

## Agree or Disagree Essay

Many students fail to do well in this type of question because they do not have a clear opinion and they do not use an appropriate structure.

### Structure

The best structure you can use for this type of essay is:

#### **Paragraph 1- Introduction**

Sentence 1- Paraphrase Question  
Sentence 2- Thesis Statement  
Sentence 3- Outline Statement

#### **Paragraph 2- Supporting Paragraph 1**

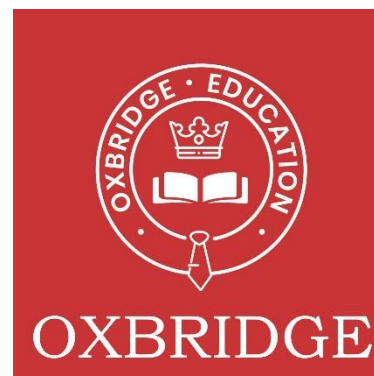
Sentence 1- Topic Sentence  
Sentence 2/3- Explain Topic Sentence  
Sentence 3/4- Example

#### **Paragraph 3- Supporting Paragraph 2**

Sentence 1- Topic Sentence  
Sentence 2/3- Explain Topic Sentence  
Sentence 3/4- Example

#### **Paragraph 4- Conclusion**

Sentence 1- Summary and reiteration of your opinion.



That's it! Four paragraphs. You don't have to use this structure and other structures can get you a high score, but this structure has been approved by IELTS examiners to be one that will allow students to write a clear and cohesive essay. This structure will allow you to focus on generating your ideas and then writing an effective essay.

### Deciding Opinion

In this essay IELTS examiners want you to give a clear opinion, so it's really important for you to make a decision when you read the question. You will also need to do this in order to write an effective thesis statement.

Let's look at an example:

**In some countries an increasing number of people are suffering from health problems as a result of eating too much fast food. It is therefore necessary for governments to impose a higher tax on this kind of food. To what extent do you agree or disagree?**

With this type of essay we have two choices:



1. We agree with the statement or;
2. We disagree with the statement

Some teachers advise that you can partly agree and disagree but this often leads to an essay with no clear focus and a confusing structure.

So for this agree or disagree essay you can say either:

1. This essay agrees that governments should tax fast food or;
2. This essay disagrees that governments should tax fast food

I think I will have more ideas for A, so I'm choosing this one. Always choose the one that you feel comfortable writing about even if you don't personally feel that way. There are no points for writing about how you feel, you just want to impress the examiner.

### Idea Generation

Now we have to think of ideas for why governments should tax fast food.

Here are some:

- Cigarettes and alcohol are taxed in the same way
- The money raised could be used to treat people with health problems
- Fast food companies should be punished for selling unhealthy food to people
- Making the food more expensive would stop people eating it
- The money raised could be used to educate people about healthy eating

We don't need to use all of these, just two for our supporting paragraphs. I'm going to pick the first and the fourth ones because I know a little about these two and feel confident I can expand on them with explanations and examples. Remember the examiner wants you to fully support your arguments, not just list a lot of ideas.

Now we have two supporting ideas we can move on to our introduction.

### Introduction

As previously stated, we will use the following structure:

#### **Paragraph 1- Introduction**

Sentence 1- Paraphrase Question

Sentence 2- Thesis Statement

Sentence 3- Outline Statement

For a more detailed explanation please see our post on writing an effective introduction.

In order to paraphrase the question we simply restate it with a different meaning using synonyms. I will also reorder the question.

Here is the question again:



In some countries an increasing number of people are suffering from health problems as a result of eating too much fast food. It is therefore necessary for governments to impose a higher tax on this kind of food.

**Paraphrased:**

It is argued that governments should levy a tariff on junk food because the number of health risks associated with consuming this kind of food is on the rise.

**This is our first sentence.**

We now need to write our thesis statement. This is our opinion in one sentence. This essay will agree with the above statement and will therefore look like this:

**This essay agrees that a higher rate of tax should be paid by fast food companies.**

This is our second sentence.

We now need to write our third and final sentence, which is the **outline sentence**. This sentence outlines what you will write about in the main body paragraphs.

**Firstly, this essay will discuss the fact that alcohol and tobacco companies already pay higher taxes and secondly, discuss how higher taxes could raise prices and lower consumption.**

**So our full introduction will look like this:**

**It is argued that governments should levy a tariff on junk food because the number of health risks associated with consuming this kind of food is on the rise. This essay agrees that a higher rate of tax should be paid by fast food companies. Firstly, this essay will discuss the fact that alcohol and tobacco companies already pay higher taxes and secondly, discuss how higher taxes would raise prices and lower consumption.**

(3 sentences, 77 words).

We now need to write our supporting paragraphs for our agree or disagree essay:

### Supporting Paragraph 1

This paragraph should include:

1. Topic Sentence
2. Explanation
3. Example

A topic sentence tells the examiner what the rest of the paragraph is about. In other words, it is a summary of your first idea. It should look something like this:

**Higher excise on liqueur and cigarettes has proven to be successful at curbing the harm caused by these substances.**



We now need to expand on this point a little. A good way of doing this is to assume that the examiner has no knowledge of this subject and you have to explain clearly what you mean. Here is what this could look like:

**This revenue has been used to treat health problems associated with these products and has proven useful in advertising campaigns warning people about the dangers of alcohol and tobacco abuse. Tax from fast food could be used in the same way.**

We should now think of an example to support our point. Think about any recent news stories, studies or adverts. If you can't think of one, make one up. The examiner won't check if it is real or not.

**The United Kingdom is a prime example, where money from smokers is used to treat lung cancer and heart disease, while at the same time, pumped into health campaigns in schools to warn children about the dangers of smoking.**

That's it. Four sentences. The full paragraph should look like this:

**Higher excise on liqueur and cigarettes has proven to be successful at curbing the harm caused by these substances. This revenue has been used to treat health problems associated with these products and has proven useful in advertising campaigns warning people about the dangers of alcohol and tobacco abuse. Tax from fast food could be used in the same way. The United Kingdom is a prime example, where money from smokers is used to treat lung cancer and heart disease.**

### Supporting Paragraph 2

We now repeat the same formula with our second supporting point- higher taxes will increase prices and reduce consumption.

Our topic sentence:

**Increasing taxes would raise prices and lower consumption.**

Explaining this further:

**Fast food companies would pass on these taxes to consumers in the form of higher prices and this would lead to people not being able to afford junk food because it is too expensive. Junk food would soon become a luxury item and it would only be consumed occasionally, which would be less harmful to the general public's health.**

We now support our point with an example:

**For instance, the cost of organic food has proven prohibitively expensive for most people and that is why only a small percentage of the population buy it regularly.**

The full paragraph would look like this:



Increasing taxes would raise prices and lower consumption. Fast food companies would pass on these taxes to consumers in the form of higher prices and this would lead to people not being able to afford junk food because it is too expensive. Junk food would soon become a luxury item and it would only be consumed occasionally, which would be less harmful to the general public's health. For instance, the cost of organic food has proven prohibitively expensive for most people and that is why only a small percentage of the population buy it regularly.

Four sentences.

### Conclusion

As stated before a good conclusion for agree or disagree essays should include:

Sentence 1- Summary of main points

Sentence 2- Your opinion

**Don't write any new ideas in this paragraph.**

A good conclusion should just restate your thesis statement and your main supporting points.

**In conclusion, junk food should be taxed at a higher rate because of the good precedent set by alcohol and tobacco and the fact that the increased cost should reduce the amount of fast food people buy.**

### Agree or Disagree Sample Essay

*It is argued that governments should levy a tariff on junk food because the number of health risks associated with consuming this kind of food is on the rise. This essay agrees that a higher rate of tax should be paid by fast food companies. Firstly, this essay will discuss the fact that alcohol and tobacco companies already pay higher taxes and secondly, discuss how higher taxes would raise prices and lower consumption.*

*Higher excise on liqueur and cigarettes has proven to be successful at curbing the harm caused by these substances. This revenue has been used to treat health problems associated with these products and has proven useful in advertising campaigns warning people about the dangers of alcohol and tobacco abuse. Tax from fast food could be used in the same way. The United Kingdom is a prime example, where money from smokers is used to treat lung cancer and heart disease.*

*Increasing taxes would raise prices and lower consumption. Fast food companies would pass on these taxes to consumers in the form of higher prices and this would lead to people not being able to afford junk food because it is too expensive. Junk food would soon become a luxury item and it would only be consumed occasionally, which would be less harmful to the general public's health. For instance, the cost of organic food has proven prohibitively expensive for most people and that is why only a small percentage of the population buy it regularly.*

*In conclusion, junk food should be taxed at a higher rate because of the good precedent set by alcohol and tobacco and the fact that the increased cost should reduce the amount of fast food people buy.*



“Prevention is better than cure”. Researching and treating diseases is too costly so it would be better to invest in preventative measures.

To what extent do you agree.

With the increased global demand in oil and gas, undiscovered areas of the world should be opened up to access more resources.

To what extent do you agree?

In many countries today, parents are able to choose to send their children to single-sex schools or co-educational schools. Some people think that children going to single-sex schools have disadvantages later in life.

To what extent do you agree?

Scientists and technology experts seem to be more valued by modern society than musicians and artists.

To what extent do you agree?



***Wild animals have no place in the 21st century, so protecting them is a waste of resources. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

Some people argue that it is pointless to spend money on the protection of wild animals because we humans have no need for them. I completely disagree with this point of view.

In my opinion, it is absurd to argue that wild animals have no place in the 21st century. I do not believe that planet Earth exists only for the benefit of humans, and there is nothing special about this particular century that means that we suddenly have the right to allow or encourage the extinction of any species. Furthermore, there is no compelling reason why we should let animals die out. We do not need to exploit or destroy every last square metre of land in order to feed or accommodate the world's population. There is plenty of room for us to exist side by side with wild animals, and this should be our aim.

I also disagree with the idea that protecting animals is a waste of resources. It is usually the protection of natural habitats that ensures the survival of wild animals, and most scientists agree that these habitats are also crucial for human survival. For example, rainforests produce oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide and stabilise the Earth's climate. If we destroyed these areas, the costs of managing the resulting changes to our planet would far outweigh the costs of conservation. By protecting wild animals and their habitats, we maintain the natural balance of all life on Earth.

In conclusion, we have no right to decide whether or not wild animals should exist, and I believe that we should do everything we can to protect them.

(269 words, band 9)

***Families who send their children to private schools should not be required to pay taxes that support the state education system. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?***

Some people believe that parents of children who attend private schools should not need to contribute to state schools through taxes. Personally, I completely disagree with this view.

For a variety of reasons, it would be wrong to reduce taxes for families who pay for private education. Firstly, it would be difficult to calculate the correct amount of tax reduction for these families, and staff would be required to manage this complex process. Secondly, we all pay a certain amount of tax for public services that we may not use. For example, most people are fortunate enough not to have to call the police or fire brigade at any time in their lives, but they would not expect a tax reduction for this. Finally, if wealthy families were given a tax discount for sending their children to private schools, we might have a situation where poorer people pay higher taxes than the rich.

In my opinion, we should all be happy to pay our share of the money that supports public schools. It is beneficial for all members of society to have a high quality education system with equal opportunities for all young people. This will result in a well-educated workforce, and in turn a more productive and prosperous nation. Parents of children in private schools may also see the advantages of this in their own lives. For example, a company owner will need well qualified and competent staff, and a well-funded education system can provide such employees.

In conclusion, I do not believe that any financial concessions should be made for people who choose private education.

(269 words, band 9)

***Foreign visitors should pay more than local visitors for cultural and historical attractions. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?***

It is sometimes argued that tourists from overseas should be charged more than local residents to visit important sites and monuments. I completely disagree with this idea.



The argument in favour of higher prices for foreign tourists would be that cultural or historical attractions often depend on state subsidies to keep them going, which means that the resident population already pays money to these sites through the tax system. However, I believe this to be a very shortsighted view. Foreign tourists contribute to the economy of the host country with the money they spend on a wide range of goods and services, including food, souvenirs, accommodation and travel. The governments and inhabitants of every country should be happy to subsidise important tourist sites and encourage people from the rest of the world to visit them.

If travellers realised that they would have to pay more to visit historical and cultural attractions in a particular nation, they would perhaps decide not to go to that country on holiday. To take the UK as an example, the tourism industry and many related jobs rely on visitors coming to the country to see places like Windsor Castle or Saint Paul's Cathedral. These two sites charge the same price regardless of nationality, and this helps to promote the nation's cultural heritage. If overseas tourists stopped coming due to higher prices, there would be a risk of insufficient funding for the maintenance of these important buildings.

In conclusion, I believe that every effort should be made to attract tourists from overseas, and it would be counterproductive to make them pay more than local residents.  
(269 words, band 9)

