



Using Pronouns and Formal Tone in IELTS Writing Task 2

What's This About?

This grammar pack focuses on two commonly overlooked issues in IELTS Writing Task 2: incorrect pronoun usage and informal tone. Many Band 6 students mix up singular and plural pronouns, overuse 'you', or refer to the essay itself ('this essay believes'). This creates a sense of grammatical inaccuracy and weakens the academic style needed for higher scores.

IELTS Scoring Impact

Errors in pronoun use can drag down both Grammatical Range and Accuracy (GRA) and Coherence and Cohesion (CC). Meanwhile, informal tone (e.g., addressing the reader as 'you') breaks the formal register expected in IELTS essays, hurting your score in Task Response (TR).

Common Mistakes

- 'It is believe that...' instead of 'It is believed that...'
- 'This essay thinks...' instead of 'It is argued that...'
- Mixing 'people' and 'you' in the same paragraph
- Using 'themselves is...' or other mismatched forms
- Overusing 'I' in formal essays

Rewrite Rules

1. Do not refer to the essay (e.g., 'this essay will discuss...').
2. Use third-person and passive structures for formal tone.
3. Maintain consistency—don't jump from 'people' to 'you'.
4. Match pronouns to the noun in both number and gender.
5. Avoid overly personal language like 'I believe' if unsure.

Comparison Examples

Incorrect: This essay believes that people should recycle more.

Correct: It is believed that recycling is essential for environmental protection.

Incorrect: If you exercise, people will feel better.

Correct: Regular exercise helps individuals improve their well-being.

Rewrite Practice

Rewrite the following sentences using correct pronoun forms and a formal tone:

1. This essay will argue that students should study abroad.
2. If you work hard, people can achieve success.
3. Everyone should take care of their health because you only get one body.

Mini Quiz

Choose the best option to complete the sentences:

1. _____ is argued that climate change must be addressed urgently.
a) This essay
b) It
c) You
2. If people want to succeed, _____ need to stay focused.
a) you
b) they
c) themselves
3. Everyone should do _____ part to reduce pollution.
a) his
b) their
c) your

Strategy Add-ons

- Use passive voice when unsure of who the subject is (e.g., 'It is said that...').
- Avoid referring directly to the reader (don't say 'you').
- Keep a formal, third-person tone throughout.

Paragraph Upgrade

Band 5 Example:

You should exercise regularly because it makes people feel good and you will be healthier.

Band 7 Upgrade:

Regular exercise is essential for maintaining both physical and mental health. Individuals who engage in daily physical activity often report increased well-being and reduced stress levels.

Get in Touch

Want more help with IELTS grammar and writing? Book a 30-minute session at ieltsjack.com and get personal feedback on your writing.