

## ***Tokubetsu Eigo: The Advanced Writing Test***



### **Tokubetsu Eigo Program: Writing Tests Introduction**

Writing is one of the four basic skills and the ability to write well is vital to university study. In most of the intermediate and advanced level classes in the Tokubetsu Eigo program, the ability to write well is very important. If you study abroad, essay writing skills are essential. To make sure that the level of our classes is maintained, we have writing tests for students who wish to enter intermediate or advanced for students who have intermediate or advanced on tests that do not test writing, such as TOEIC and TOEFL PBT.

### **The writing test to become an advanced student in Tokubetsu Eigo**

The writing test for the advanced level of Tokubetsu Eigo is based on task 2 of the writing section of the IELTS Academic language test. You have 40 minutes to write an essay of about 250 words. There is a lot of information and study material for this online. Here is one sample question and answer (with a few changes) from <http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org>.

#### **Question:**

A person's worth nowadays seems to be judged according to social status and material possessions. Old-fashioned values, such as honour, kindness and trust, no longer seem important.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

#### **Model answer: (252 words)**

Given the power and influence of the super rich, it might seem as if social status and material possessions are the new symbols of personal worth, but in everyday life I do not think this is true.

It is clear that most celebrities today are admired or envied only for their material wealth or position in society. Many of these people are known to turn their backs on friends, cheat on their husbands or wives, or spend their evenings taking or drinking too much alcohol and/or drugs. Things like owning a big house, driving an expensive car and getting into parties

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with famous people are thought more important than old-fashioned values. In the end, though, it is the many readers of gossip magazines and celebrity blogs who reinforce these ideas.

Nevertheless, I do believe that in their day-to-day lives most people still believe in values such as honour, kindness and trust. In some way most of us want to form loving families, raise our children to be good citizens, stand up for people who are being treated unfairly and protect our communities from harm. We still form friendships, romances and business partnerships based on old-fashioned ideas. When someone does something that hurts us or we are unfairly treated, we think that person is no longer to be trusted or treated as a friend and we change our relationship with them.

In conclusion, I believe there is some truth to the idea that status and possessions are more important than old-fashioned values as a measure of a person's worth. Looking beyond the gossip newspapers, however, it is apparent that most ordinary people have still preserved an old-fashioned conscience.

This is the rubric (a chart explaining the marking) to show how your essay will be evaluated:

**Tokubetsu Eigo Advanced Writing Test Marking Rubric (for student reference)**

	HIGH PASS	PASS	FAIL	LOW FAIL
Task achievement Essay structure Vocabulary Grammatical range and accuracy	Not only is the question answered clearly and effectively, the writer presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages. The information is logically organized with effective use of a range of cohesive devices like 'firstly,' 'secondly' and 'in conclusion.' While there may be some errors, advanced or unusual vocabulary is effectively used and a variety of complex structures are used, most of them with no errors.	The question is clearly and effectively answered in an interesting way. The writing flows well and is easy to read. The writer is trying to use more advanced vocabulary and sentences are a mix of simple and more complex forms. There are relatively few grammatical errors.	All aspects of the question are addressed in an appropriate format. There is a decent overall structure that uses a simple (but not advanced level), connected, relevant text. Some sentences may start with connectors like 'And' and 'Because,' (which is not so good.) The student shows an ability to describe experiences, feelings and events in some detail (but with simpler vocabulary), although some spelling errors may be present. While there are grammatical errors, it is mostly possible to understand the overall meaning of the text.	It is or appears to be an essay, but only some parts of the question are answered or the student has started talking about something not in the question. Paragraphing exists, although lack of indenting may make it unclear. Connectors such as 'and', 'but' and 'because' may be in use, but often at the start of sentences. While descriptions and supporting information are present, there are problems in word formation and spelling. Sentence structure is limited and relatively simple and there are a significant range of grammar mistakes.

*Note: this is based on the publicly available rubric for IELTS and CEFR.*

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While good content is essential, don't forget to:

1. Take a little time to plan out your answer.
2. Write in clear paragraphs (so clearly indent them)
3. Have a good introduction and conclusion to hold your argument together
4. Leave yourself some time to read over the essay at the end to check for simple grammar or spelling mistakes (which are easy to make when you are concentrating on the contents.)

Here are some sites that may help you to study:

For essay structure (students need to make sure their writing is easy to follow, logical and well-organized: teachers often talk about "cohesion" in an essay, which means how easy the essay is to follow.)

<http://home.ku.edu.tr/~doregan/Writing/Cohesion.html>

<http://library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.33.htm>

Sites that might help with vocabulary:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/608/01/> (a source that looks at aspects of vocabulary like how formal it is, slang and biased language)

Sites that might help with grammatical range and accuracy that look at simple and complex sentence patterns:

<http://www2.ivcc.edu/rambo/eng1001/sentences.htm>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/573/02/>

For a range of videos with advice about IELTS:

<https://www.britishcouncil.jp/exam/ielts/resources/test-tips>

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