

A PROBLEM-SOLUTION ESSAY

We write problem-solution essays to describe the problems associated with a particular issue and make suggestions about how these problems might be solved. You can outline the problems in one paragraph and then propose the different solution in another, or explain the problem and suggest a solution in the same paragraph.

MODEL TASK: 'School class sizes are too big and students need more individual attention'. What do you think can be done to solve these problems?

USEFUL LANGUAGE

It is often said that ...
 A common problem nowadays is ...
 I firmly believe that ...
 It is my view that ...
 The first problem is ...
 Firstly ... / Secondly ... / Finally ...
 One possible solution would be to ...
 A further problem ...
 This could be solved by ...
 To sum up, ...

Tips

- ▶ If the problems are provided in the task, think about how you can expand these ideas or give examples. If they are not, brainstorm some problems you think are caused by the situation.
- ▶ Think of a solution or solutions for each of the problems.
- ▶ Begin your essay with a general belief or opinion about the problems mentioned in the task.
- ▶ Use the paragraphs to organise your essay by discussing each specific aspect of the problem and propose a solution.
- ▶ Make use of different modal verbs to express possibilities for the problems and obligations in the solutions.

YOUR TURN Add another paragraph with a third problem caused by large classes and propose another solution.

After the general belief, make your overall opinion clear.

It is often said that overcrowding is the most important challenge for our schools nowadays. Large classes create problems for both teachers and students, which affect discipline and students' progress and create additional stress. I firmly believe that more staff must be hired to tackle this urgent problem.

Outline another problem, giving examples of consequences, and propose a different solution.

Firstly, large classrooms are almost unmanageable for teachers. Having 30 students in the same room can lead to frequent disruptions, more noise and tension. One possible solution would be to hire qualified young teachers who can assist teachers in keeping discipline.

A further problem is that students who are struggling in a subject do not receive the attention they need. It is clear that students perform better when they receive more personalised teaching time. Schools need to divide these large groups to form smaller classes so that teachers can help students who may be having problems.

Outline the first problem, giving examples of consequences, and propose a solution.

To sum up, our schools are struggling to manage the large numbers of students in classes, causing major problems for discipline and learning. The solutions proposed above could be implemented easily to improve school life for everyone involved.

Summarise the problem and explain how you think your proposals might solve it.