

Sample 3: IELTS Writing Task 2 (Advantages and Disadvantages Essay)

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

An increasing number of companies are allowing employees to work from different locations instead of a central office. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this development?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. Write at least 250 words.

Answer for Score Band 7 Level

In recent years, remote and flexible working arrangements have become increasingly common, with many organisations allowing staff to work from home or other locations rather than a fixed office. This development brings several notable benefits, but it also raises some significant concerns that deserve careful consideration.

Advantages

The most widely cited advantage is improved work-life balance. Employees who are not required to commute can reclaim valuable time and often report lower stress levels and greater job satisfaction. Additionally, companies benefit from access to a wider talent pool, since geography no longer restricts recruitment. A software firm based in New York, for instance, can hire skilled developers from Warsaw or Nairobi without requiring relocation, which can also reduce salary costs significantly.

Disadvantages

However, distributed working is not without drawbacks. One prominent concern is the erosion of team cohesion. When colleagues rarely meet in person, spontaneous collaboration and the informal relationships that underpin trust can be difficult to sustain. Furthermore, not all employees have access to a suitable home working environment; those in shared or cramped accommodation may find concentration and productivity harder to maintain than in a dedicated office space.

Conclusion

In conclusion, location-flexible working offers genuine advantages for both employees and employers, but these must be weighed against the risks of isolation and diminished collaboration. Companies that invest in regular in-person gatherings and strong digital communication tools are best placed to capture the benefits while minimising the downsides.

Answer for Score Band 8 Level

The shift towards distributed working — accelerated dramatically by the global pandemic — has fundamentally altered the relationship between employers, employees, and the physical workplace. While this transformation offers compelling advantages in terms of flexibility and talent acquisition, it simultaneously introduces challenges around cohesion, equity, and managerial oversight that organisations are only beginning to fully reckon with.

Advantages

The productivity gains associated with remote work have been well-documented. A landmark Stanford study found that remote employees worked longer hours and took fewer sick days than their office-based counterparts. Beyond individual output, companies gain access to a genuinely global talent pool, decoupling hiring decisions from geographic proximity and enabling cost efficiencies in high-rent urban markets. For employees, the elimination of the daily commute — averaging over one hour in many major cities — translates into measurable improvements in physical health, mental wellbeing, and family life.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages, however, are equally substantive. Organisational culture — the invisible connective tissue of a functioning workplace — struggles to survive when built entirely through screens. Junior employees, in particular, are disproportionately disadvantaged: they lose the mentoring, osmotic learning, and professional visibility that proximity to senior colleagues naturally provides. There is also a risk of deepening workplace inequality, as those with inadequate home environments or unreliable internet access are structurally penalised relative to better-resourced peers.

Conclusion

The advantages of distributed working are real and significant, but so too are its social and organisational costs. The most effective response is not a binary choice between office and remote, but a deliberately designed hybrid model that preserves flexibility while intentionally rebuilding the human connections that physical workplaces once generated organically.

Answer for Score Band 9 Level

For most of industrial history, the office was not merely a place of work — it was the primary mechanism through which organisations exercised coordination, oversight, and cultural reproduction. The widespread dismantling of that model forces a reckoning with a question that was never seriously asked before: what, precisely, does physical co-presence contribute that cannot be replicated digitally? The answer to that question determines how seriously we should weigh the advantages and disadvantages of distributed work.

Advantages

The efficiency case for remote work is robust. Individual productivity research — most notably Nicholas Bloom's controlled studies at Stanford — consistently finds that remote workers outperform office counterparts on measurable output, driven by fewer interruptions, reclaimed commute time, and autonomy over working conditions. At the organisational level, the dissolution of geographic hiring constraints has proven transformative: technology companies operating distributed teams routinely access specialist talent at a fraction of the cost demanded by workers in San Francisco or London, restructuring competitive dynamics across entire industries.

Disadvantages

Yet efficiency metrics obscure what proximity quietly generates. Serendipitous hallway conversations, unrehearsed collaboration, and the tacit knowledge transferred through observation are not captured in productivity dashboards — but their absence accumulates. Research on distributed teams reveals declining psychological safety over time, as the low-bandwidth nature of digital communication strips away the nonverbal cues through which trust is built and maintained. This erosion falls heaviest on those newest to an organisation, for whom physical immersion would otherwise compress years of cultural acclimatisation into months.

Conclusion

Distributed work is unambiguously advantageous for tasks that are individual, measurable, and cognitively self-contained. It is quietly corrosive for the relational, generative, and cultural dimensions of organisational life that are hardest to quantify and easiest to underestimate — until they are gone.