

Task 2: 5-Minute Planning Sheet

Turn the question into a clear position and two focused body paragraphs before you start writing.

A short plan can help you avoid **unclear positions, repeated ideas and off-topic paragraphs**. The five minutes below are a suggested routine, not an IELTS rule.

A simple planning routine

1	2	3	4
DECODE What is the task?	DECIDE What is my position?	DEVELOP What are my 2 main ideas?	SUPPORT Why? Example? Result?

Decode → Decide → Develop → Support

Worked example

QUESTION Some people think schools should spend more time teaching practical life skills, while others believe academic subjects should remain the main focus. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

DECODE	Discuss both views + give a clear opinion.
POSITION	Academic subjects should stay central, but practical skills should be built into the school timetable.
BODY 1	Why academic subjects matter: they provide the knowledge and skills needed for further study and many careers. Example: literacy, maths and science are foundations for later learning.
BODY 2	Why practical skills matter: they prepare students for everyday responsibilities. Example: budgeting, first aid or communication could be taught in short regular modules without replacing core subjects.
CONCLUSION	Restate the same position. Do not introduce a new main idea.

Suggested 5-minute routine

MIN 1	MIN 2	MIN 3-4	MIN 5
Read twice Underline the task words.	Choose Decide your position.	Plan Build two body paragraphs.	Check Does every idea answer the question?

Remember: planning means choosing your ideas and their purpose. You do not need to write the essay before you write the essay.

Try it yourself



Use the boxes below to make a clear plan before you begin writing.

QUESTION Some people believe that public transport should be free in large cities. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

1. Decode the question

TOPIC	TASK	LIMIT
What is the essay about? _____	What must you do? _____	What words narrow the topic? _____

2. Decide your position

Write one sentence that makes your position clear. Fully agree? Partly agree? Disagree?

3. Develop two body paragraphs

BODY 1	Main idea: What will this paragraph prove? _____
	Explain: Why is this true / important? _____
	Support: Example, result or comparison? _____
BODY 2	Main idea: What will this paragraph prove? _____
	Explain: Why is this true / important? _____
	Support: Example, result or comparison? _____

4. Check before you write

☐ My position answers the exact question.	☐ Each body paragraph has one clear main idea.
☐ Both main ideas support my position.	☐ I can explain each idea, not just name it.
☐ My examples are relevant, not memorised.	☐ I have not planned the same point twice.
DON'T Plan full sentences for every paragraph.	DO Plan the idea, the explanation and the support.