

## IELTS Writing Sample #24

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You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. In some countries the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 50, while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70. Meanwhile, we see some politicians enjoying power well into their eighties. Clearly, there is little agreement on an appropriate retirement age.

Until what age do you think people should be encouraged to remain in paid employment?

Give reasons for your answer. You should write at least 250 words.

model answer: Mandatory retirement age varies from society to society, perhaps a reflection of economics, population pressures or simply value systems. Indeed, retirement at 50 can probably be as easily justified as that at 70. It is my belief, however, that the longer an able person is allowed to work, the better for both the individual worker and the employer.

Chronological age is not always a true indicator of ability. While some 65+ year-olds may not perform as well as they did in their past, many workers at this age do just as well or better than they used to. People's suitability for a position should be a reflection of their performance in the job, rather than the number of wrinkles or grey hairs they have. Employers concerned about the increasing age of their employees need only observe their work records. Those doing poorly may be asked to retire, but those as yet unaffected by age should stay on. Indeed, it would appear economical for an organisation to retain its older employees when possible rather than spend time and money on training new workers.

Remaining in one's job for as long as one is able makes sense as life expectancies increase around the world. As people live longer, they are longer able to contribute to society in the form of meaningful work. But they are also in need of income for a longer period, so a mandatory retirement age of 55 for someone who is statistically likely to live to 77 becomes increasingly difficult to justify. At a time when populations are ageing, governments are less able to provide for their senior citizens, so by keeping able workers in paid employment for as long as is practicable, public expenditures are less strained.

Thus, workers who can still demonstrate their capacity to carry out their work should not be asked to retire simply because they have reached a certain age. Societies that insist on early retirement may do well to look again at their policies.