



IELTS Writing Community

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Lecture 16 How to Avoid Overgeneralisations Using Hedging

What is Overgeneralisation

Task Response 7 - presents, extends and supports main ideas, **but there may be a tendency to overgeneralise** and/or supporting ideas may lack focus

One logic error that can befall text is overgeneralization, the expansion of too few instances to many in a manner difficult to justify.

“No one gets band 7 in IELTS writing.” **an overgeneralization.**

“I’m not a very good writer” **not an overgeneralization.**

How to avoid Overgeneralisation using Hedging

Living in another country **is** difficult.

- Generally speaking, living in another country **can be** difficult.

Doing exams **is** stressful.

- Doing exams **tends to be** stressful.

Learning a new language **is the most** challenging task.

- In many cases, learning a new language **is one of** the most challenging tasks.

Living in a city **is** more convenient.

- For many, living in a city **is** more convenient.

Prison **will be** more effective than a punishment.

- In many instances, prison **is highly likely to be** more effective than a punishment.

Older people **must be** more conservative.

- Older people **should be** more conservative.

How to avoid Overgeneralisation using Hedging

Using adverbs of frequency to soften language.

often, sometimes, usually, generally, typically

It is **often** said that children should not be allowed to use social networking sites.

it is **typically** argued that social networking has a bad effect on young children's minds.

Using modals and modal adjectives

could, may, might, can, probable

It is **typically** argued that social networking **may** have a bad effect on young children's minds.

Some people **might** argue that youngsters **tend to** be influenced more by their peers than their parents.

That clauses (useful in a discussion essay)

It could be argued that..., It is often assumed that..., There is a high probability that....

Some people hold the view that it is beneficial to share a lot of data especially in business, scientific research and academia, **whereas others argue that** certain information **tends to be** too important too share openly.

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