

IELTS Sample Essay - Alternative Medicine

This IELTS sample essay tackles the subject of **alternative medicine**.

When you are asked whether you **agree (or disagree)**, you can look at both sides of the argument if you want.

This shows that you have good academic skills as you are able to see both sides of the issue. It can also sometimes be a good idea to look at both sides of the argument because it may be easier for you to brainstorm ideas. If you just look at one side, you may run out of ideas. If you look at both, then there are more ideas to discuss.

In this IELTS sample essay, the writer **disagrees** overall with the opinion presented - that *alternative medicine is ineffective and possibly dangerous*.

However, in the **first body paragraph** the writer discusses what those who agree with this opinion think.

In the **second body paragraph** the writer then gives the reasons why he/she disagrees.

In other words:

Body 1 = the disadvantages of alternative medicine

Body 2 = the advantages of alternative medicine

It is then a good balanced conclusion as the writer states that they are best used together.

Question:

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Present a written argument to an educated reader with no specialist knowledge of the following topic.

Currently there is a trend towards the use of alternative forms of medicine. However, at best these methods are ineffective, and at worst they may be dangerous.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

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

You should write at least 250 words.

IELTS Sample Essay Model Answer

Alternative medicine is not new. It is accepted that it pre-dates conventional medicine and it is still used by many people all over the world. I am unconvinced that it is dangerous, and feel that both alternative and conventional medicine can be useful.

There are several reasons why the conventional medical community is often dismissive of alternatives. Firstly, there has been little scientific research into such medicine, so there is a scarcity of evidence to support the claims of their supporters. Furthermore, people often try such treatment because of recommendations from friends, and therefore come to the therapist with a very positive attitude, which may be part of the reason for the cure. Moreover, these therapies are usually only useful for long-term, chronic conditions. Acute medical problems, such as accidental injury, often require more conventional methods.

On the other hand, there remain strong arguments for the use of alternatives. Despite the lack of scientific proof, there is a lot of anecdotal evidence to suggest that these therapies work. In addition, far from being dangerous, they often have few or no side effects, so the worst outcome would be no change. One of the strongest arguments for the effectiveness of alternative therapies in the West is that, whilst conventional medicine is available without charge, many people are prepared to pay considerable sums for alternatives. If they were totally unhelpful, it would be surprising if this continued.

I strongly believe that conventional medicine and alternative therapies can and should coexist. They have different strengths, and can both be used effectively to target particular medical problems. The best situation would be for alternative therapies to be used to support and complement conventional medicine.

(280 words)

Comments

*The writer in this IELTS sample essay introduces the topic in the introductory paragraph (**Alternative medicine...**) and puts forward a clear view on the issue (**I am unconvinced...and feel...**).*

*The essay has a well-balanced argument looking at both sides of the issue. The first body paragraph expresses some doubt about alternative therapies (**...little scientific research... only useful for long term...**), but in the second body paragraph the writer takes a different view (**On the other hand...**) and examines the benefits (**...few side effects**).*

*The writer's concluding paragraph offers a strong opinion (**I strongly believe...**) and sums up the fact that both types of treatment are valid today.*

*There is also a good range of grammatical structures (**If they were totally unhelpful, it would be...**), and connectors (**despite the fact, in addition, finally**).*