

Writing Task 2

You should spend about **40 minutes** on this task.

Present a written argument or case to an educated reader with no special knowledge of the following topic:

Nowadays there is no realistic way of cutting yourself off from the communications blitz. We are all exposed to more communication than anyone would have believed possible 50 years ago. In some respects this has clearly improved the quality of our lives, but at the same time, modern methods of communication have threatened many things that we once believed were important.

Say whether you see instant communication as a blessing or a curse.

You should write **between 250 and 300 words**.

You should support your arguments with examples and ideas of relevance.

You will receive points for relevant content, good organisation, range of vocabulary and sentence structure, and linguistic accuracy.

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The days are long gone when women had to give birth at home because there was no means of contacting a doctor, or dates and appointments had to be set weeks in advance without the possibility to cancel or postpone them a day or two before it was going to take place. Everything changed with the introduction of the telephone; much later computers and mobile phones marked the peak in communication technology. Are we better off, or worse, nowadays?

No one is going to argue the convenience of modern communication. Being able to call a doctor in case of emergency, or service when your car breaks down in the middle of nowhere – but also the more easy-going and laid-back ways of contacting friends at any time one's free time allows; hardly anyone would like to give up these advantages anymore.

However, there is never any advantage without disadvantage. The down sides of modern communication technology are well-known to most of us. We feel obliged to be available all the time, for friends, but also employers. As communication speeds up, text messages or e-mails must not be left unanswered for more than a few hours, or less. We are therefore pushed into a new form of tyranny, unless we defend ourselves against it with all our might. As a private person, it is still possible to reject the momentum of instant availability by switching off the phone, the computer, and taking one's "time off". Companies, however, do not have this option anymore. If an e-mail is not answered within a maximum of five hours or so, a company is frequently regarded as unprofessional or not customer-friendly. The would-be customer will be likely to turn towards another company which is quicker to reply, even if the price is higher or the quality lower. Therefore, one of the most negative effects of instant communication is a decline in quality, and an increase in an "I want it now" mentality.

On a personal level, this development is taking place so well, so if a person doesn't react fast enough, he or she will be excluded from an activity or meeting.

All in all, as with all things, it isn't possible to say instant communication is all bad, or all good. There are two sides to it, and it would be desirable to watch out in order not to let the negative side take over our everyday lives.

(405 words)

Band 3**Justification**

Clear and readable text. Most paragraphs well developed, good control of cohesive markers; theme-rheme organisation observed. Final two paragraphs poorly developed and too short (one-sentence paragraph).