

# Human versus Machine: How IELTS Learners Use AI Feedback on IELTS Writing Task 2 Essays and What They Miss

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## Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT has increasingly shaped the practices of English language learning and teaching, especially in writing instruction for high-stakes exams like IELTS. These tools offer immediate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, supporting learners in producing more accurate and fluent writing. However, questions remain about the reliability of AI-generated feedback when it comes to more complex writing criteria, particularly Task Response and Coherence and Cohesion, key components of the IELTS Writing Task 2 rubric. This small-scale, classroom-based study investigates how IELTS learners engage with and apply feedback from ChatGPT during the process of essay revision. Data include student-written drafts (before and after AI use), guided reflections, and teacher-assigned band scores. Preliminary findings suggest that while AI tools effectively support lexical and grammatical improvements, learners often misinterpret or overlook feedback on deeper rhetorical features. The findings highlight the need for explicit AI-literacy training in IELTS preparation courses, helping students become more critical and strategic users of AI feedback in developing high-stakes academic writing.

Keywords: AI feedback, IELTS Writing, Chat GPT, Automated Learning Evaluation

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