Writing Essay (IELTS type)

1. **Several languages are in danger of extinction because they are spoken by very small numbers of people. Some people say that governments should spend public money on saving these languages, while others believe that would be a waste of money. Discuss both these views and give your opinion.**

It is true that some minority languages may disappear in the near future. Although it can be argued that governments could save money by allowing this to happen, I believe that these languages should be protected and preserved.

There are several reasons why saving minority languages could be seen as a waste of money. Firstly, if a language is only spoken by a small number of people, expensive education programmes will be needed to make sure that more people learn it, and the state will have to pay for facilities, teachers and marketing. This money might be better spent on other public services. Secondly, it would be much cheaper and more efficient for countries to have just one language. Governments could cut all kinds of costs related to communicating with each minority group.

Despite the above arguments, I believe that governments should try to preserve languages that are less widely spoken. A language is much more than simply a means of communication; it has a vital connection with the cultural identity of the people who speak it. If a language disappears, a whole way of life will disappear with it, and we will lose the rich cultural diversity that makes societies more interesting. By spending money to protect minority languages, governments can also preserve traditions, customs and behaviours that are part of a country's history.

In conclusion, it may save money in the short term if we allow minority languages to disappear, but in the long term this would have an extremely

negative impact on our cultural heritage.

> **2. Some** people think that all university students should study whatever they like. Others believe that they should only be allowed to study subjects that will be useful in the future, such as those related to science and technology. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

People have different views about how much choice students should have with regard to what they can study at university. While some argue that it would be better for students to be forced into certain key subject areas, I believe that everyone should be able to study the course of their choice.

There are various reasons why people believe that universities should only offer subjects that will be useful in the future. They may assert that university courses like medicine, engineering and information technology are more likely to be beneficial than certain art degrees. From a personal perspective, it can be argued that these courses provide more job opportunities, career progression, better salaries, and therefore an improved quality of life for students who take them. On the societal level, by forcing people to choose particular university subjects, governments can ensure that any knowledge and skill gaps in the economy are covered. Finally, a focus on technology in higher education could lead to new inventions, economic growth, and greater future prosperity.

In spite of these arguments, I believe that university students should be free to choose their preferred areas of study. In my opinion, society will benefit more if our students are passionate about what they are learning. Besides, nobody can really predict which areas of knowledge will be most useful to society in the future, and it may be that employers begin to value creative thinking skills above practical or technical skills. If this were the case, perhaps we would need more students of art, history and philosophy than of science or technology.

In conclusion, although it might seem sensible for universities to focus only on the most useful subjects, I personally prefer the current system in which people have the right to study whatever they like.

> **3. In many cities the use of video cameras in public places is being increased in order to reduce crime, but some people believe that these measures restrict our individual freedom. Do the benefits of increased security outweigh the drawbacks?**

It is true that video surveillance has become commonplace in many cities in recent years. While I understand that critics may see this as an invasion of privacy, I believe that the benefits do outweigh the drawbacks.

There are two main reasons why people might disapprove of the use of video cameras in public places. The first objection is that these cameras invade our privacy, in the sense that we are constantly being watched by the authorities or by private security firms. Many people find this intrusive and feel that the recording of their movements is a form of state control that curtails their individual freedom. The second argument against the proliferation of CCTV cameras is that they are being used as an alternative to police officers patrolling the streets. If this is indeed happening, then it is unlikely that members of the public will feel safer.

In spite of the drawbacks mentioned above, I believe that the use of video cameras to monitor public areas is a positive measure. The key objective of video surveillance is to deter criminals and to prevent crime. For example, petty criminals like shoplifters and pickpockets are less likely to operate in parts of cities where they know that they are being watched. At the same time, when crimes are committed, the police can use video evidence to catch and prosecute offenders. Therefore, in my view, video cameras offer valuable support to police officers, and they make cities safer for inhabitants, workers and visitors alike.

In conclusion, it seems to me that we gain more than we lose from the enhanced security that CCTV cameras bring to our cities.

> **4. Some universities now offer their courses on the Internet so that people can study online. Is this a positive or negative development?**

It is true that online courses are becoming a common feature of university education. Although there are some drawbacks of Internet-based learning, I would argue that there are far more benefits.

The main drawback of the trend towards online university courses is that there is less direct interaction. Students may not have the opportunity to engage face-to-face with their teachers, and will instead have to rely on written forms of communication. Similarly, students who study online do not come into direct contact with each other, and this could have a negative impact on peer support, discussion and exchange of ideas. For example, whereas students on traditional courses can attend seminars and even discuss their subjects over coffee after lessons, online learners are restricted to chatting through website forum areas. These learners may also lack the motivation and element of competition that face-to-face group work brings.

Despite the negatives mentioned above, I believe that online university courses are a positive development for various reasons. Firstly, they allow learners to study in a flexible way, meaning that they can work whenever and wherever is convenient, and they can cover the material at their own pace. Secondly, the cost of a university education can be greatly reduced, while revenues for institutions may increase as more students can be taught. Finally, online learning offers open access to anybody who is willing to study, regardless of age, location, ability and background. For example, my uncle, who is 65 years old, has recently enrolled on an online MBA course in a different country, which would have been impossible in the days before Internet-based education.

In conclusion, while I recognise the possible disadvantages of online learning, I consider it to be a positive development overall.

5. In many countries today, people in cities either live alone or in small family units, rather than in large, extended family groups. Is this a positive or negative trend?

It is true that cities are seeing a rise in smaller families and one-person households, while the extended family is becoming a rarity. In my opinion, this is a negative development.

As families become smaller, the traditional family support network is disappearing, and this can have a negative impact on children as they grow up. In a nuclear family or single-parent household, childcare becomes an expensive and stressful part of daily life. Without the help of grandparents or aunts and uncles, busy parents must rely on babysitters, nannies and after-school clubs to take care of younger children, while older children may be left alone after school and during holidays. The absence of adult family members can mean that friends, television and the Internet become the primary influences on children's behaviour. It is no surprise that the decline of the extended family has been linked to a rise in psychological and behavioural problems amongst young people.

The trend towards people living alone is perhaps even more damaging because of the psychological effects of reduced human interaction. Individuals who live on their own have nobody to talk to in person, so they cannot share problems or discuss the highs and lows of daily life. They forgo the constant stimulation and hustle and bustle of a large family, and are left to their own devices for extended periods of time. The lack of human contact in the home is necessarily replaced by passive distractions, such as television, video games, online chat rooms or Internet surfing. This type of existence is associated with boredom,

loneliness, and feelings of isolation or even alienation, all of which are factors that are known to increase the risk of mental illness.

In conclusion, I believe that individuals thrive when they are part of larger family groups, and so it is worrying that many people are choosing to live alone or in such small family units.

6. Some people claim that not enough of the waste from homes is recycled. They say that the only way to increase recycling is for governments to make it a legal requirement. To what extent do you think laws are needed to make people recycle more of their waste?

It is true that we do not recycle enough of our household waste. Although I accept that new legislation to force people to recycle could help this situation, I do not agree that a recycling law is the only measure that governments should take.

In my view, a new recycling law would be just one possible way to tackle the waste problem. Governments could make it a legal obligation for householders to separate all waste into different bins. There could be punishments for people who fail to adhere to this law, ranging from a small fine to community service, or even perhaps prison sentences for repeat offenders. These measures would act as a deterrent and encourage people to obey the recycling law. As a result, the improved behaviour of homeowners could lead to a clean, waste-free environment for everyone.

However, I believe that governments should do more than simply introduce a recycling law. It might be more effective if politicians put education, rather than punishment, at the centre of a recycling campaign. For example, children could be taught about recycling in schools, and homeowners could be informed about the environmental impact of household waste. Another tactic that governments could use would be to create stricter regulations for the companies that

produce the packaging for household products. Finally, money could also be spent to improve recycling facilities and systems, so that waste is processed more effectively, regardless of whether or not people separate it correctly in the home.

In conclusion, perhaps we do need to make recycling a legal requirement, but this would certainly not be the only way to encourage people to dispose of their waste more responsibly.

7. Some people think that employers should not care about the way their employees dress, because what matters is the quality of their work. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

In the modern workplace, dress codes are changing as employers focus more on results than on the rules that employees must follow. While I agree that the way people dress should be seen as irrelevant in many work contexts, I believe that dress codes still exist for good reason in certain professions.

On the one hand, many employers have stopped telling their staff how to dress, and I see this as a positive trend. Some of the most successful companies in the world, including technology giants like Google and Facebook, are famous for the relaxed office environments that they try to create. Employees are encouraged to dress casually, and even the company executives and leaders are rarely seen wearing anything other than T-shirts and jeans. However, while managers and programmers are free to dress how they like, they are expected to produce work of outstanding quality. It is clear from the performance and global dominance of such companies that strict dress codes are completely unnecessary in the technology sector.

However, I would also argue that rules regarding employees' clothing are still relevant in other work situations. We expect certain professionals, such as nurses, police officers and airline pilots, to wear uniforms. These uniforms may

have a practical or safety function, but perhaps more importantly they identify the person's position or role in society. Similarly, a lawyer, politician or school principal may choose to wear formal clothing in order to portray an image of authority, trustworthiness and diligence. I believe that most of us prefer to see these professionals in smart, formal attire, even if it is not strictly necessary.

In conclusion, I support the trend towards relaxed dress codes for workers, but I do not see it as applicable to all occupations or sectors of the economy.