

Model essay: Problem and solution

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

People who live in large cities face a range of problems in their daily life.

What are the main problems people in cities face, and how can these problems be tackled?

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

Write at least 250 words.

These days, more and more of us are living in big cities, and urban conurbations are expanding all the time. Although cities are very attractive places to live, and they provide a wide range of work and leisure opportunities, there are also a host of significant social problems affecting cities. This essay will examine some of these problems in detail, and then propose some solutions.

One of the biggest problems facing people who live in cities is the high property prices. In many cities, buying a house near the centre is out of reach for people on the average salary, and they are forced to live outside the city and to commute into work. In central London, for instance, the cost of even a one-bedroom flat is prohibitive for many people. To solve this problem, the government could put more resources into building affordable housing, which would allow more people to buy their own home.

Another issue is traffic and air pollution. Most big cities are overrun with cars, and there is a great deal

of traffic congestion. The exhaust fumes from these cars cause air pollution, and as a consequence, more and more people are suffering from respiratory diseases, such as asthma. This problem could be addressed by introducing a congestion charge for cars entering the city centre, thereby cutting the number of vehicles on the road.

Finally, another problem is the quality and cost of public transport. That is to say, in most capitals, public transport is inefficient and the infrastructure is old and inadequate. At the same time, ticket prices are often too high, which puts people off using public transport. The way forward must be to invest more money in trains and buses, and to slash ticket prices. This would encourage more people to use public transport.

To sum up, although it is clear that cities face a range of problems, it is undoubtedly possible to start to tackle these issues, and improve the quality of life in cities. Governments and local councils must take the lead in dealing with these problems, otherwise city life will only get worse in the future.

(355 words)

1 Complete this table with the key information from the essay.

main idea	supporting ideas/examples	solution/consequence
1 high property prices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too expensive in centre Have to live outside and commute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government – build cheap houses would allow people to buy own home in city centre
2		
3		

2 Check the meanings of these phrases in your dictionary.

- 1 urban conurbations 2 a congestion charge 3 to slash ticket prices

Structure and linking

in order to / so as to / so that

Very often in IELTS essays, it is useful to explain *why* something is done.

- Many people move from the countryside to big cities **in order to** find a better job.
- Instead of going to supermarkets for their food, a lot of people have their shopping delivered to their house, **so as to** save time.
- Many people prefer to work from home, **so that** they can avoid commuting to work every day.

1 Look at the example sentences in the box above, and choose the correct options to complete these rules.

- After **in order to** and **so as to**, we use a *verb / subject*.
- After **so that**, we use a *verb / subject*.

2 These constructions are also useful for writing about suggestions and solutions. Match the two halves of these sentences.

- The government should ban smoking in public places, ...
 - It would be a good idea to ban cars from city centres on Sundays, ...
 - Schools should teach children how cook, ...
- a **so as to** makes cities quieter and cleaner for people to walk around.
 b **so that** they will be able to eat healthily when they are older and live by themselves.
 c **in order to** cut the number of the deaths from passive smoking.

3 Complete these sentences in a suitable way.

- Many young people spend a few months in an English-speaking country after graduating, **so as to** *improve their English quickly.*
- Many people take a gap year between school and university, **in order to** ...
- The government should increase tax on junk food, **so as to** ...
- It is common for retired people to move out of cities and buy a house in the countryside, **so that** ...
- It would be a good idea to charge for plastic bags in supermarkets, ...
- Many parents with young children only work part time, ...
- In my view, the government ought to put more police officers on the streets, ...

4 Write a few sentences of your own about these common IELTS topics.

- sport health environment
- crime education transport
- technology travel

Example: *I think governments should build more sports facilities, like gyms and tennis courts, so as to give more people the chance to keep fit.*

