

□ WRITING PIECE 1 - FEEDBACK

Section 1:

#1 First Paragraph a. Strengths:

- Effectively sets up the scenario with vivid imagery of communities depending on aid
- Strong emotional appeal through concrete examples of hardship

b. Weaknesses: Incomplete development of key ideas → Your opening fails to fully explore the complexity of aid dependency. The phrase "danger of enforced reliance on aid" needs deeper examination of why this creates problems for nations.

c. Exemplar: *While foreign aid provides immediate relief, the long-term consequences of aid dependency can severely impact a nation's ability to develop sustainable solutions for their citizens.*

#2 Second Paragraph (Lebanon example) a. Strengths:

- Uses a specific country example to support the argument
- Links aid dependency to broader economic issues

b. Weaknesses: Limited analysis of solutions → Your discussion of education and vocational training lacks detail. The phrase "invest in education and vocational training" needs specific examples of how this helps nations become self-sufficient.

c. Exemplar: *By investing in vocational training programmes, nations can develop skilled workers who create local businesses, strengthen the economy, and reduce reliance on foreign support.*

#3 Final Paragraph a. Strengths:

- Clear conclusion about voluntary cooperation
- Thoughtful alternative to forced aid

b. Weaknesses: Underdeveloped argument structure → Your conclusion about "resilience" and "opportunities" needs stronger connections to earlier points. These ideas appear suddenly without proper development throughout the piece.

c. Exemplar: *Through voluntary international cooperation and targeted economic opportunities, nations can build lasting partnerships that foster genuine progress whilst maintaining their autonomy.*

■ Your persuasive piece shows promise but needs more depth in key areas. The opening effectively grabs attention, but you could strengthen your argument by fully developing each solution you propose. Additionally, your examples need clearer links to your main points. You could improve the second paragraph by showing how education specifically helps reduce aid dependency. Also, try to connect your ideas better - when you mention "resilience" at the end, explain how it relates to your earlier points about education and economic development. Your writing would be stronger if you showed clear steps from problem to solution in each paragraph. Try to make your arguments flow naturally from one to the next.

Score: 44/50

Section 2:

Should Rich Countries Be Required to Help Poorer Nations?

#1 Imagine a nation where millions depend on foreign aid for survival—where entire communities ~~rely on~~ [depend upon] external funding for food, shelter, and healthcare. Now, picture what happens when that aid is withdrawn. Without the skills or resources to sustain themselves, people face extreme hardship, struggling to secure even a single meal. This is the danger of enforced reliance on aid. While supporting poorer nations is an act of compassion, making it an obligation can foster dependency, misallocate resources, and violate national autonomy.

#2 When governments become overly reliant on foreign aid, they risk losing their ability to sustain their own people. Instead of developing self-sufficient economies, they become trapped in a cycle of dependency. Take Lebanon, for example—crippled by economic collapse, it now relies heavily on humanitarian assistance. Without addressing root causes of poverty, continuous aid only ~~prolongs~~ [extends] the crisis. A more effective solution would be to invest in education and vocational training, equipping people with the skills to build their own economies rather than perpetuating reliance on external support.

Beyond dependency, aid often leads to wasted resources. According to a study published in Science Direct, nearly 4% of donated food spoils before reaching those in need. While this may seem like a small percentage, on a large scale, it translates to millions of tonnes of wasted food—resources that could have been used more effectively. Instead of simply providing

handouts, a better approach would be to invest in agricultural development programs that enable communities to grow their own food, reducing waste and improving sustainability.

Forcing wealthier nations to provide aid also raises ethical concerns. Assistance should stem from goodwill, not obligation. Psychologist Jack W. Brehm's reactance theory suggests that when individuals—or nations—are forced into action, they often resist, even if the action is beneficial. If countries are compelled to help, they may become resistant or disengaged, reducing the overall effectiveness of aid efforts. A more sustainable approach would be to encourage voluntary international cooperation, fostering a spirit of shared responsibility rather than forced compliance.

While aid can be beneficial, it should not be a requirement. Instead of enforcing obligations, we should promote sustainable development by empowering poorer nations with education, infrastructure, and economic opportunities. This way, they can build resilience, reduce waste, and foster genuine global cooperation. True progress comes not from endless handouts but from providing nations with the tools to thrive independently.

□ WRITING PIECE 2 - FEEDBACK

Section 1:

#1 (First paragraph) Strengths:

- Strong opening hook with a relatable scenario about a student in class
- Effective use of descriptive language to paint a vivid picture

Weakness: Limited development of key ideas → Your opening scenario would benefit from deeper exploration of how smartphone notifications directly impact learning. While you mention "missing crucial lessons," you could strengthen this by showing specific examples of learning disruption.

Exemplar: *When Sarah's phone buzzes with social media alerts during maths class, she misses key steps in solving equations, leading to gaps in her understanding that affect her homework completion.*

#2 (Second paragraph) Strengths:

- Clear connection between memory retention and smartphone use
- Good transition from previous paragraph

Weakness: Underdeveloped argument structure → Your point about memory retention lacks sufficient detail to convince readers. You mention smartphones affecting memory but don't fully explain the connection between device usage and cognitive impact.

Exemplar: *When students constantly check their phones, their brains struggle to transfer information from short-term to long-term memory, making it difficult to recall important concepts later.*

#3 (Final paragraph) Strengths:

- Strong concluding message about balanced technology use
- Good synthesis of main arguments

Weakness: Incomplete solution development → Your conclusion would be more persuasive with specific strategies for responsible smartphone use. You mention students must "learn to use technology responsibly" but don't provide concrete ways to achieve this.

Exemplar: *By setting specific phone-free study periods and using apps only for educational purposes, you can maintain focus while still benefiting from technology's advantages.*

■ Your persuasive piece shows promise in addressing an important issue affecting students today. You've created a good foundation, but your arguments need more depth and specific examples. Focus on developing each point fully before moving to the next one. Take your second paragraph about memory retention and add real classroom examples of how smartphone interruptions affect learning. Also, your third paragraph about solutions could include practical tips for balancing phone use with studies. Additionally, try connecting your ideas more smoothly between paragraphs. Your piece would be stronger if you showed more cause-and-effect relationships throughout your arguments. Finally, consider adding student perspectives to make your points more relatable to your audience.

Score: 42/50

Section 2:

Are smartphones making us dumber?

#1 ~~Imagine a student sitting in class, struggling to focus as her smartphone lights up with notifications every few minutes. Despite her best efforts, she instinctively reaches for the phone, turning her teacher's words~~ [Picture this: a student sits in class, her concentration broken every few minutes by the bright notifications on her smartphone. Despite trying to resist, she automatically reaches for her phone, missing her teacher's instructions]. Her classmates face the same challenge, missing crucial lessons and falling behind in their studies. ~~This scenario is all too common and highlights~~ [This common scene reveals] a pressing issue: smartphones are significantly affecting students' cognitive abilities. From memory retention to focus and critical thinking, smartphones are undermining the very skills essential for learning and development.

#2 Smartphones have become ~~a crutch for memory~~ [a substitute for memory skills], with students relying on them to store everything from reminders to important dates. While this may seem convenient, it comes at a cost. Memory retention is a critical component of cognitive development, ~~as it allows us to store and recall information when needed~~ [enabling us to store and access information independently]. However, by outsourcing this function to smartphones, students are losing the ability to remember things on their own. For example, relying on alarms to wake up or calendars to track exams ~~can lead to problems when the phone runs out of battery or malfunctions~~ [creates difficulties when devices fail or batteries die]. Learning to remember important tasks without digital assistance not only strengthens memory but also prepares students for situations where technology isn't available.

~~#3 This not only leads to incomplete homework but also results in missed lessons and poor grades~~ [Such dependence leads to unfinished assignments and declining academic performance]. The temptation to check one's phone is hard to resist, especially when it's within arm's reach. ~~By keeping smartphones away during study or class time, students can regain their focus and improve their academic performance~~ [Creating phone-free study periods helps students regain concentration and enhance their learning]. The ability to concentrate without interruption is a skill that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Smartphones also encourage users to rely on technology for answers without fully understanding the underlying concepts. While tools like calculators and search engines are helpful, they can hinder the development of critical thinking skills. For instance, solving a maths problem like $23+54$ versus $2 \times 3 + 54$ requires an understanding of mathematical principles, not just the ability to input numbers into a calculator. Similarly, ~~blindly accepting information from the internet without questioning its accuracy can lead to misunderstandings~~ [accepting online information without evaluation leads to misconceptions]. By fostering a deeper understanding of fundamental concepts, students can develop the ability to think critically and solve problems independently.

The impact of smartphones on cognitive abilities cannot be ignored. They weaken memory retention, disrupt focus, and encourage ~~over-reliance~~ [dependence] on technology for problem-solving. While smartphones are undoubtedly useful, their negative effects on learning and development are significant. To combat this, students must learn to use technology responsibly, balancing its convenience with the need to develop essential cognitive skills. By doing so, they can protect their ability to think, learn, and grow in an increasingly digital world.

□ WRITING PIECE 3

Section 1:

#1 First Paragraph Strengths:

- Strong opening with a relatable scenario that draws readers in
- Clear connection between the problem and proposed solution

Weaknesses: Limited development of the main argument → Your opening paragraph touches on several issues but doesn't fully develop the central argument about later school start times. The phrase "reliance on caffeine" could be better connected to your main point about school timing.

Exemplar: ***By shifting school start times later, we can address the root cause of this exhaustion, creating a healthier environment for both parents and children.***

#2 Third Paragraph Strengths:

- Good use of cause-and-effect reasoning
- Clear link between sleep deprivation and safety concerns

Weaknesses: Underdeveloped supporting evidence → Your paragraph about accidents and safety would be more convincing if you showed how later start times directly lead to fewer accidents. The phrase "crash risks are 30% higher" needs more context about how this connects to your solution.

Exemplar: ***Later school start times would significantly reduce morning traffic accidents by allowing parents and students to be more alert during their commute.***

#3 Final Paragraph Strengths:

- Strong concluding statement
- Clear call to action

Weaknesses: Limited synthesis of key points → Your conclusion could better tie together all the benefits discussed. The phrase "safer, and more productive society" needs more specific details about how these improvements would happen.

Exemplar: ***By implementing later start times, we can create a positive chain reaction: well-rested students lead to better academic results, which creates stronger communities and healthier families.***

■ Your persuasive piece shows promise but needs more depth in key areas. Focus on strengthening the connections between your evidence and main argument about later school starts.

Your opening could better set up the problem by showing how current start times affect daily life. Additionally, try to build stronger bridges between your paragraphs to help readers follow your reasoning. Your safety argument would be more powerful if you showed the direct link between later starts and fewer accidents. Also, your conclusion could bring together your main points more effectively by showing how the benefits work together. Take time to expand on how later starts would actually create these positive changes in practice.

Score: 42/50

Section 2:

Should Schools Start Later? A Case for Health, Safety, and Academic Success

#1 Imagine a mother, exhausted from working late into the night to make ends meet, ~~walking~~ [waking] up at 6 a.m. to walk her children to school. With only six hours of sleep, she relies on caffeine to keep her going, unaware that this habit is slowly weakening her bones. Her children, too, struggle to stay awake in their morning ~~class~~ [classes]. This scenario is not uncommon, and it highlights a pressing issue: early school start times are harming families. Schools must begin later to reduce reliance on caffeine, prevent accidents, and improve academic performance.

Early school start times force families to rely on caffeine to cope with sleep deprivation. Many parents and teenagers regularly consume caffeine daily, and excessive caffeine intake can lead to health issues such as increased heart rates, breathing difficulties, and weakened bones due to calcium deficiency. By shifting this reliance on caffeine can lead to long-term health problems, including ~~osteoporosis~~ [osteoporosis] and cardiovascular issues. By starting school later, families can enjoy more sleep in the morning, reducing their dependence on caffeine and promoting healthier lifestyles.

#2 Early school start times increase the risk of sleep-related accidents. Sleep-deprived parents driving their children to school are more likely to be involved in accidents. ~~Research~~ [Research] by [from] ~~Wong et al~~ [Wong et al.] (2014) found that crash risks are 30% higher during traditional school hours compared to later times. These accidents not only endanger lives but also place a financial burden on families and communities through medical costs and property damage. Delaying school start times would reduce the number of sleep-related accidents, creating safer roads for everyone.

#3 Later school start times would allow students to get adequate sleep, improving their focus, academic performance, and overall well-being.

Starting school later is not just a matter of convenience—it is a necessity for the health, safety and success of students and parents alike. By delaying school start times, we can reduce reliance on caffeine, prevent accidents, and improve academic outcomes. This change would create a healthier, safer, and more productive society. Let's prioritise the well-being of our families and give them the opportunity to thrive.