

## **WRITING AN ESSAY**

The essay gives you an opportunity to show how effectively you can develop and express ideas.

Develop your point of view, present your ideas logically and clearly.

You will receive 2 pages with 46 lines. Practice using smaller handwriting before the test so you don't run out of space.

There is a certain expectation from the essay graders concerning the length of a well-written essay.

Your essay should range between 300-400 words.

Small, yet legible, handwriting will conserve space.

Neatness matters. Your essay should be readable. If you edit what you've written do it neatly.

You are not expected to produce a perfect piece of writing. You have only 25 minutes to think about, write and proofread your work.

It is expected to be an organized and readable piece of writing that makes an argument supported by real examples.

### **Step 1. Generating ideas. Know it and understand it.**

You should consider the topic from a variety of angles and to explore what you already know about the topic. If your topic asks you to discuss 2 sides of an issue and explain why you support one side try to bring to mind information you already know. For example: information from your reading or personal experience that relates to the topic.

Advice: simply write down whatever occurs to you when you consider the topic. Read over what you've written and summarize the main point in one sentence. You may also want to write anything down just brainstorm.

The most important aspect of this step is to fully understand what you need to write about.

### **Step 2. Organizing ideas. Plan. Collect your ideas.**

Organize what you've written down. First, you are to find a thesis, that is your controlling idea, the position you want to support. Write down a one-sentence statement. When you have it in mind you are ready to begin planning the body of your essay. Look through the ideas you wrote when you brainstormed the topic, eliminate those that do not relate to the thesis you've chosen. Decide on the best order of the remaining ideas. If you are discussing both sides of the issue, consider the side you do not support first and then concentrate on the side you support.

You have picked the controlling idea and now choose examples to back up your argument. Think about 2-3 specific examples from history, your life, literature, from the latest news and so on, but they should be bright and vivid.

When you think about your examples also think about some evidence for each of them. Supporting your point of view you should have a good reason and be convincing.

Now it's time to organize your paragraphs.

Paragraph 1. Clearly state your argument and briefly mention the evidence to support that argument.

Middle (2-3) paragraphs. Explain your evidence in detail.

Last paragraph. Briefly summarize your argument.

### **Step 3. The introduction.**

A good introduction has 2 important goals.

1 – It informs the reader of the point you want to make about the subject.

2 – A good introduction catches the reader's attention and makes him continue reading.

For this reason you are to consider who your audience is likely to be. It will determine the tone of your essay (how formal or informal you will be). The following are the methods of the essay beginning: a narration or anecdote, a summary of the writer's experience with the subject, a surprising fact or statistics, a strong contrast, a rhetorical question, a definition of terms, a relevant quotation, a historical detail and so on.

#### **Step 4. Transitions.**

Transitions are signal words, phrases and clauses that show the relationships among the ideas in your essay. They help the reader to follow your argument and make you write smoothly. The most common transitional expressions are the conjunctions – single words and words used in pairs. The following is the list of these conjunctions and the logical relationships they indicate.

Addition: and, both...and, not only...but also

Contrast: but, yet

Cause, effect: for, so

Alternation: or, either...or, nor, neither...nor

Other common kinds of transitions are adverbs and prepositional phrases. The list of them:

Addition: also, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover, likewise, first, second, third, similarly, again

Contrast: however, still, all the same, on the other hand, on the contrary, nevertheless, instead, otherwise

Cause, effect, purpose: therefore, as a consequence, consequently, accordingly, hence, for this purpose, as a result, thus

Time: later, after, meanwhile, finally, before, then, during, at the present time, eventually

Space: here, opposite to, next to, there, to the left/right, nearby, in the middle

Support: for example/instance, such as, in fact, in general

Summary: as shown above, to sum up, in other words, in short, in brief, in conclusion, in summary

#### **Step 5. The conclusion.**

The conclusion is a signal to the reader that you have finished making your point. It must be related to what you have already said. Therefore it is not the place to introduce details or a new topic. You may simply write a concluding sentence or a short separate paragraph. The conclusion must be especially effective because this is the last thing the readers will see. It is a short summary. Common types of conclusions include the following:

- A call for action;
- A prediction;
- A question;
- A quotation;
- A sentence or two that remind readers of the importance of the topic.

#### **Step 6. Proofread. Read for errors.**

The first thing to keep in mind about editing your essay is to make the job of checking for grammar, spelling and other mistakes a separate stage in the writing process. If you stop to edit, you will certainly forget your idea. Instead, if you have questions, simply mark them in the text (by underlining, putting in brackets, ticking). Thus, you do not interrupt your train of thought.

When you have completed your essay, read it through to make certain that:

- You have made the meaning clear to your readers;
- You haven't omitted some words or phrases;
- You have organized the paragraphs in the right way;
- You have ended every sentence with a final mark of punctuation;

Now go back to the beginning of your essay and reconsider the problems you marked earlier.

Mind the troubles you have had in previous writing assignments. It's good to make a list of your potential problems.

#### **REMEMBER!**

- View writing your essay as a process with at least 3 stages: pre-writing, writing, editing.
- Use the first minutes to brainstorm and to organize your ideas.
- Compose a thesis that states your controlling idea, the point you want to make about the subject.
- Place your thesis in the first paragraph that introduces you topic.
- Follow your plan as you write the body of your essay.
- Include specific details as you develop each point.
- Mark any problems (grammar, spelling) so that you can reconsider them later.
- Use a variety of transitional devices to make certain your ideas flow smoothly.

- End with a concluding sentence or a brief concluding paragraph.
- Edit for clarity, the problems you marked, and any other trouble spots on your own personal checklist.

**Assignment 1:** Should friends be honest with each other, even if a truthful comment be hurtful? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue.

Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience or observations.

“Don’t flatter yourself that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friends to learn unpleasant things from his enemies, they are ready enough to tell them.”

“ A good friend can tell you what is the matter with you in a minute. He may not seem such a good friend after telling.”

**Assignment 2:** Is an individual’s financial status the most important factor governing their quality of life?

**Assignment 3:** Do you have to be brave to do something courageous?

**Assignment 4:** Does the media have too much influence on the young adult population?

## 1. Opinion essay

### *Introduction*

Paragraph 1—State the topic and your opinion

### *Main Body*

Paragraphs 2-3—viewpoints and reasons/examples

Paragraph 4—opposing viewpoints and reasons/example

### *Conclusion*

Final Paragraph—summarise/restate your opinion

## 2. For and Against Essay

### *Introduction*

Paragraph 1—State the topic (without stating your opinion)

### *Main Body*

Paragraphs 2-3—arguments for and justifications, examples or reasons

Paragraphs 4-5— arguments against and justifications, examples or reasons

### *Conclusion*

Final Paragraph—balanced consideration or opinion

## 3. Essay Suggesting Solutions to Problems.

### *Introduction*

Paragraph 1—State the problem and its cause(s)/consequence(s)

### *Main Body*

Paragraphs 2—suggestion 1 and result

Paragraphs 3- suggestion 2 and result

Paragraphs 4— suggestion 3 and result

### *Conclusion*

Final Paragraph—summarise your opinion

*Sample Front Page of an Essay*

**M.M. Faez**

**Tutor: Mr Green**

**Course 4, Term 7**

**Group 2**

**(Subject) Oral Practice**

**Term 7 (Major) essay**

**Homelessness within the context of social and ecological problems**

**Actual Length:        approx. 300 words**

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