more quickly and more fully.
- IELTS examiners often see errors with **CAPITAL LETTERS** and **FULL-STOPS**.

PUNCTUATION

CAPITAL LETTERS

We use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence:

- **One** of the main reasons why those living in cities suffer from stress is that levels of noise pollution are so high.

We use capital letters when we refer to a name or an acronym:

- **The United States (The USA)** has been a member of **The United Nations (The UN)** since its inception.
- **The International Monetary Fund (The IMF)** is based in **New York**.
- Pollution levels in parts of **The Pacific Ocean**, especially around **Hawaii**, are unacceptably high in **June** and **July**.
- **Charles Darwin** made a huge contribution to our understanding of the world when he published '**On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection**'.

PUNCTUATION

FULL-STOP

We can use a full-stop to indicate the end of a sentence:

- A sentence or clause needs a **subject** and a **verb**:
- **Experts understand.**
- **Experts who analyse the question understand.**
- **A significant number of experts who have analysed the question in detail claim to fully understand the implications of the proposed policy.**

PUNCTUATION

FULL-STOP

Be careful with sentences:

- **INCORRECT:** The statistical information given shows **that the** number of residents in five large Asian cities.
- **CORRECT:** The statistical information given shows **that** the number of residents in five large Asian cities **has risen**.
- **INCORRECT:** I am genuinely worried **that so many people in large metropolitan areas**.
- **CORRECT:** I am genuinely worried **that** so many people **live** in large metropolitan areas.
- **CORRECT:** I am genuinely worried **that there are** so many people in large metropolitan areas.

PUNCTUATION

FULL-STOP

Be careful with sentences:

- **INCORRECT:** Many school-children fail their exams **because** stress.
- **CORRECT:** Many school-children fail their exams **because of** stress.
- **CORRECT:** Many school-children fail their exams **because they feel** stress.
- **INCORRECT:** There seems little doubt that the injection of money has had a negative impact on top-level international sport. **For example, drug-taking and cheating.**
- **CORRECT:** There seems little doubt that the injection of money has had a negative impact on top-level international sport. **For example, drug-taking and cheating have occurred.**



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Punctuation

APOSTROPHES

EXPLANATION

- **PUNCTUATION** is a key feature of your writing.
- Using **PUNCTUATION** correctly can improve your **GRAMMAR**.
- It also shows the reader how your writing is connected, which makes your writing more coherent and cohesive.
- Understanding **PUNCTUATION** helps you to understand reading texts more quickly and more fully.
- **APOSTROPHES** can be used to **indicate possession** or (in informal English) to **connect two words together**.

PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes can indicate possession. The apostrophe usually goes before a singular or uncountable noun:

- This country's economy is flourishing. (= The economy of this country is flourishing)
- The government's proposal has been accepted. (= The proposal of the government has been accepted)
- Alcohol's benefits have not been scientifically proven, but its drawbacks certainly have. (= The benefits of alcohol have not been scientifically proven)
- My sister's car was stolen but her friend's brother had a bike he could lend her. (= The car of my sister / The brother of her friend)

PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes can indicate possession. The apostrophe usually goes after a plural noun:

- Individuals' right/rights to freedom of speech should be protected at all times. (= The right of individuals)
- New laws need to be introduced, protecting workers' rights. (= The rights of workers)
- Students' grades often fall if the teacher forgets to praise them. (= The grades of students)
- Economists' predictions are often hopelessly inaccurate.
- Politicians' loved-ones should never have their photographs printed in the press or on websites.

PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes can indicate possession. The apostrophe usually goes after a plural noun:

- It is clear that motorists should not use mobile phones whilst on the roads. **Drivers's** ability to concentrate whilst talking or texting is clearly impaired. (= The ability of drivers to concentrate...)
- **Teachers's** knowledge of the subjects they teach should be excellent. (= The knowledge which teachers have...)
- I will be leaving for Finland in a few **days's** time. (We can use this structure with singular nouns: **London is an hour's drive from here**)

But be careful!

- **Human's** intelligence is only matched by their ability not to use it.

PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes can indicate possession. Be careful with nouns with unusual plural forms:

- The police's attitude towards criminals needs to change.
- The people's right to free and fair elections is unchallengeable.
- Babies' clothes should certainly not be taxed.
- We need to understand large companies' desire to make profits.
- Some governments seem not to think that women's health is as important as men's health.
- Children's education should be the priority of any government.

PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes can be used for contractions in informal writing:

This is informal:

- Shoppers **shouldn't** always believe what advertisers tell them. Those who make adverts **don't** necessarily tell the truth.
- Annoyingly, my **laptop's** been stolen.

This is formal:

- Shoppers **should not** always believe what advertisers tell them. Those who make adverts **do not** necessarily tell the truth.
- Annoyingly, my **laptop has** been stolen.

PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes are not necessary for decades and other numbers:

- Although the number of inhabitants in the village was quite low in **the 1940s**, it rose sharply in the early part of **the 1960s** and by the end of **the 1970s** it had more than doubled.
- It is predicted that by the end of **the 2020s**, average rainfall will have fallen slightly. Even more worryingly, by the middle of **the 2040s**, the amount of rain we get is likely to have almost halved.
- Workers in their **50s/fifties** would often like to retire.
- Those in their **20s/twenties** often fail to realise how important it is to save money.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Punctuation

SEMI-COLONS AND COLONS

EXPLANATION

- **Most IELTS candidates prefer not to use SEMI-COLONS (;). However, they impress the examiner.**
- **They give your writing variety and connect ideas.**
- **A SEMI-COLON is usually used to connect two INDEPENDENT CLAUSES. An INDEPENDENT CLAUSE has a subject and a verb and it either is a sentence or it could be a sentence.**
- **When two INDEPENDENT CLAUSES have equal importance, and there is a strong connection between them, we can connect them with a SEMI-COLON.**

PUNCTUATION

SEMI-COLONS

Semi-colons are used to join two clauses with a strong connection:

- **If individuals break the law, they should be punished; if the punishment does not work, they should receive an even harsher sentence.**
- **Working in an office can become very boring; spending all day behind a shop counter can be even worse.**
- **Prisoners involved in creative activities, like painting and singing, are less likely to report feelings of depression or anxiety; those who are not given the opportunity to express themselves are more likely to be violent or aggressive.**

PUNCTUATION

SEMI-COLONS

Semi-colons are used to join two clauses with a strong connection:

- **Some of the world's most successful sports-stars earn vast amounts of money; there is considerable debate over whether they deserve it.**
- **Television programmes depicting sexual activity and violence are extremely popular amongst some viewers; there is, however, widespread concern that this type of programme could have a detrimental effect on children's development.**
- **Football hooliganism has been a problem for several decades; studies suggest that the availability of alcohol before matches is a key predictor of how likely it is that violence will break out.**

PUNCTUATION

SEMI-COLONS

Semi-colons are used to join two clauses with a strong connection:

- **Some guitarists enjoy playing as part of a group; others prefer to play alone.**
- **In some parts of the world, football is the most popular sport; in other regions, baseball has more participants and followers.**
- **I believe that criminals found guilty of violent crimes should go to prison for a considerable period; those guilty of murder should be sent to jail for life.**
- **Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.**

PUNCTUATION

SEMI-COLONS

Semi-colons are used before a second clause which is connected to the first clause with a linking word or expression:

- Many city-dwellers live in apartment blocks; **however**, an increasing number are able to afford private houses away from the centre.
- Hundreds of people have written to the government to express their anger; **in addition**, thousands have been out on the streets protesting.
- I would love to get a well-paid job; **unfortunately**, I don't have the relevant qualifications.
- 'The fact that an opinion has been widely held is no evidence whatever that it is not utterly absurd; **indeed**, in view of the silliness of the majority of mankind, a widespread belief is more likely to be foolish than sensible.' (Bertrand Russell)

EXPLANATION

- **Most IELTS candidates prefer not to use COLONS (:).** However, used correctly, they can impress the examiner. They can give your writing variety and help you to show how ideas are connected.
- **A COLON** is usually used to connect information before it to information after it.
- **The information after the COLON** usually explains or gives an example of the information before the **COLON**.

PUNCTUATION

COLONS

Colons can be used to start a second clause which explains or expands on the first clause:

- Having a university degree appears to give prospective employees a distinct advantage: a recent study indicated that most employers would prefer to offer the job to a candidate with an academic background.
- Learning a foreign language is time-consuming: it is estimated that the average student needs around ten thousand hours of practice to become proficient.
- This point is illustrated by the case of my cousin: she is a wheelchair user but, thanks to technology, manages to live a full, active and useful life.

PUNCTUATION

COLONS

Colons can be used to introduce a list. What follows the colon is not always a clause:

- **There are three main reasons why children misbehave in class: boredom, poor quality teaching, and the thrill they get from showing off in front of their classmates.**
- **There are two strategies to bear in mind when suffering from culture shock: you should be patient, and remember that this is a natural process faced by almost everyone who lives abroad.**
- **There are several places I would love to visit: Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar, to name just a few.**

PUNCTUATION

COLONS

Colons can be used to create emphasis. What follows the colon is not always a clause:

- There are two things which any good author needs: talent and luck.
- There is one thing which governments need when facing a terrorist threat: courage.
- The cause is simple: selfishness.
- There is only one thing we need to fear: fear itself. (based on F. D. Roosevelt's quotation)
- Our media will increasingly become dominated by one story: the environmental crisis.

PUNCTUATION

COMBINING COLONS AND SEMI-COLONS

You can combine colons and semi-colons when you write lists of longer items which support a point:

- **There are many ways to improve your employment prospects:** it is possible to do extra training and gain new qualifications; some people practise their interview technique; spending more time actually looking for a job is recommended; and finally, anyone wanting a job should think about widening their social network.
- **There are ways in which city-life can be stressful:** those living in built-up areas have to cope with noise pollution and light pollution; streets and public transport networks are overcrowded; the quality of schools tends to be poor; and it is quite hard to make genuine friends, despite having access to millions of people.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Punctuation

HYPHENS, DASHES AND BRACKETS

EXPLANATION

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- Understanding **PUNCTUATION** helps you to understand reading texts more quickly and more fully.
- **IELTS** examiners do not often see **HYPHENS, DASHES** and **BRACKETS** used well.

PUNCTUATION

HYPHENS

Hyphens can be used to connect adjectives with two parts:

- Those who have had the opportunity to live abroad tend to be **hard-working** and **broad-minded**.
- The question of whether **twelve-year-old** children who commit crimes should be imprisoned is a tricky one to answer.

Hyphens can be used to connect compound nouns:

- **City-dwellers** living in **tower-blocks** complain about **stress-levels**.

Hyphens can be used to split words into two parts at the end of a line:

- One of the most important aspects of working in finance is **under-standing** how important technology is.

PUNCTUATION

'EM' DASHES

'Em' dashes can be used to add extra information which you want to stand out and which you want the reader to notice:

- **Childhood obesity**—now affecting almost four in every ten primary school pupils—is a disgraceful situation which the authorities should tackle.
- **Everyone learning a foreign language**—from beginners to the most proficient student—needs to be aware of the cultural context of what they are studying.
- **The planes**—three of which have crashed in the last year—need to be grounded.
- **When you finally brought us the bill**—after a twenty-minute wait—it was completely wrong.

PUNCTUATION

BRACKETS

Brackets can be used to show that extra information is less relevant in the sentence:

- **India** (which gained independence soon after **The Second World War**) has transformed itself into a global super-power.
- **Volcanoes** (which also exist on several other planets and moons in the solar system) offer us a valuable insight into how our world was formed.
- **My brother** (who used to be an accountant before becoming a clown) is absolutely brilliant with children.
- **Leeds** (which is said to have more green spaces than any other **British city**) was the location for the filming of the first ever moving image.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

PUNCTUATION

ADVICE

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EXPLANATION

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- Understanding **PUNCTUATION** helps you to understand reading texts more quickly and more fully.
- **IELTS** examiners will give you extra credit if you follow certain strategies connected with **PUNCTUATION** and **HANDWRITING**.

PUNCTUATION

YOU SHOULD NOT USE IN FORMAL IELTS WRITING

Question marks:

This is weak:

- **Why do people eat so much meat?**

This is stronger:

- **It is interesting to consider why people eat so much meat.**

This is stronger:

- **The question of why people eat so much meat has perplexed many experts over the years.**

PUNCTUATION **YOU SHOULD NOT USE IN FORMAL IELTS WRITING**

Exclamation marks:

This is weak:

- Most people in developed countries eat far too much meat!

This is stronger:

- Most individuals in economically-advanced nations consume significantly more meat than is necessary or appropriate.

This is stronger:

- The majority of those living in advanced regions consume an exorbitant/staggering quantity of meat.

PUNCTUATION

YOU SHOULD NOT USE IN FORMAL IELTS WRITING

Avoid symbols like % & + = # or /:

This is weak:

- **12%** of those questioned agreed with the statement. **Men/women &** children were surveyed.

This is stronger:

- Twelve percent of those questioned agreed with the statement. Men, women and children were surveyed.

STRATEGY: HANDWRITING

- Use upper-case letters for capitals.
- Make sure your capital letters are twice as high as other letters.
- Make sure your full-stops are a clear point.
- Make sure your commas finish below the line.
- Leave a line between each paragraph.
- Cross out with a single line if you make a mistake.
- Don't use arrows.
- Write in pen.
- Practise handwriting for an hour.



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PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Look at the following sentences. Decide whether each sentence is **correct** or whether it is **incorrect** because commas (,) need to be added:

1. The most recent Olympic Games which were held in Brazil in 2016 were generally considered to have been successful.
2. Cities which host The Olympics often benefit from a boost in tourism in the years following the event.
3. The Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics of 2008 which included a spectacular firework display is considered by many to have been the best ever.
4. The 1996 Atlanta Olympics which were heavily criticised for relying on advertising from Coca-Cola will probably not be remembered as one of the great sporting events.
5. The process which is used to determine which venue will stage each Olympic Games has been criticised as unfair and even corrupt.
6. Local inhabitants often find themselves having to pay higher taxes to cover the cost of Olympic Games which take place in their cities.

ANSWERS

1. **COMMAS ARE NEEDED:** The most recent Olympic Games, which were held in Brazil in 2016, were generally considered to have been successful.
2. **NO COMMAS ARE NEEDED:** Cities which host The Olympics often benefit from a boost in tourism in the years following the event.
3. **COMMAS ARE NEEDED:** The Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics of 2008, which included a spectacular firework display, is considered by many to have been the best ever.
4. **COMMAS ARE NEEDED:** The 1996 Atlanta Olympics, which were heavily criticised for relying on advertising from Coca-Cola, will probably not be remembered as one of the great sporting events.
5. **NO COMMAS ARE NEEDED:** The process which is used to determine which venue will stage each Olympic Games has been criticised as unfair and even corrupt.
6. **NO COMMAS ARE NEEDED:** Local inhabitants often find themselves having to pay higher taxes to cover the cost of Olympic Games which take place in their cities.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Look at the extracts. Each extract has a missing verb. Try to complete each extract by adding an appropriate verb:

1. Frequently, science undergraduates feel a great deal of pressure during their university course. On the other hand, social science and arts students.
2. The statistical information given shows that the number of residents in five large Asian cities.
3. Many school-children fail their exams because stress.
4. Even though bad weather, many so-called experts still claim that global warming is a figment of scientists' imaginations.
5. Although criticism of the law on gun control, leading politicians are unwilling to change it.
6. There seems little doubt that the injection of money has had a negative impact on top-level international sport. For example, drug-taking and cheating.
7. I am genuinely worried that so many people in large metropolitan areas.
8. Some migrants who from war-torn regions are willing to risk their lives in search of a better and safer future.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

1. Frequently, science undergraduates feel a great deal of pressure during their university course. **On the other hand, social science and arts students seem to find little difficulty at times.**
2. The statistical information given shows that **the number of residents in five large Asian cities has increased significantly.**
3. Many school-children fail their exams **because stress causes them to become nervous** / Many school-children fail their exams **because of stress.**
4. **Even though there has been a great deal of bad weather**, many so-called experts still claim that global warming is a figment of scientists' imaginations.
5. **Although there has been criticism of the law on gun control**, leading politicians are unwilling to change it.
6. There seems little doubt that the injection of money has had a negative impact on top-level international sport. **For example, drug-taking and cheating are far more widespread than they used to be.**
7. I am genuinely worried that **so many people live in large metropolitan areas.**
8. Some migrants **who are from war-torn regions** are willing to risk their lives in search of a better and safer future.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Look at the following sentences. Some sentences are correct. Some sentences do not have a verb. Decide which sentences are correct and try to re-write the incorrect sentences:

1. Some critics are of the opinion that governments should not invest money in museums, art galleries and opera houses. In contrast, a significant number of art-lovers.
2. Some politicians, especially those with right-wing views, believe that all higher education should be private and that the state should play no part in the provision of university education. On the other hand, a large number of academics and other experts from the world of education.
3. The charts demonstrate that levels of car ownership over a twelve-year period beginning in 1995.
4. Many parents believe that their children struggle at school because of the poor quality of the teachers.
5. Some experts in the field of education believe that a lot of school-leavers have low levels of literacy and numeracy because the teachers.
6. Teachers sometimes claim that their students leave school without the relevant skills and qualifications because the government refuses to fund the secondary school system.
7. Although problems of discipline, bullying and low-level disruption in schools, most head-teachers claim that children have a generally good learning environment.
8. Even though top universities now offer scholarships to the brightest students, it still tends to be children from privileged backgrounds who apply for places at institutions of higher education.
9. For those living in large urban areas, there are many stresses and strains. For example, overcrowded buses, poor-quality accommodation, high levels of noise pollution and light pollution.
10. Most students who prepare diligently for exams are successful in their academic studies. However, a few children who work very hard but find exams stressful may, regrettably, not get the grades they desire.

ANSWERS

1. **INCORRECT:** a significant number of art-lovers is a noun phrase. It does not have a verb. **CORRECT VERSION:** Some critics are of the opinion that governments should not invest money in museums, art galleries and opera houses. In contrast, a significant number of art-lovers believe that funding things connected with the arts is beneficial for the whole of society.
2. **INCORRECT:** a large number of academics and other experts from the world of education is a noun phrase and it does not have a verb. **CORRECT VERSION:** Some politicians, especially those with right-wing views, believe that all higher education should be private and that the state should play no part in the provision of university education. On the other hand, a large number of academics and other

experts from the world of education think that the state should be in charge of undergraduate and post-graduate courses.

3. **INCORRECT:** levels of car ownership over a twelve-year period beginning in 1995 is a noun phrase and it does not have a verb. **CORRECT VERSION:** The charts demonstrate that levels of car ownership over a twelve-year period beginning in 1995 rose.
4. **CORRECT:** When we write **because of** we can follow it with a noun phrase. We do not need to write a clause.
5. **INCORRECT:** the teachers is a noun. We need to use a clause here with a subject/ noun and a verb. **CORRECT VERSION:** Some experts in the field of education believe that a lot of school-leavers have low levels of literacy and numeracy because the teachers are poor / because of the teachers.
6. **CORRECT:** the government refuses to fund the secondary school system is a clause with a subject, a verb and an object.
7. **INCORRECT:** problems of discipline, bullying and low-level disruption in schools is a noun phrase. It does not have a verb. We need a clause with a subject and a verb here. **CORRECT VERSION:** Although there are problems of discipline, bullying and low-level disruption in schools, most head-teachers claim that children have a generally good learning environment.
8. **CORRECT:** top universities now offer scholarships to the brightest students is a clause with a subject, a verb and an object.
9. **INCORRECT:** overcrowded buses, poor-quality accommodation, high levels of noise pollution and light pollution includes several noun phrases but there is no verb. **CORRECT VERSION:** For those living in large urban areas, there are many stresses and strains. For example, overcrowded buses, poor-quality accommodation, high levels of noise pollution and light pollution all cause difficulties.
10. **CORRECT:** There are two examples of relative clauses which begin with '**who**'. Both of these clauses have a subject and a verb.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Look at the following sentences. All of the capital letters have been taken out. Try to replace them:

1. the united states of america and china are two of the world's biggest economies, according to the international monetary fund.
2. we hope to come and see you in april or may.
3. roger federer has won more tennis competitions than almost any other european.
4. i think that ridley scott's film 'blade runner' is one of the best movies ever.
5. the decision to cancel the conference in switzerland and move it to italy was controversial.
6. although the himalayas are beautiful, they can also be dangerous. personally, i would prefer not to try to climb there.

ANSWERS

1. **The United States** of **America** and **China** are two of the world's biggest economies, according to **The International Monetary Fund**.
2. **We** hope to come and see you in **April** or **May**.
3. **Roger Federer** has won more tennis competitions than almost any other **European**.
4. **I** think that **Ridley Scott's** film '**Blade Runner**' is one of the best movies ever.
5. **The** decision to cancel the conference in **Switzerland** and move it to **Italy** was controversial.
6. **Although The Himalayas** are beautiful, they can also be dangerous. **Personally, I** would prefer not to try to climb there.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Decide which is the correct alternative in the following sentences:

1. An **individual's/individuals'** right to freedom of speech should be protected at all times.
2. New laws need to be introduced, protecting **worker's/workers'** rights.
3. A **student's/students'** willingness to learn is often connected to the quality of the teacher.
4. **Student's/Students'** grades often fall if the teacher forgets to praise them.
5. **Economist's/Economists'/Economists** predictions are often hopelessly inaccurate.
6. The family members of **politician's/politicians'/politicians** should never have their photographs printed in the press or on websites.

ANSWERS

1. **individual's** (We use **a** and refer to one person. Obviously, we refer to one person as an example of all people, but **individual** is singular, so the apostrophe goes before the **s**)
2. **workers'** (We refer to all workers here. The noun is plural and the apostrophe is placed after the **s**)
3. **student's** (This sentence is similar to sentence 1. Although we write about **a student**, we do not mean a specific student. We use this **student** as an example of all students. However, the noun is singular, and the apostrophe goes before the **s**)
4. **students'** (Here we refer to **students** in general and so the apostrophe goes after the **s** because it is a plural noun)
5. **economists'** (Again, this is a plural noun)
6. **politicians** (The possessive form is made using **of**, so we do not need an apostrophe. It would be possible to write: **Politicians' family members...**)

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Decide which is the correct alternative in the following sentences:

1. The **police's/polices/polices'** duties include ensuring that those who break the law are caught and punished.
2. **Children's/Childrens'** lives have become increasingly stressful over recent years.
3. I will be leaving for Finland in a few **days'/days/day's** time
4. London is an **hours/hour's/hours'** drive from here.
5. **Womens/Women's/Womens'** rights are as important as those of men.
6. Some **mens/men's/mens'** attitudes towards women need to improve.
7. In the **1980s/1980's**, the number of individuals owning a car rose significantly.
8. **People's/Peoples'** attitudes towards politicians have certainly changed. They have become far more cynical and suspicious

ANSWERS

1. **police's** (although nouns like **the police** and **the army** refer to a group of people, these nouns are treated as singular, so we put the apostrophe before the **s**)
2. **children's** (when plural nouns do not end in **s**, we usually add the apostrophe before the **s**)
3. **days'** (here we are expressing the idea of **a few days of time**. Because **days** is plural, the apostrophe goes after the **s**)
4. **hour's** (here we are expressing the idea of **one hour of driving**. Because **hour** is singular, the apostrophe goes before the **s**)
5. **women's** (when plural nouns do not end in **s**, we usually add the apostrophe before the **s**)
6. **men's** (when plural nouns do not end in **s**, we usually add the apostrophe before the **s**)
7. **1980s** and **1980's** are both possible (**1980s** is probably more common and more logical)
8. **People's** (when plural nouns do not end in **s**, we usually add the apostrophe before the **s**. It is possible to use **peoples** as a countable noun to mean **groups of nationalities or races**, but it would be extremely unusual to use this word in a possessive form)

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

The following sentences all contain semi-colons (;). For each sentence, decide if the highlighted semi-colon is used correctly or not:

1. Although wages have risen recently; many workers still complain that their salaries are too low.
2. Parents who shout at their children need to be re-educated; those who hit them should be fined or put in prison.
3. There are several reasons why healthcare is costing the government more money: the prices of medicines are rising; modern medical equipment, which hospitals desperately need, is horrendously expensive; people are living longer and therefore require care for longer periods; life-threatening diseases such as cancer have become far more prevalent and require patients to spend lengthy periods in hospital.
4. There are two things which people value above all else in their friendships; honesty and support.
5. Children should be given computers in the classroom for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is essential that they learn how to use technology, and this can best happen under the guidance and supervision of a teacher; another point worth making is that the internet is an incredibly valuable source of information.
6. It is now illegal for motorists to use their mobile phones whilst driving; however, some apparently ignore this law.

ANSWERS

1. **INCORRECT:** A semi-colon can only be used to connect two sentences or clauses which are equally important. In this sentence, the clause **wages have risen recently** is not independent. It does not exist independently of the rest of the sentence. We only include it because it provides extra information about the important clause: **many workers still complain that their salaries are too low**. If this is difficult to understand, it is probably easier to remember that when you use words and phrases like **although, even though, despite, when, if, due to** and **owing to** (these words and phrases show how two parts of a sentence are connected) we do not usually use a semi-colon.
2. **CORRECT:** We have two separate and independent clauses here. They are very closely connected. The subject is similar and **those** and **them** in the second clause refer to nouns in the first clause.
3. **CORRECT:** When we make a list of nouns or very short phrases, we usually separate them with commas. When the list contains longer items or items which have commas in them already, it is a good idea to put a colon (:) at the start of the list and separate items with semi-colons.
4. **INCORRECT:** We can only use semi-colons to connect two clauses. A clause has a subject and a verb. Here, **honesty and support** is not a clause. It is a phrase with two nouns. We could use a colon (:) here.
5. **INCORRECT:** Semi-colons are used to connect two clauses which have a very strong link. The two sentences connected here by a semi-colon are not strongly

connected. The first sentence is an example to support one point and the second sentence is a new point.

6. **CORRECT:** After reading sentence 1) it might surprise you that this sentence is correct. Here we have two separate sentences, so it would be possible to separate them with a full-stop (.) but the link between them is very strong and a semi-colon is possible. When we use adverbs like **however, nevertheless, in addition or consequently**, and where the connection between the two clauses is strong, we can use a semi-colon.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

In each of the following extracts, there is a punctuation mistake. Try to find it and re-write the sentences correctly:

1. It is quite likely that crime has actually fallen over the past few years. Nevertheless more and more people are afraid of being burgled or mugged in the street.
2. During the twenty-five years under discussion, the number of Canadians Americans Mexicans and Argentinians visiting Europe remained relatively constant.
3. Food prices have fallen in real terms since the beginning of the decade but the cost of fuel on the other hand has shot up.
4. Homelessness has become a huge issue in some parts of the world. For example, In Brazil, a significant proportion of youngsters find themselves sleeping on the streets.
5. Making society fairer and giving poorer people more opportunities should be a goal of the authorities. Its always incredibly important.
6. The governments policy has been supported by many leading economists, but the economists views are often very different from the opinions of members of the public.
7. It is my strong belief that smokers should'nt light up cigarettes in public. If I were a cigarette-user, I certainly would'nt smoke in public places.
8. If criminals manage to escape from prison, they should be re-captured, if they are caught again they should be given much longer sentences.
9. Government ministers who receive a huge annual salary often state that public sector workers like teachers and nurses should not be given a pay rise.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

1. It is quite likely that crime has actually fallen over the past few years. Nevertheless, more and more people are afraid of being burgled or mugged in the street.
2. During the twenty-five years under discussion, the number of Canadians, Americans, Mexicans and Argentinians visiting Europe remained relatively constant.
3. Food prices have fallen in real terms since the beginning of the decade, but the cost of fuel, on the other hand, has shot up.
4. Homelessness has become a huge issue in some parts of the world. For example, in Brazil, a significant proportion of youngsters find themselves sleeping on the streets.
5. Making society fairer and giving poorer people more opportunities should be a goal of the authorities. It's/It is always incredibly important.
6. The government's policy has been supported by many leading economists, but the economists' views are often very different from the opinions of members of the public.
7. It is my strong belief that smokers should not/shouldn't light up cigarettes in public. If I were a cigarette-user, I certainly would not/wouldn't smoke in public places.

8. If criminals manage to escape from prison, they should be re-captured; if they are caught again they should be given much longer sentences. (It would also be possible to write two separate sentences here)
9. Government ministers- who receive a huge annual salary- often state that public sector workers like teachers and nurses should not be given a pay rise. (It would be possible to use either commas or brackets instead of dashes)