

Part 1

Sample answer

1

The theme common to both texts is that humans need some risk in their lives.

In Text 1, the writer observes that the element of risk and danger in life has been greatly reduced in the modern world. To compensate for this, it argues, we actively seek risk and even invent it when it isn't really there. In my view, there is some truth in this. We do live in very safety-conscious times and our lives are very regulated. So some people seek risk in, say, virtual games and extreme sports. But I must point out that this depends very much where one lives and there are many countries in the world where the threat of violence and danger is only too real. People from these countries would not take the same view at all, so I think this writer is very insular.

The writer's own view on risk isn't really explicit in the extract, but in Text 2 there is a stronger authorial voice. Text 2 goes further, presenting a very positive view of risk as something we should all try to experience as it is beneficial to us. It seems to imply that embracing risk can lead to a richer life. It also makes the point that some people are risk-averse, because they don't like to feel out of control.

Text 2 is more psychological. It seems to be urging people to 'let go' and just see what happens to them in their lives. I am not sure whether this is really appropriate advice, but I would agree to some extent, because the times when I took a risk and did something adventurous have given me confidence in my life and good memories.

On balance, therefore, Text 2 seems more relevant to my own situation.

Part 1

Read the two texts below.

Write an essay summarising and evaluating the key points from both texts. Use your own words throughout as far as possible, and include your own ideas in your answers.

Write your answer in 240–280 words.

World no longer dangerous      A world without risk      people still like to feel they are taking risks

Compared to what it used to be, the world has become a relatively safe place; life is no longer a dangerous adventure. Instead it is dull, dull, dull. Now that many of us no longer face real danger, we pretend it's there. We get our thrills from imagining the world is more dangerous than it is. Newspapers and news bulletins contribute to this, giving people the impression that even as they huddle in their armchairs, they are really up against raw and frightful threats.

Many people do not take risks and may regret not experiencing all that they might have      Taking risks

We hear stories over and over again about the people who reach the end of their lives and regret the fact that they never took any risks, that they never challenged life and stepped out and tried something that was beyond their current existence. If people take care of every possible outcome of risk before they're willing even to take it, they turn the risk into a calculated venture, and try to control it, losing most of the potential benefit of taking the risk. Risk can make us more mature, wiser and stronger.

Taking risks helps us develop and become better.

Write your essay.