

Writing | Part 1

An essay

Exam information

In Writing Part 1 you write an essay in which you discuss a question or topic. You are given

- three areas to consider and you must discuss two of them
- three opinions which you can use if you wish.

This part tests your ability to develop an argument or discussion, express your opinions clearly and support your ideas with reasons and examples.

1 Underline the key ideas in the writing task below.

Your class has taken part in a seminar on whether the education system does enough to help young people to find jobs which fit their abilities and interests. You have made the notes below.

Methods schools and universities use to help students find suitable jobs

- providing courses and qualifications
- work experience programmes
- careers advice

Some opinions expressed in the seminar:

'We study lots of things which we'll never use in any future job.'

'Without work experience you'd have no idea what to study at university.'

'Some of my teachers can't give me advice because they've never done any job other than teaching.'

Write an essay discussing **two** of the methods in your notes. You should explain **which method is more effective**, giving **reasons** in support of your answer.

You may, if you wish, make use of the opinions expressed in the seminar, but you should use your own words as far as possible.

Write your answer in 220–260 words in an appropriate style.



2 Work in small groups.

- Discuss each of the methods and whether or not you agree with the opinions expressed in the seminar.
- During your discussion, express your own opinions on the methods and give reasons for your opinions.
- Take notes on the main ideas which arise during the discussion.

3 Read the writing task in Exercise 1 again. Do you think the following sentences are true (T) or false (F)? Why?

- 1 You must discuss all three methods.
- 2 You must decide which is the best method.
- 3 You must say whether you agree or disagree with the opinions expressed.
- 4 If you use any of the opinions, you should express them in a more formal style.
- 5 When you express your opinion, you should say why you hold that opinion.
- 6 You can expand the topic to talk about other issues related to work that interest you.
- 7 You can write your answer using a bulleted list of points instead of formal paragraphs.
- 8 The task contains a word limit, but if you write 300 words you will get higher marks.

- 4 Read Cristina's essay. Then complete the plan she wrote beforehand by matching the notes (a–e) with the paragraphs.

For many young people it is hard to find the sort of job they aspire to. ¹This is in part due to a mismatch between what education provides and what employers believe ²they require.

Schools and universities should offer students courses which provide ³them with qualifications which will attract potential employers. However, employers often complain that courses are too theoretical and do not teach students the practical skills ⁴they will need in the workplace.

While I understand ⁵this viewpoint, I do not entirely share ⁶it. I believe that the purpose of education is primarily to develop critical thinking skills, including the ability to analyse and solve problems. ⁷These abilities will be useful throughout people's working lives. To achieve ⁸this, I do not think it matters whether someone studies history or theoretical physics as long as the right teaching methods are used. Students will then pick up the specific job skills they require very quickly once they are in full-time employment.

It is often suggested that young people need to gain work experience in order to make an informed choice of university course and career. Although I believe ⁹this helps to focus students' minds on what working life will be like, generally speaking it is not possible for students to get a wide enough range of experience to be able to choose ¹⁰their career wisely.

I would therefore argue that the best way to help young people find suitable jobs is to give them an excellent general education while ensuring that employers realise how valuable ¹¹it is.

Plan

- Para 1: Introduction:
- Para 2:
- Para 3:
- Para 4:
- Para 5: Conclusion:

- a education should teach students to think – useful for every job
- b provide a good all-round education + persuade employers of its importance
- c employers say courses not practical enough
- d difficulty finding jobs – education vs. employers' needs
- e work experience often too limited for students to make informed choices



- 5 Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.

- 1 Why is it important to underline the key ideas in the writing task?
 - 2 Why should you write a plan before you write your essay?
 - 3 Did Cristina follow her plan exactly?
 - 4 Has she dealt completely with the instructions in the writing task?
 - 5 What words and phrases does she use in her essay to introduce her opinions?
 - 6 To what extent do you agree with Cristina's point of view?
 - 7 Why is it important to make your opinions clear in an essay?
- 6 When you write, it is important that each paragraph should cover a different aspect of the subject and that sentences should be linked together using clear references. What do the underlined reference words in Cristina's essay refer to?
- 7 Write your own plan for the writing task in Exercise 1. When you have finished, compare your plan with a partner's.
- 8 Read Cristina's essay in Exercise 4 again and highlight any words or phrases you would like to use in your essay. Also, copy them to your plan and to your notebook.

Then write your essay following your plan.

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Essays

An essay is a piece of academic writing, produced for a teacher or lecturer, in which you have to discuss issues connected with a topic. You may previously have discussed this topic in class. You should express your opinions on the topic and the reasons for them.

You studied how to write essays in Units 1, 3, 9 and 14

Exercise 1

Look at this writing task. Underline what you consider to be the main points and then answer the questions below.

You have watched a television discussion about methods governments could adopt to encourage people to take more exercise. You have made the notes below.

How can governments encourage people to take more exercise?

- better education
- free facilities
- exercise time at work

Some opinions expressed in the discussion:

'People already know the benefits of exercise but don't do enough about it.'

'Many forms of exercise are free.'

'Employers would benefit from a healthier workforce.'

Write an essay discussing **two** of the methods in your notes. You should **explain which method you think is more important** for governments to consider and **provide reasons** in support of your opinion.

You may, if you wish, make use of the opinions expressed in the discussion, but you should use your own words as far as possible.

- 1 Do you agree, on the whole, that governments have a role to play in encouraging people to take more exercise? If you do, what is your main reason? If not, why not?
- 2 How could education be used to achieve this aim?
 - Who should be targeted by an education programme? Children? Adults?
 - Where should this education take place? In school? On TV? Online?
- 3 What kinds of facilities could be made free?
- 4 How do you think employers and employees would react to the idea of 'exercise time at work'?
- 5 Do you agree or disagree with any of the three opinions expressed?

Exercise 2

Which two of these three plans are appropriate for the essay task in Exercise 1? What are the problems with the other plan?

Plan 1

- Para 1 Introduction: the importance of taking exercise – otherwise, heart problems, obesity
- Para 2 People of all ages need facilities that are freely available
- Para 3 Idea of introducing exercise classes in schools – problems, why it won't work
- Para 4 Conclusion: providing free facilities is the best thing governments can do

Plan 2

- Para 1 Introduction: the general consensus on exercise and the idea of a government role to play
- Para 2 How schools can do more to help solve the problem – more PE and sport
- Para 3 The part parents might play in supporting these initiatives
- Para 4 Benefits of more free facilities, e.g. swimming pools, bike paths
- Para 5 Conclusion: why education is more important

Plan 3

- Para 1 Introduction: the exercise I did as a child and how it has benefited me
- Para 2 Teaching young people about exercise: inadequacies in the current education system
- Para 3 Advantages of having free exercise facilities
- Para 4 Exercise time at work – impractical: loss of productivity
- Para 5 Conclusion: need for better education and free facilities