

IELTS PERSONAL TRAINER

THE 6 FIXES

That Cost You the Most

A practice workbook for IELTS Writing candidates aiming for Band 7

341

real essays analysed

86,300

words of student writing

75-80%

of what holds your score back

Before You Start

This book is different from other English-learning books, and it is worth thirty seconds to understand why.

We did not start with a list of grammar rules and write exercises to match. Instead, we studied 341 real essays — over 86,000 words of student writing. We counted every error, looked for patterns, and found something useful: six types of mistake account for roughly three-quarters of the errors that quietly hold a score back.

Six types of mistake account for roughly **75-80% of the errors that lower a score.**

Fix these six, and most of the problem disappears.

You do not need fifty grammar rules or three hundred pages of exercises. You need six fixes, practised until they become automatic.

A NOTE ON WHAT “SMALL” ERRORS REALLY COST

Here is the part most candidates miss. These are not beginner errors. They appear in Band 5 essays, but they also appear — less often, yet still there — in Band 6, 6.5 and even Band 7 writing. An examiner does not need an essay to be full of mistakes to keep it at Band 6. A handful of recurring slips is enough.

That is the whole problem at this level. By Band 6 you usually *know* the rule. What holds you back is using it *consistently* under exam pressure. The band descriptors reward control and accuracy, and “frequent” or “occasional” errors are exactly the wording that separates a 6 from a 7. This book targets the frequency. Each fix shows you the error, the one rule that removes it, and enough practice to make the correct version feel natural — so the slips stop happening when it matters.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

- **The Problem** — what the mistake looks like, using real examples from our data.
- **The Rule** — one simple principle that fixes most errors in this category.
- **Practice** — targeted drills you can do in three to five minutes.
- **Answer Key** — so you can check yourself immediately.

Work through one chapter per week. Do the exercises, check your answers, then apply the rule to your own writing. The key is repetition: repeat each exercise type until the correct version feels automatic, not effortful.

THE SIX FIXES

Fix	The problem	Roughly what it costs
#1	Overusing THE	the largest single source of grammar error in our data
#2	Recycling the same ten words	a major drag on the Lexical Resource score
#3	Connectors used without real logic	a common cap on Coherence & Cohesion
#4	Commas where sentences should break	missed complex sentences (Grammatical Range)
#5	Avoiding the present perfect	a recurring tense-control issue
#6	Agreement and word-form slips	small but visible accuracy errors

Ready? Let's start with the biggest one.

FIX #1

Stop Overusing THE

The single most common grammar error in our data — found in almost every essay.

THE PROBLEM

Read these sentences. They look correct, don't they?

FROM OUR DATA

The technology has changed the society. The education is very important for the people. The life in the modern world is very stressful.

Every one of these has the same problem: **THE is not needed.**

In our data, “the people” appeared 37 times; “the society” 24 times; “the education” in essay after essay. Most writers never notice they are doing it. They feel THE makes writing sound more academic. It does the opposite — it makes it sound unnatural.

WHY THIS CAPS YOUR BAND

This error survives all the way into Band 6 and 7. You probably already know the rule. The issue is that THE slips in automatically before big abstract nouns when you are writing at speed. Each slip is a small article error, and a scattering of them across an essay is exactly what keeps Grammatical Range & Accuracy at “frequent minor errors” — i.e. Band 6, not 7.

WHY IT HAPPENS

If your first language is Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean or Japanese, it has no word for THE. So when you write English your brain adds THE as a “safety marker” — especially before important-sounding words like *education*, *technology* or *society*. But in English, when you talk about something in general, you use no article at all. Not THE. Not A. Just the noun.

THE ONE RULE

The “Which one?” test. Every time you write THE, ask: “Which one? Can the reader point to it?”
Yes → keep THE. No (you mean it in general) → delete THE.

✗ *The technology has changed the society.*

✓ **Technology has changed society.**

Which technology? All of it. Which society? Society in general. No THE.

✗ *The government should invest in the education.*

✓ **The government should invest in education.**

“The government” = which one? This country’s. Keep THE. “Education” = in general. Delete THE.

But compare:

✓ **The water in this river is polluted.**

“Which water?” → the water in this river. Specific. Keep THE.

PRACTICE

EXERCISE A Keep or Delete?

If THE is correct, write KEEP. If THE is not needed, rewrite the sentence without it.

1. The pollution is a serious problem in many countries.

.....

2. The pollution in Beijing was very bad last winter.

.....

3. The children should spend less time on the internet.

.....

4. The children in my class are very creative.

.....

5. The money cannot buy the happiness.

.....

6. The money I saved last year helped me buy a car.

.....

7. The music is good for the brain.

.....

8. The music at the party was terrible.

.....

9. The people in developing countries need more the support.

.....

10. I think the life is more difficult now than 50 years ago.

.....

EXERCISE B Fix the Paragraph

This paragraph contains seven unnecessary uses of THE. Cross them out, then rewrite it correctly.

FIND SEVEN

In the modern world, the technology plays an important role in the education. The students can use the internet to study at the home. The knowledge is now available to the people everywhere. However, the technology also has some disadvantages. For example, the children spend too much time playing the games on the computers. I believe the government should control how the children use the technology.

Rewrite the corrected paragraph:

EXERCISE C Memorise These Chunks

These phrases appeared hundreds of times in our data — almost always with THE wrongly added. Memorise them without THE, and use at least three in your next essay.

Stop writing...	Start writing...
the education is important	education is important
the people believe that...	people believe that...
the technology has changed...	technology has changed...
the life is difficult	life is difficult
the money cannot buy...	money cannot buy...
the society needs...	society needs...
the health is more important...	health is more important...
the information is available	information is available
the knowledge helps...	knowledge helps...
the children learn by...	children learn by...

EXERCISE D Upgrade Your Own Writing

Take any essay you have written recently. Circle every THE. For each, ask “Which one?” If you cannot answer, cross it out and reread. Most writers find they can delete five to ten uses of THE from a single essay.

FIX #2

Upgrade Five Words

You already know better vocabulary. You simply don't reach for it.

THE PROBLEM

In our data, “good” appeared 186 times, “important” 114 times, “very” 129 times, and “a lot of” 59 times.

These words are not wrong. But repeated in sentence after sentence, they signal a narrow vocabulary — the opposite of what a higher band needs. To move up, you have to show less common vocabulary and natural word combinations.

Here is the revealing part: the same writers already knew words like significant, beneficial and considerable. They simply never used them. Under pressure, the brain reaches for the safe, familiar word every time.

WHY THIS CAPS YOUR BAND

This is a Lexical Resource ceiling, not a knowledge gap. Band 7 asks for “some less common vocabulary” used with awareness of collocation. You may have those words passively, but if your essay defaults to good / very / important, the examiner only sees the common range. Activating five upgrades you already half-know is the fastest LR gain available to you.

THE ONE RULE

You don't need more words. You need to **use** the words you already know.

Learn five upgrades as complete phrases — not single-word synonyms. Learn the whole chunk and it comes out naturally.

The five upgrades:

Stop writing...	Start writing...
a lot of people	a significant / growing number of people
is very good	is highly beneficial / has clear advantages
a big problem	a serious / major / significant problem
is very important	plays a crucial / vital role • is essential
a lot of money	considerable / substantial resources

Notice that every upgrade is a complete phrase. You are not learning “significant = big.” You are learning “*a significant number of*” as a ready-made chunk you can drop into any essay.

PRACTICE

EXERCISE A The Five-Word Ban

Write a short paragraph (four or five sentences) on the topic below.

TOPIC

Some people think children should start school at age 5. Others think age 7 is better. Discuss both views.

The rule: you may not use **good, bad, important, a lot of, very**. Find alternatives. No dictionary.

EXERCISE B The Upgrade Race

Rewrite each sentence, replacing the weak words with a more precise phrase. Aim for under ten seconds each.

1. A lot of people think university should be free.

2. It is very important for children to exercise.

3. This is a big problem in many countries.

4. Technology is very good for education.

5. The government spends a lot of money on healthcare.

6. There are a lot of reasons to support this idea.

7. Pollution is a very bad problem in big cities.

8. Education is very important for the economy.

EXERCISE C Reverse Paraphrase

Read each higher-level sentence. Identify which “safe” word(s) it replaces.

1. This trend poses a considerable challenge to developing economies.

Replaces:

.....

2. Regular exercise plays a vital role in preventing chronic disease.

Replaces:

.....

3. A growing number of young people are choosing to study abroad.

Replaces:

.....

4. Excessive screen time has a detrimental effect on children's health.

Replaces:

.....

5. The government has allocated substantial resources to infrastructure.

Replaces:

.....

FIX #3

Stop Using Connectors Like a Robot

More connectors / better writing. Often it is the opposite.

THE PROBLEM

In our data, “However” appeared 140 times, “On the other hand” 48 times, “In conclusion” 51 times, “Firstly” 48 times.

That sounds like strong cohesion. It is not. Looking closely, 72 sentences began with “However” with no genuine contrast behind it — connectors inserted like signposts on an empty road, pointing nowhere.

Most essays followed the identical template: Nowadays... Firstly... Secondly... However... In conclusion. Examiners see this pattern hundreds of times a day. It reads as a memorised frame and actively works against your writing.

WHY THIS CAPS YOUR BAND

This is the classic Band 6 cohesion trap. The Band 6 descriptor specifically mentions cohesion that is “mechanical” or “faulty” and connectors that are “overused or inaccurate.” Band 7 rewards cohesion you barely notice. Counter-intuitively, removing the empty connectors is what lifts the band — not adding more.

THE ONE RULE

A connector must describe a relationship that **already exists** between your ideas.

Before “However”, ask: is this really the **opposite** of what I just said?

Before “Moreover”, ask: does this really **add evidence** for the same point?

If no, delete the connector. Your writing improves immediately.

Compare two paragraphs:

LOWER

Firstly, technology has many benefits. For example, we can communicate with people around the world. Moreover, technology helps students learn. However, technology also has some disadvantages. For instance, people spend too much time on their phones.

HIGHER

Technology’s most significant impact has been on communication — it lets people connect instantly across borders. That same connectivity, though, creates problems: easy access means people often struggle to disconnect, particularly from their phones.

Which uses more connectors? The first. Which sounds smarter? The second. Fewer connectors with real logic beat more connectors with none.

PRACTICE

EXERCISE A The Connector Audit

For each pair, name the relationship the connector claims (CONTRAST, ADDITION, CAUSE, RESULT, EXAMPLE). Then decide: is it real? If not, rewrite without the connector.

1. Education is important for children. Moreover, many schools have computers.

Relationship claimed:

Real or fake? If fake, rewrite:

.....

2. Some people prefer to work alone. However, teamwork is also common in offices.

Relationship claimed:

Real or fake? If fake, rewrite:

.....

3. Fast food is unhealthy. For example, it contains a lot of fat and sugar.

Relationship claimed:

Real or fake? If fake, rewrite:

.....

4. Technology helps students learn. In addition, technology is developing quickly.

Relationship claimed:

Real or fake? If fake, rewrite:

.....

5. Many people live in cities. On the other hand, some people prefer the countryside.

Relationship claimed:

Real or fake? If fake, rewrite:

.....

6. Exercise improves physical health. Furthermore, it can reduce stress and anxiety.

Relationship claimed:

Real or fake? If fake, rewrite:

.....

EXERCISE B The Sentence-Starter Swap

Each sentence starts with “The” or “It.” Rewrite each starting differently — a subordinate clause (Although..., Because..., While...), an adverb (Increasingly..., Consequently...), or a different noun phrase.

1. The government should invest more money in education.
-

2. It is clear that technology has changed the way we communicate.
-

3. The number of people living in cities is increasing every year.
-

4. It is important for young people to learn a second language.
-

5. The problem of pollution is getting worse in many countries.

EXERCISE C Develop Without Listing

Write two or three sentences developing each point. You are banned from Firstly, Secondly, Moreover, In addition, Furthermore. Develop by explaining WHY or showing HOW.

1. "Technology helps education." → Explain how:

-
2. "Working from home has advantages." → Explain why:

-
3. "Exercise is good for mental health." → Explain how:
-

FIX #4

Fix Your Commas

365 comma splices in our data. This one fix hands you complex sentences for free.

THE PROBLEM

Read this sentence:

FROM OUR DATA

Technology is useful, people depend on it every day.

It looks fine, and many candidates write like this. But both sides of the comma are complete sentences, and in English you cannot join two complete sentences with a comma alone. This is a “comma splice,” and we found 365 of them.

Why it matters: every comma splice is a missed opportunity. Fixed correctly, it becomes a complex sentence — and complex sentences are exactly what a higher band needs.

WHY THIS CAPS YOUR BAND

Comma splices appear in good essays too. This is not only a punctuation slip; it is a Grammatical Range signal. The descriptors reward “a variety of complex structures.” Each splice you repair into a subordinate or relative clause directly adds the kind of structure the examiner is counting. Two or three clean repairs per essay is visible range.

THE ONE RULE

The two-sentence test. At every comma, ask: could the words before it stand as a complete sentence? Could the words after it?

If both answers are yes, a comma alone is not enough.

You have three repair tools:

Tool	Comma splice	Fixed
Split	Technology is useful, people depend on it.	Technology is useful. People depend on it.
Join	Technology is useful, people depend on it.	Technology is useful because people depend on it.
Embed	Many people use phones, this causes problems.	Many people use phones, which causes problems.

The Join (conjunction) and Embed (which/who) repairs are the valuable ones — each creates a complex sentence that demonstrates grammatical range.

PRACTICE

EXERCISE A Spot the Splice

Write CORRECT or SPLICE. If it is a splice, fix it with any of the three tools.

1. Many students study abroad, they want better opportunities.
.....
2. Although the cost is high, many families still choose private schools.
.....
3. Exercise improves health, it also helps with stress.
.....
4. People who live in cities often experience higher levels of pollution.
.....
5. The government increased spending, the economy did not improve.
.....
6. Working from home saves time, because there is no commute.
.....
7. Social media connects people, it can also cause loneliness.
.....
8. Technology has improved healthcare, which has increased life expectancy.
.....

EXERCISE B Three Ways to Fix It

Fix each splice three ways: with a period, with a conjunction, and with a relative pronoun (which/who).

1. People work longer hours, they don't spend time with family.
 Period:
 Conjunction:
 Relative pronoun:

2. Social media is popular among teenagers, it has both benefits and risks.
 Period:
 Conjunction:
 Relative pronoun:

3. The city has grown rapidly, this has caused traffic problems.
 Period:
 Conjunction:
 Relative pronoun:

EXERCISE C Sentence Combining

Combine each group into exactly two complex sentences. Use at least one conjunction and one relative pronoun.

1. Many young people use social media. They spend several hours a day on it. This affects their study time. Their grades sometimes suffer.

-
2. The government built new hospitals. The hospitals are in rural areas. Many people now have access to healthcare. Previously they had to travel long distances.
-

FIX #5

Use the Present Perfect (Finally)

Most essays use it three times less than they should. Adding three or four per essay shifts your tense control.

THE PROBLEM

In our data, writers used the simple past 634 times but the present perfect only 165 — a ratio of about 4:1. In comparable native writing the ratio is closer to 1.5:1.

This is not a small gap; it is near-total avoidance. Writers produced sentences like these:

FROM OUR DATA

In recent years, technology changed many things. Since 2010, the population grew by 20%.

Both need the present perfect. The form is not the problem — everyone knows “have + past participle.” The problem is not feeling when to use it.

WHY THIS CAPS YOUR BAND

This is a tense-control issue that quietly recurs at Band 6. Because the simple past feels “safer,” the present perfect gets avoided even where the meaning demands it. Each avoidance is a small accuracy slip, and a pattern of them keeps grammar in the “some errors” band. Adding three or four correct present-perfect verbs per essay both removes the slip and shows tense range.

THE ONE RULE

The present perfect is not about **when**. It is about **connection**.

Ask: does this past thing still matter right now?

Yes → present perfect. No → simple past.

✗ *In recent years, technology changed many things.*

✓ **In recent years, technology has changed many things.**

“Changed” = it happened and finished. “Has changed” = it changed, and things are still changed now.

Five triggers that almost always take the present perfect:

in recent years • since [year] • over the past decade • increasingly • nowadays + change verb

Useful chunks to memorise: *Research has shown that...* | *This trend has continued...* | *The situation has become...* | *Governments have attempted to...*

PRACTICE

EXERCISE A Past, or Connected to Now?

Write SP (simple past) or PP (present perfect) for each, then correct the verb if needed.

1. The internet arrived in the 1990s.

.....

2. The internet has transformed how we communicate.

.....

3. Since 2015, the cost of living increased dramatically.

.....

4. Last year, the government introduced a new tax.

.....

5. Over the past decade, many people moved to cities.

.....

6. The Roman Empire fell in 476 AD.

.....

7. Air pollution has become a major issue in many cities.

.....

8. Recently, more companies started to offer remote working.

.....

9. In recent years, online learning has grown rapidly.

.....

10. Shakespeare wrote many famous plays.

.....

EXERCISE B Rewrite With the Trigger

Rewrite each using the present perfect, keeping the trigger phrase.

1. Since 2010, the population grew by 20%.

.....

2. In recent years, technology changed the way we work.

.....

3. Over the past decade, air quality improved in some cities.

.....

4. Increasingly, people started to question traditional education.

.....

5. Since the invention of the smartphone, communication became much faster.

FIX #6

Subject-Verb Agreement & Word Forms

Small, visible slips that an examiner cannot un-see — and that quietly cap accuracy.

THE PROBLEM

Three related slips cluster here, and all are about precision rather than ignorance. The first is agreement on collective and uncountable nouns — “*people is*” instead of “**people are**”, or treating *information / advice / research* as countable. The second is using the wrong form of a word you know — “*success*” where you need “**successful**”. The third is making uncountable nouns plural: “*informations,*” “*advices,*” “*equipments.*”

WHY THIS CAPS YOUR BAND

These are not “beginner” errors — they survive into strong essays. An otherwise Band 7 essay with two or three agreement or word-form slips reads, to an examiner, as Band 6 accuracy. They are visible and easy to spot, so each one is fully “counted.” Removing them is one of the cheapest accuracy gains available, because the underlying knowledge is usually already there.

THE ONE RULE

Before the verb, check the real subject; before the noun, check whether it can be counted.

“People” is always plural → people **are**. Uncountables (information, advice, research, equipment) take a **singular verb and no -s**.

- ✗ *People is worried about the economy, and the government give little advices.*
- ✓ **People are worried about the economy, and the government gives little advice.**

PRACTICE

EXERCISE A Make It Agree

Complete each sentence with the correct present-tense form (every subject here is “people” or similar — watch the verb).

1. Many people ____ concerned about climate change.
.....
2. Young people ____ more likely to use technology for learning.
.....
3. Most people ____ aware of the benefits of exercise.

4. Some people ____ opposed to this idea.
5. In developing countries, people ____ often unable to access quality healthcare.
6. Nowadays, more and more people ____ choosing to work remotely.
7. Elderly people ____ particularly vulnerable to loneliness.
8. An increasing number of people ____ moving to cities.

EXERCISE B Build the Word Family

Complete the table. Knowing all four forms of a word means you never reach for the wrong one under pressure.

Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
develop	_____	_____	_____
benefit	_____	_____	_____
signify	_____	_____	_____
succeed	_____	_____	_____
inform	_____	_____	_____
compete	_____	_____	_____
economise	_____	_____	_____
create	_____	_____	_____

EXERCISE C Countable or Uncountable?

Write C (countable) or U (uncountable), then write the correct quantity phrase: "two ____" or "some ____."

1. advice
2. idea
3. information
4. problem
5. knowledge

.....
6. suggestion

.....
7. research

.....
8. opportunity

.....
9. equipment

.....
10. evidence

.....
11. benefit

.....
12. furniture

.....
13. experience (an event)

.....
14. experience (knowledge gained)
.....

Answer Keys

Check yourself immediately after each exercise — then apply the rule to your own writing.

Fix #1 — Stop Overusing THE

Exercise A

1. DELETE → “Pollution is a serious problem in many countries.” (General.)
2. KEEP → the pollution in Beijing. Specific.
3. DELETE “the children” → “Children should spend less time on the internet.” (“The internet” is correct — there is only one.)
4. KEEP → the children in my class. Specific.
5. DELETE both → “Money cannot buy happiness.”
6. KEEP → the money I saved. Specific.
7. DELETE → “Music is good for the brain.” (“The brain” = acceptable common phrase.)
8. KEEP → the music at the party. Specific.
9. DELETE “the people” and “the support” → “People in developing countries need more support.”
10. DELETE → “I think life is more difficult now than 50 years ago.”

Exercise B

Seven THE to remove: the technology (×2), the education, the home, the knowledge, the people, and “the children” in the final sentence. Keep: the modern world, the internet, the games, the computers, the government.

Corrected: “In the modern world, technology plays an important role in education. Students can use the internet to study at home. Knowledge is now available to people everywhere. However, technology also has some disadvantages. For example, children spend too much time playing the games on the computers. I believe the government should control how children use technology.”

Fix #2 — Upgrade Five Words

Exercise B (sample answers — accept any reasonable upgrade)

1. A significant / growing number of people think university should be free.
2. It is essential / plays a vital role for children to exercise.
3. This is a serious / major problem in many countries.
4. Technology is highly beneficial for education.
5. The government spends considerable / substantial resources on healthcare.
6. There are numerous / several reasons to support this idea.
7. Pollution is a severe / serious problem in major cities.
8. Education plays a crucial / essential role in the economy.

Exercise C

1. considerable = big / a lot of; challenge = problem; developing = poor
2. vital = very important; preventing = stopping
3. growing number = a lot of / more and more
4. detrimental = very bad; effect = result
5. allocated = given / spent; substantial = a lot of; resources = money

Fix #3 — Stop Using Connectors Like a Robot

Exercise A

1. ADDITION claimed. FAKE — “schools have computers” adds no evidence about why education matters. Rewrite: “Education is important for children, and many schools now use technology to make learning more effective.”
2. CONTRAST claimed. FAKE — not opposites. Rewrite: “Some people prefer to work alone, while teamwork is more common in office environments.”
3. EXAMPLE claimed. REAL — fat and sugar are genuine examples.
4. ADDITION claimed. FAKE — “developing quickly” is not more evidence that it helps students. Rewrite: “Technology helps students learn by giving them access to a wider range of resources.”
5. CONTRAST claimed. Borderline — real if the essay genuinely contrasts city vs. countryside life. Accept if context supports it.
6. ADDITION claimed. REAL — reducing stress genuinely adds to the health benefits.

Exercise B (sample answers)

1. Because the education system remains underfunded, greater government investment is needed.
2. Increasingly, technology is reshaping the way we communicate.
3. Each year, a growing proportion of the population moves to urban areas.
4. For economic and cultural reasons, learning a second language is essential for young people.
5. Despite efforts to reduce emissions, pollution continues to worsen in many countries.

Fix #4 — Fix Your Commas

Exercise A

1. SPLICE → “Many students study abroad because they want better opportunities.”
2. CORRECT (although = conjunction).
3. SPLICE → “Exercise improves health, and it also helps with stress.” / “...health. It also helps...”
4. CORRECT (who = relative pronoun).
5. SPLICE → “...increased spending, but the economy...” / “...spending; however, the economy...”
6. CORRECT (because = conjunction).
7. SPLICE → “...connects people, but it can also...” / “...connects people. However, it can also...”
8. CORRECT (which = relative pronoun).

Exercise B (sample answers)

1. Period: People work longer hours. They don't spend time with family. • Conjunction: Because people work longer hours, they don't spend time with family. • Relative: People work longer hours, which means they don't spend time with family.
2. Period: Social media is popular among teenagers. It has both benefits and risks. • Conjunction: Although social media is popular among teenagers, it has both benefits and risks. • Relative: Social media is popular among teenagers, which brings both benefits and risks.
3. Period: The city has grown rapidly. This has caused traffic problems. • Conjunction: The city has grown rapidly, and this has caused traffic problems. • Relative: The city has grown rapidly, which has caused traffic problems.

Fix #5 — Use the Present Perfect

Exercise A

1. SP → Correct. “The 1990s” = a specific finished time.
2. PP → Correct. Still relevant now.
3. Should be PP → “...the cost of living has increased dramatically.” (“Since 2015” = trigger.)
4. SP → Correct. “Last year” = a specific finished time.
5. Should be PP → “...many people have moved to cities.” (“Over the past decade” = trigger.)
6. SP → Correct. “476 AD” = a specific finished time.
7. PP → Correct. Still relevant now.
8. Should be PP → “...more companies have started to offer remote working.” (“Recently” = trigger.)
9. PP → Correct. “In recent years” used correctly.
10. SP → Correct. Historical fact, no connection to now.

Exercise B

1. Since 2010, the population has grown by 20%.
2. In recent years, technology has changed the way we work.
3. Over the past decade, air quality has improved in some cities.
4. Increasingly, people have started to question traditional education.
5. Since the invention of the smartphone, communication has become much faster.

Fix #6 — Agreement & Word Forms

Exercise A (every answer is “are”)

1. are • 2. are • 3. are • 4. are • 5. are • 6. are • 7. are • 8. are. “People” and “an increasing number of people” are always plural.

Exercise B

Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
develop	development	developing / developed	developmentally
benefit	benefit	beneficial	beneficially
signify	significance	significant	significantly
succeed	success	successful	successfully
inform	information	informative	informatively
compete	competition	competitive	competitively
economise	economy	economic / economical	economically
create	creation / creativity	creative	creatively

Exercise C

1. U → some advice
2. C → two ideas
3. U → some information
4. C → two problems
5. U → some knowledge
6. C → two suggestions
7. U → some research
8. C → two opportunities
9. U → some equipment
10. U → some evidence
11. C → two benefits
12. U → some furniture
13. C → two experiences (an event is countable)
14. U → some experience (knowledge gained is uncountable).

That's it. Six fixes. Practise them for 15–20 minutes a day over four to six weeks, and apply them to every essay you write.

Your score will improve — not because you studied more, but because you fixed the right things.

Want one of your own essays marked the way an examiner would? ieltspt.com