

Sample 6: IELTS Writing Task 2 (Double Question Essay)

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

More people are choosing to delay major life decisions, such as marriage and home ownership, until later in life. What factors are causing this change? Is this a positive or negative 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 many countries, people are increasingly postponing significant life milestones such as marriage and buying property. This essay will examine the key factors behind this trend and argue that it is largely a positive development.

Several factors explain why people are delaying these decisions. The most significant is economic pressure. Rising house prices and stagnant wages in many cities have made home ownership unaffordable for younger generations without years of saving. Similarly, the cost of weddings and the financial expectations associated with starting a family lead many to wait until they are more financially stable. Additionally, shifting cultural attitudes have played a role. Greater emphasis on personal fulfilment, career development, and travel means that young people today feel less social pressure to conform to traditional life timelines. Higher rates of university attendance also delay financial independence, pushing key decisions further into adulthood.

On balance, I consider this trend to be largely positive. Delayed decision-making often results in greater maturity and financial readiness, which can contribute to more stable marriages and sustainable homeownership. Research suggests that couples who marry later tend to have lower divorce rates, indicating that waiting may strengthen long-term commitment. However, there are concerns. Delaying marriage and parenthood can reduce opportunities to have children, and late entry into the property market may leave people without adequate housing security in retirement.

In conclusion, while this trend carries some risks, the broader shift towards more deliberate, well-prepared life decisions reflects personal and societal progress that should be welcomed rather than resisted.

Answer for Score Band 8 Level

The trend of deferring major life commitments — marriage, homeownership, and parenthood — has become a defining characteristic of adulthood in many contemporary societies. This shift is driven by converging economic and cultural forces, and I regard it as predominantly positive, albeit with important caveats.

The primary catalyst is economic constraint. In cities such as London, Sydney, and Toronto, property prices have escalated so dramatically that purchasing a home before one's mid-thirties is practically unachievable for most without substantial parental support. Simultaneously, the expansion of higher education has extended the period of financial dependency, meaning that young adults enter stable employment later than previous generations. Beyond economics, there has been a profound cultural reorientation. Women's increased participation in the workforce has diluted the social expectation that marriage and motherhood should be immediate post-educational priorities. The normalisation of cohabitation and diverse relationship structures has further reduced urgency around formalising partnerships legally.

I regard this as a broadly positive development. Decisions made from a position of financial security and emotional maturity are more likely to endure; this is reflected in declining divorce rates in nations where later marriage has become the norm, such as Scandinavia. Nevertheless, demographic consequences deserve acknowledgement: persistently low birth rates in countries like Japan and South Korea illustrate how indefinite postponement can create systemic pressures on pension systems and labour forces that societies are ill-prepared to manage.

In sum, delaying major life decisions reflects rational adaptation to modern realities and represents genuine personal progress, provided societies simultaneously address the structural conditions making earlier choices untenable.

Answer for Score Band 9 Level

The progressive deferral of marriage, homeownership, and parenthood represents one of the most consequential behavioural shifts in modern social history. Far from being a lifestyle preference, it is largely a structural response to changed economic and cultural conditions — and evaluating it demands the same nuance with which it should be understood.

Two forces, operating in tandem, explain this phenomenon most convincingly. The first is economic foreclosure. In housing markets across the developed world, the ratio of property prices to median incomes has reached historically unprecedented levels, effectively disqualifying younger cohorts from ownership that their parents took for granted. Student debt compounds this: in the United States, graduate debt now averages over \$37,000, absorbing the capital that earlier generations directed towards deposits and early family formation. The second force is an irreversible cultural shift in how adulthood itself is conceived. The dismantling of prescriptive gender roles, expanded access to education, and greater individual autonomy have

collectively severed the link between chronological age and social expectation, allowing — indeed, encouraging — people to sequence life decisions according to personal readiness rather than social timetable.

Whether this constitutes progress depends entirely on which lens one applies. From the individual perspective, later decisions are almost invariably better-informed and better-resourced; marital stability data from Nordic countries support this unambiguously. Societally, however, the picture is more troubling: sub-replacement fertility rates in ageing economies such as Italy and South Korea reveal that what individuals experience as liberation can aggregate into demographic fragility at scale.

This trend is, therefore, simultaneously a marker of personal progress and a symptom of structural failures that governments cannot afford to ignore.