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# Writing Essays in English

## (the handbook of exercises and methodological recommendations)

for the students majoring in linguistics  
in their Bachelor's and Master's programme



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М 42

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*Навчально-методичний посібник призначений для студентів мовних факультетів вищих навчальних закладів та усіх, хто має бажання покращити чи опанувати навички письма, зокрема у написанні есе англійською мовою. У посібнику систематизовано основні та найважливіші положення і поради щодо написання логічно структурованого та змістовного есе; відмічено основні типові помилки, яких припускаються студенти. З урахуванням когнітивних операцій, які залучаються студентами під час творчого процесу, розроблено асоціативну карту для написання есе.*

*У посібнику наведено приклади різних видів есе та запропоновано мовні кліше і вирази для забезпечення зв'язності та цілісної твору і розроблено ряд вправ на відпрацювання навичок визначення різновиду твору та правильного використання мовних кліше.*

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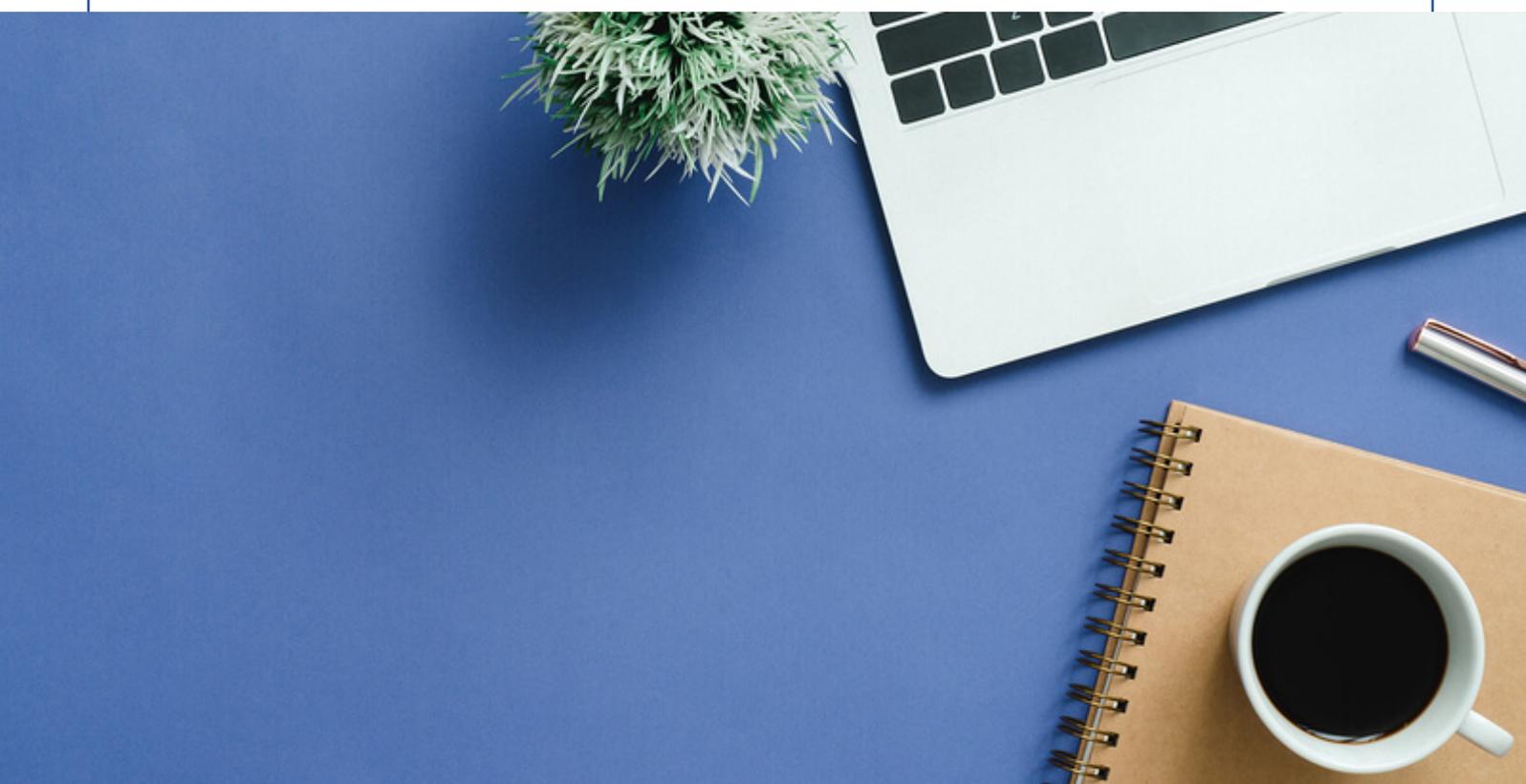
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# FROM THE AUTHERS

If you are at the stage of your learning where you are expected to compose an essay, it is fair to say that you've achieved a good grasp of the English language. Writing an essay gives you the opportunity to display your knowledge, but it is important that you get lots of things right.

Despite the fact that, as Shakespeare said, "the pen is mightier than the sword," the pen itself is not enough to make an effective writer. In fact, though we may all like to think of ourselves as the next Shakespeare, inspiration alone is not the key to effective essay writing. You see, the conventions of English essays are more formulaic than you might think – and, in many ways, it can be as simple as counting to five.

This book is written specifically to help undergraduate students of the English language and linguistics to develop the art of writing essays. Hopefully, all the tips, reflected in this book, will help you to master the art of eloquent, coherent and laconic representation of your thoughts on the paper, infuse you with self-confidence, motivation and enthusiasm.

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## Writing General Advice

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- **DO** read the questions carefully and make sure you understand them.
- **DON'T** go off topic. Underline key words in the exam question. This will help you focus your answer on the key points.
- When writing essays, a common mistake students make is not planning enough. **DO plan each task** to make sure you answer all parts of the question and **organise your ideas** well when you write.
- Spend a few minutes **brainstorming ideas**, e.g. using a benefits / disadvantages table or a mind map, before writing. You can then focus on language issues. **DON'T** spend too much time planning. No more than 10 minutes.
- **DON'T** write a first draft in full and then write a second. You will not have time for this.
- **DO** write in paragraphs.
- **DO** complete the task in full sentences and paragraphs - **DON'T** answer in a list of notes or bullet points.
- **DO** write in a formal, neutral tone, and only include information that is directly relevant to the task.
- **DO** use **a variety of language and connecting words/phrases** to join ideas together (e.g. *as a result, however*).
- **DO** leave time to **review** your writing. Read it once to check it makes sense, then read it again and check for any incorrect language, punctuation and spelling.

### Types of essays

1. The “advantages and disadvantages” / “for and against” essay;
2. The “agree or disagree” essay;
3. The “discursive” essay;
4. The essay answering “to what extent” question.
5. The a “problem and solution” essay.

## Structure of a balanced argument essay

**INTRODUCTION:** Introduces the topic (paraphrases the question) and makes it clear that both sides of the argument will be examined.

**BODY 1:** Introduces the first idea and supports with reasons and examples. Mentions an opposing view then concludes the paragraph by refuting it with your opinion.

**BODY 2:** Introduces the second idea and supports with reasons and examples.

**BODY 3:** Introduces the opposing argument and supports with examples. Concludes the paragraph at the end with your view.

**CONCLUSION:** Summarizes main points and concludes with the writer's opinion based on the arguments in the essay. No new ideas are expressed.

### The Introduction

In many ways, your conclusion and introduction are very similar in that they both state your opinion. The introduction is probably the shortest section of the essay.

It might contain:

- a restatement of the question
- your opinion
- what and how you are going to discuss the question

When you write your introduction **DO NOT:**

- copy the question word for word
- give a lot of background information

The **introduction** to the essay can describe the topic of the essay, give background information to it and list various opinions about it. You should also briefly state your own view, which you then go on to explain and support in the main body of the essay. In your introduction, re-word the question showing the topic clearly and state the opinion(s) that you will go on to discuss.

### Body paragraphs

A clearly structured body paragraph is more accessible to the reader and communicates ideas effectively. At advanced academic levels, writers will structure complex paragraphs to reflect complex lines of argument. However, under the time and

word limits of the Writing Task, it is more practical to follow a relatively simple paragraph format, which allows the reader to identify the main idea, the development of this idea in the form of **explanation** or **examples**, and a **concluding** or **transition sentence** which leads into the following paragraph. **Show clear links** between the main argument and the supporting arguments.

When you write the main body of your essay, you need to explain your ideas fully. Examiners are looking to see how you **develop** your topic sentences, and will give you a better score if you do it well.

A good way to make your writing more academic and stylish is to use some **noun phrases** in your essay. Noun phrases give the reader more information about a noun. For example, with the nouns *prices* or *the Internet*, you can make the noun phrases *rising house prices* or *the invention of the Internet*.

Remember that **each paragraph should have one main argument** - start a new paragraph when you start a new main idea. Develop contrasting views, problems and solutions, advantages and disadvantages. Make sure you justify each point with clear supporting material. Do not forget to **provide a logical argument** wherever you refute the opposing opinion.

### **Conclusion**

At the end of any type of essay, you need to write a short conclusion. The important thing to remember is **there are no right or wrong conclusions**, and the examiner will not make any judgements about your opinions, so write freely and clearly.

Conclude your essay by summarising the main points and stating your own personal view. Provide a strong conclusion which relates your argument back to the original question/s and summarises your opinion.

### **Timing, planning and structuring**

It is essential that you plan your writing before actually beginning to write your answer. Some students may want to begin writing immediately as they are afraid that they will run out of time. This will not allow them to produce a well-organised response that answers the task well.

At first 250 may seem like a lot of words, but if you break the answer down into the paragraphs then it will seem easier: Introduction and concluding paragraph about 50 words each. The two main body paragraphs 100 words each. Each of these paragraphs

has to include at least 2 ideas (3 is better), as well as reasons for your ideas and an example to support one of them.

Timing is critical in any test or exam. Running out of time leads to underlength essays and essays that are really a set of notes or bullet point. The latter will lead to the candidate losing points due to poor paragraphing. Although taking a watch into the test will help, it is by practising before the test and improving writing speed that the candidate will really help themselves. Try to keep a note of how many words you are able to write within a time limit and record how your writing speed improves with practice.

Make sure you leave **enough** time to give yourself the **opportunity** to check your answers thoroughly. Make any corrections neatly and legibly. Errors often occur when a letter is silent, for example in the words **government**, **technology** and **otherwise**. Be especially careful with vowel combinations in words such as **beautiful** and **enormous**. Also, remember to check that you have added any suffixes accurately: **-ness** and **-ful** are often misspelled.

Let's consider the application of the structure tips on the example of the following essay.

**The Essay task:**

**Today's teenagers have more stressful lives than previous generations. Discuss this view and give your own opinion.**

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. Write at least 250 words.

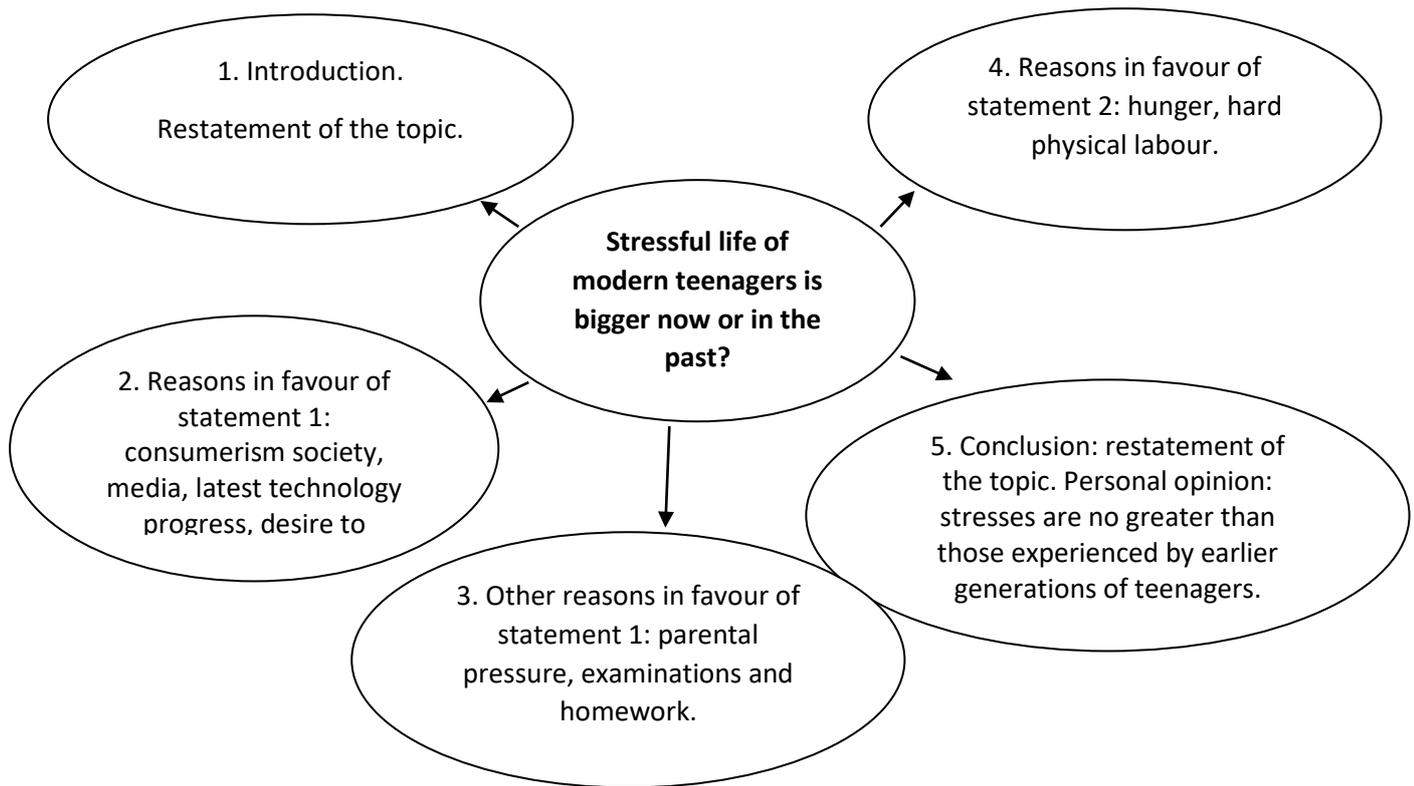
**Type of the essay:** discursive.

**Task:** to compare the degree of pressure in the life of modern teenagers with those in the past. Give personal opinion.

**Key words:** stressful life, teenagers, the past, the present.

**Synonyms:** (to put) pressure / tension (on) / make life more strenuous / difficult / filled with pressure, young people / generation / the youth / teenagers, in the earlier times / at present / in contemporary life / nowadays.

## Applying Mindmapping for writing essays. Brainstorming ideas.



### Sample answer

**Introduction. (Restatement of the topic of the essay.)** Despite a continuing improvement in standard of living, many people believe that young people suffer more stress than older generations. In this essay, the arguments surrounding the issue of teenage stress will be discussed.

**Body paragraph 1. (Presenting the arguments in favour of the first statement.)** Firstly, teenagers are exposed to more products than earlier generations as a result of living in a modern consumer society. Through films and the media, they see celebrities with expensive jewellery, clothes and cars. In addition, youth-oriented advertising gives them an awareness of the latest technology such as digital music formats and mobile phones. Consequently, teenagers feel pressure to acquire these items. Some might argue that these pressures are not new. However, I believe that such stresses were not so strong during earlier times.

**Body paragraph 2. (Presenting supporting examples to Body paragraph 1.)** It could also be argued that pressures at school are stronger than before. In order to achieve the lifestyle they see in the media, teenagers must succeed in their studies so

they can compete for the best jobs. Parental pressure, examinations and homework are all reported as causing increased levels of strain.

**Body paragraph 3. (Introduction of the opposing argument.)** On the other hand, although it may be true to say that modern society produces certain stresses it does not necessarily mean that stress was previously absent. In earlier times, hunger and physical discomfort would undoubtedly have caused high levels of anxiety, as would hard physical labour, for example, working down a mine. Any balanced view must take into account these alternative factors.

**Conclusion. (Summarizing the main points, giving the personal point of view.)** To sum up, consumerism and academic pressures are powerful causes of stress on today's teenagers. Nevertheless, it is my view that these stresses are no greater than those experienced by earlier generations of teenagers.

(267 words)

## Thesis Statement

Sometimes students may experience difficulties in writing introductions to their essays, especially when trying to make a transition from the introduction to body paragraph 1. This “transition” is called “a hook” or “a thesis statement.”

A strong thesis statement supports, expresses, and supports the central opinion, proposal, position, evaluation, cause-and-effect statement, or interpretation around which the rest of the essay is focused. It also provides the reader with a sense of how the essay will be organized.

### Criteria for Thesis Statements for Persuasive Writing

A. Is it an arguable conclusion? Does it take a stand rather than just announce a topic? Could reasonable people disagree with it?

B. Is the assertion more than simply your opinion? Can you back it up persuasively with evidence, reasons, examples?

C. Is it specific rather than vague? Is it narrow enough to fully support rather than being too broad or too general? Is the scope appropriate for the length of paper you will be writing?

D. Does it give the reader a guide or “map” to the argument or organization of your paper? Will the reader know what to expect in the paper by reading the thesis?

E. Is written in the third person (not first person “I” or “me”)?

### **Model Thesis Statements**

#### ***Topic “School uniforms”***

1. Because adopting school uniforms has been shown to improve behavior and academic achievement, our middle schools should consider adopting them for a two-year trial period.

2. Because adopting school uniforms has not been shown to improve either behavior or academic achievement, it is time for our middle school to consider abandoning them.

#### ***Topic “Sodas in the high-school lunchroom”***

3. Our school should remove sodas and other artificially sweetened drinks from the lunchroom because students are replacing nutritional foods with empty calories.

4. Sodas should remain an option in our lunchrooms because of their fundraising importance and because they allow students to begin exercising responsibility and good decision-making.

5. Instead of banning sodas school should teach students about the nutritional and health effects of consuming high fructose corn syrup to better prepare them to make healthy and economical choices.

6. Schools should not restrict lunchrooms food choices because those decisions should belong to the students and their parents.

#### ***Topic “Cell phones in high schools”***

7. Students should be allowed to carry cell phones at school because they provide students more security, they can be used in emergencies, and they keep parents involved in their children’s school lives.

8. Cell phones should not be allowed at schools because of their potential to distract students, to lead to thefts, and to be used for cheating.

9. Schools should think of inventive ways to incorporate cell phones into modern education because students’ success in the future will depend on their ability to use technology in for creative and productive purposes.

### **Exercise 1.**

Working with a partner, evaluate these statements using the criteria above. Write GOOD beside the ones that meet all the criteria for good thesis statement. For others, jot down which criteria the statement doesn't meet. **Then**, improve **three** by rewriting them to meet all of the criteria.

1. I've always loved the sound of wild geese flying overhead, ever since I was a child and heard them at night.

2. Marine animals should not be kept in captivity because of the damage to their physical and mental health.

3. It is cruel to release marine animals born and raised in captivity because they lack the foraging, defensive and social skills they would need to thrive in the wild.

4. Exploitation of animals by the entertaining industry is wrong, and I think it should be stopped.

5. Captive elephants treated humanely and allowed to live in social groups live longer than their wild counterparts because they are protected from natural and man-made dangers, provided ideal nutrition and exercise, and given state-of-the-art medical care their whole lives.

6. Breeding programmes in zoos are valuable.

7. Some animals that are rare in the wild are fairly common in zoos.

8. Animal abuse is cruel to animals.

9. I heard that some poachers kill the mothers in order to capture the babies to sell to zoos.

10. Lots of people think zoos accomplish valuable goals.

### **Exercise 2.**

Working individually, write 2 persuasive thesis statements on topics of your own choosing.

## **How to write an “advantages and disadvantages” / “for and against” essay**

An “advantages and disadvantages” essay is the type of an essay where you have to write about the good and bad points of a common situation. Here is the approximate structure of an 'advantages and disadvantages' essay:

- ✓ write an introduction to the topic
- ✓ think of **two advantages** to the situation and provide **clear examples**
- ✓ think of **two disadvantages** and write about these with **good support**
- ✓ write a short conclusion giving your overall opinion

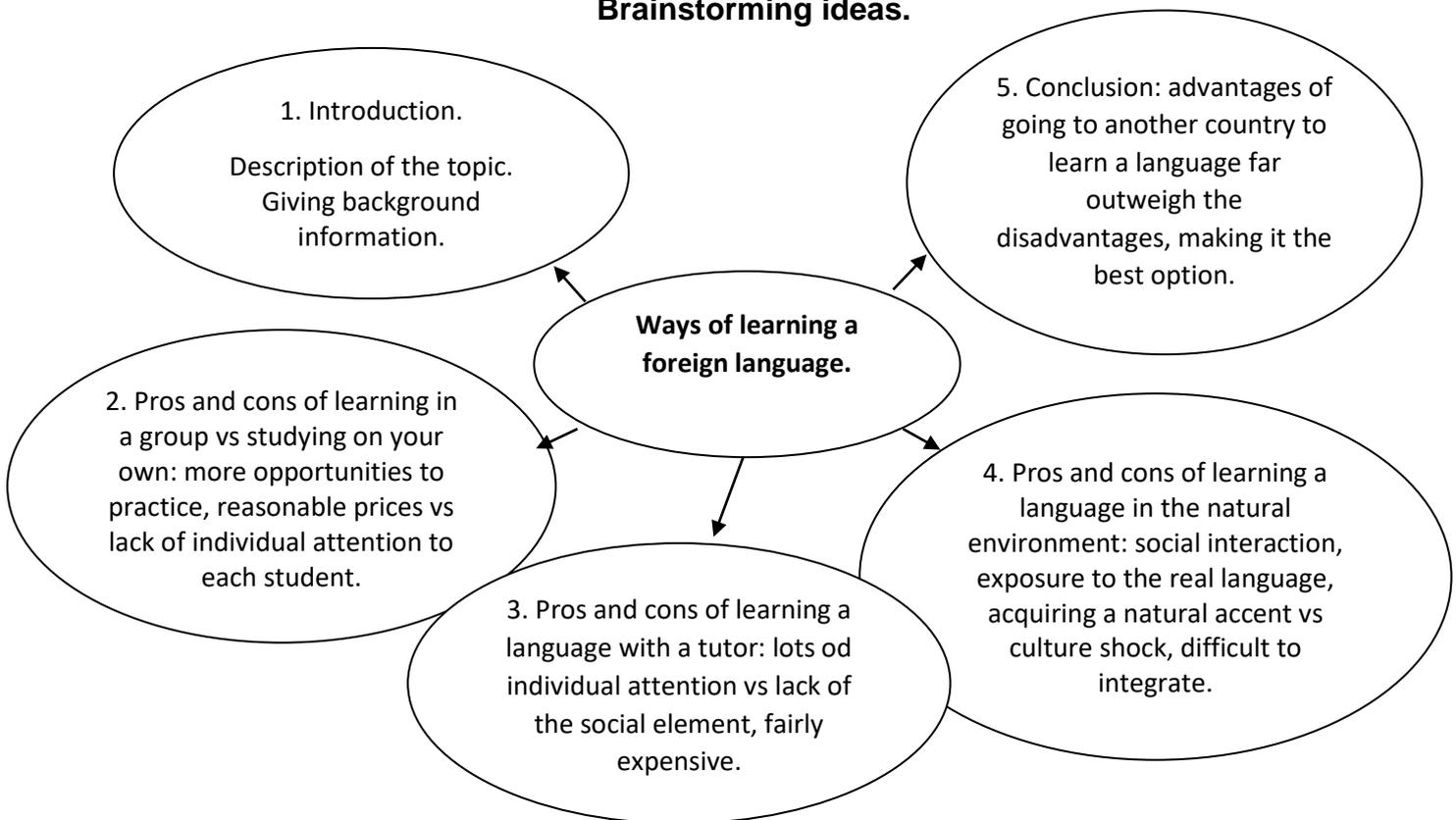
**The Essay task:**

**Compare the advantages and disadvantages of three of the following ways of learning a foreign language. State which you consider to be the most effective:**

- ✓ studying on your own;
- ✓ taking lessons with a private tutor;
- ✓ taking lessons as part of a class;
- ✓ taking lessons online;
- ✓ going to live in a country where the language is spoken.

**Applying Mindmapping for an “advantages and disadvantages” essay.**

**Brainstorming ideas.**



**Key words:** stressful life, teenagers, the past, the present.

**Synonyms:** to learn / to acquire, to improve; advantages and disadvantages / pros and cons / merits and demerits / for and against / on the one hand and on the other hand.

### **Sample answer**

The question of how to learn a foreign language has become increasingly important in recent years as business has become more international. Although there are a number of effective ways, I am convinced that living in a country where that language is spoken is the most efficient way of learning.

Traditionally, people have learned languages as part of a large group in a classroom. This has the advantage of providing many opportunities to practise what you learn with a number of different people. In addition, the fees for this form of education are usually reasonable, since a large number of people are taught at once. However, the size of the group means that more demands are placed on the teacher's time. Students may not get the individual attention they require to improve.

The amount of individual attention you receive is certainly an advantage of working with a private tutor. Also, the student can work at a pace which is comfortable for them. On the other hand, working with a private tutor can lack the social element, which is crucial in learning to communicate well in a foreign language. It can also prove to be beyond the means of many people.

By far the most natural way to acquire a language is to go where it is spoken. Not only is every social interaction a chance to practise, but you are also exposed to the real, living language. As well as that, you are able to acquire a natural accent by imitating the people around you. This is not to say, of course, that there are not drawbacks. Many people suffer from culture shock away from home, and it can be very difficult to integrate into a foreign culture.

In conclusion, I would argue that the advantages of going to another country to learn far outweigh the disadvantages, making it the best option.

(312 words).

### **The “evidence-led” type of essay**

With some question types in the Writing Task, you need to discuss more than one type of evidence, argument or point of view before reaching your conclusion. This is called the evidence-led approach. These questions are a type of the “agree or disagree”

/ “for and against” essay, which usually start with: “*some people think that ... while others believe ...*”

**When you have to discuss two different views, you have to:**

- ✓ Present both views.
- ✓ Evaluate the strength of the arguments on both sides.
- ✓ Challenge the ideas you disagree with and support the ideas you agree with by providing examples and evidence.
- ✓ Remember that you don't have to totally agree with one of the views. Express your own opinion, whatever it is.

Let's consider an example of this type of the essay.

***Some people think that human history has been a journey from ignorance to knowledge. Others argue that this underestimates the achievements of ancient cultures, and overvalues our achievements. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.***

### **Sample answer**

**Introduction. (Restatement of the topic of the essay.)** Some argue that people in the modern world are in possession of much more knowledge than people of ancient cultures. Others believe that this ignores the accomplishments of the past and places too much emphasis on present achievements.

**Body paragraph 1. (Challenging the first argument.)** While it is undoubtedly true that modern technologies, such as the internet could not have been imagined in ancient cultures, it is a mistake to view these ancient cultures as ignorant. Few would argue that the builders of the Sphinx were mere primitive cavemen, for example. People at the time had the knowledge they needed to understand and deal with their world and in fact one argument that is sometimes put forward is that, even with all we know today, we do not have the technology to build the Pyramids of Egypt.

**Body paragraph 2. (Evaluation of the strength of the second argument.)** Even if we do accept that modern society is richer in technological terms, it is undoubtedly poorer in spiritual terms. Our societies have become so complex that people often become victims to the lifestyles they lead and must face a whole new variety of widespread modern-day problems, such as stress and obesity which affect people in developed countries worldwide. Furthermore, the number of uneducated people still living in poverty with little opportunity to benefit from technological achievements suggests that our modern society is not so advanced after all.

**Conclusion. (There's no comparison between knowledge in the past and in the present as lots of people cannot benefit from modern achievements. Although we must respect ancient cultures, modern achievements have brought us to the peak of human civilisation.)** In my view, however, there is no comparison between what we can achieve today and what people even two hundred years ago could achieve as we now know so much more. The vast majority of people in developed countries are able to benefit from an education system, standard of living, healthcare and life expectancy that are so much more advanced than ever before. It is my personal opinion that although we must remember and respect ancient cultures, modern day achievements have brought us to the peak of human civilisation.

(307 words).

## **How to write an “agree or disagree” essay**

You can either answer them like a 'for and against essay', looking at both sides of the argument, or you can put forward your own personal opinion and take one side of the argument, i.e. 'agree or disagree'.

Let's consider an example of an “agree or disagree” essay.

### **The Essay task:**

**Governments around the world spend too much money on treating illnesses and diseases and not enough on health education and prevention.**

**Do you agree or disagree with this statement?**

### **Sample answer**

I very much agree with the statement that governments are not spending their health budgets in the best possible way. If governments continue to spend such large sums of money on treating illness and disease instead of preventing these diseases, then perhaps they should rename our national health services 'national illness services'!

Governments will probably argue that it is necessary to spend a large proportion of health budgets on treating illness because the general population do not live healthy lifestyles and so become ill. They would argue that most people do not listen to health campaigns. Also, they would say it is not possible to prevent many illnesses and

diseases such as flu and many types of cancer, as well as accidents and emergencies. The problem with this argument is that it is very negative because it assumes that people are stupid and refuse to lead healthy lives. However, when people have the right information, they often do the right thing – in my country than in the past. I believe that the main reason for this is government health campaigns, including very strong health warnings on the products.

In my opinion, governments can do a lot to prevent not only illnesses and disease, but also accidents. Why don't governments spend more money on installing speed cameras on roads to make people drive more slowly? That would reduce the number of accidents.

To summarise, I really think that there is a lot that governments can do to prevent illness and disease to make the world a healthier place to live. In particular, rich governments can spend more money on scientific research to find the causes of new diseases such as AIDS, while governments from less well-developed countries can spend money on providing clean water for all their people. In this way, the world will have less need for expensive cures and hospitals.

(311 words)

## **How to write a “discursive” essay**

A discursive essay question requires you to write about a contemporary social issue. You are given a point of view, an argument or a problem, and are asked for your opinion. The following are some of the typical tasks that you might be required to do:

- Discuss advantages and disadvantages of something.
- Outline the reasons for a problem and suggest solutions.
- Express views on an issue.
- State whether you agree or disagree with a view.
- Take a side in an argument over an issue.

Sometimes before writing decide whether you agree / disagree completely with the statement, partly agree / disagree with it, or have no definite opinion. Choose one of these approaches:

1) State your position in the introduction and then justify it with arguments. This may be more suitable **if you feel strongly about the statement**.

2) Present the arguments first and then say what you think in the conclusion. This may be better **if you have no strong opinion** but can put forward arguments on both sides.

Let's consider an example of a "discursive" essay.

**The Essay task:**

***In general, people do not have such a close relationship with their neighbours as they did in the past. Why is this so, and what can be done to improve contact between neighbours?***

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. Write at least 250 words.

**Sample answer**

**Introduction. (Describing the topic, giving background information.)** In the past, neighbours formed an important part of people's social lives and they helped them when they had problems. Nowadays, people often do not even know their neighbours and in consequence they live much more isolated lives.

**Body paragraph 1. (Providing reasons for not having a close relationship with their neighbours nowadays.)** There are a number of reasons why we have less contact with our neighbours. Firstly, our lifestyles are more mobile. This means people may change the area where they live quite frequently and this causes their relationships with their neighbours to be more superficial. Secondly, nowadays people often live and work in different places. This leads to people forming closer relationships with work colleagues than the ones they have with their neighbours. Finally, modern lifestyles make us spend more time inside our houses watching television, and when we go out, we travel by car. Consequently, we do not speak to the people in our neighbourhood so much.

**Body paragraph 2. (Suggesting the ways for improving the relationship between neighbours.)** There are a number of ways in which I think contact between neighbours can be improved. First of all, local authorities can provide communal areas such as playgrounds for children and community halls so that there are places where neighbours can meet and make friends. Next, I think that when new neighbours come to a street, the people living there ought to introduce themselves and welcome them.

Lastly, people living in a street or small district should form neighbourhood associations and meet regularly to discuss the things which affect them.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, these suggestions will probably not make neighbours as important in our lives as they were in the past. However, they will help our relationships with our neighbours to become more useful and valuable.

(270 words)

## **How to write an essay answering a “to what extent” questions. Understanding ‘to what extent’ questions**

Some questions, such as *‘How is hygiene ensured in the production of cheese?’* and *‘What were the causes of the Great Depression?’* can be answered with a series of facts. Other questions, such as *‘To what extent has the diet of Melanesians changed over the past 20 years?’* and *‘How far does a knowledge of statistics contribute to success in tertiary study?’* require an answer expressed in terms of degree: for example, *‘The diet of Melanesians has changed to a great extent/very significantly/minimally/not at all/etc.’*

Questions requiring an answer expressed in terms of degree cannot be answered with ‘yes’ or ‘no’. In order to answer them, it is useful to ‘translate’ them into questions which can be given a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. This will help in the next stage of writing: preparing a plan.

### **EXAMPLE:**

- To what degree is a knowledge of statistics useful in tertiary study? = Is a knowledge of statistics useful in tertiary study?
- To what extent has the diet of Melanesians changed over the past 20 years? = Has the diet of Melanesians Changed over the past 20 years?
- To what extent is environmental damage irreversible? = Is environmental damage irreversible?
- How necessary is media censorship in a modern society? = Is media censorship necessary in a modern society?

The words “to what extent” mean the same as “how much”. That is, your answer will express one of these attitudes:

- 1) I agree completely;

2) I agree partly and disagree partly;

3) I disagree completely.

Let's consider an example of an essay answering "to what extent" question.

**The Essay task:**

***Genetic engineering is a dangerous trend. It should be limited. To what extent do you agree?***

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. Write at least 250 words.

**Sample answer**

**Introduction. (Describing the topic, giving background information.)** Over the last few decades, remarkable advances have been made in the field of genetic engineering. Consequently, scientists now have the ability to manipulate genes for a range of purposes, from making improvements in agriculture to experimentation with human genes. The question, however, is whether there should be any limitations on this development. In this essay, I shall examine both sides of the argument.

**Body paragraph 1. (Is Genetic engineering a dangerous trend? Arguments against genetic engineering.)** Firstly, it is clear that genetic engineering has brought about certain benefits in terms of crop production. Now plants, for example, can produce more fruit more quickly. This achievement means that greater harvests are guaranteed, so that more people can be fed. As for the impact of genetic engineering on healthcare, advocates claim it could be used to cure a range of health-related problems, such as cystic fibrosis and Alzheimer's. Children and adults with these diseases endure terrible suffering, yet with gene therapy, there is a possibility of a better quality of life.

**Body paragraph 2. (Arguments in favour of genetic engineering.)** Despite these advantages, there are some aspects of genetic engineering which require ongoing consideration. Critics claim that genetically modified plants have little nutritional value and that they will lead to the eradication of weeds, which many insect species depend on. In the case of gene therapy, it is still uncertain how the alteration of one gene, even though it may be faulty, could affect the functions of the human body in the long term.

**Conclusions.** In my opinion, the benefits of genetic engineering can outweigh the drawbacks, provided governments and scientists consider the consequences carefully, and put people before profit.

(256 words)

## How to write a “problem and solution” essay

In some tasks of the essay you may be asked to discuss a problem and possible solutions to it. For this type of question, you should **explain exactly what the problem is** (*its causes and effects*) and then consider the merits and drawbacks of various solutions.

### The Essay task:

***As the number of private cars has increased, so too has the level of pollution in many cities. What can be done to tackle this increasingly common problem?*** Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. Write at least 250 words.

### Sample answer

**Introduction. (Explaining what the problem is.)** As the number of private cars has increased, so has the level of pollution. Overreliance on cars at the expense of public transport has made this problem even worse, causing many concerned citizens to look for a solution to the problem.

**Body paragraph 1. (Suggesting solutions.)** One potential solution to this problem is to discourage the use of private cars by raising taxes. If the cost of petrol was increased, then many people would consider using alternative forms of transport or even walking. Admittedly, there would be a number of complaints from car drivers, but these would not be of much importance when balanced against the environmental benefits.

**Body paragraph 2. (Suggesting other solutions and providing examples.)** Another solution could be to look at more specific causes of the problem. Modern cars are fitted with cleaner burning engines and catalytic converters. Accordingly, they do not cause as much of an environmental hazard as some older cars. In Japan, for example, cars are heavily taxed once they have been on the road for three years or more, encouraging people to buy new cars which pollute less. By heavily taxing older vehicles from the road, some of the worst-polluting vehicles would be taken off the road. However, this would not really be fair to those who cannot afford a new car with such regularity.

**Body paragraph 3. (Suggesting other solutions and providing examples.)** An improvement in the quality and efficiency of public transport would also encourage people to use their cars less. In London, for example, a system has been operating for some time in which people are allocated days of the week when they can use their cars. On days that they are not allowed to drive, public transport is taken.

**Conclusions.** Although these are potential solutions to the problem, none of them are perfect. Only by a concerted effort by both the government and the public can this situation truly be resolved. (298 words)

## The evaluating criteria for a well-balanced essay

**TR** – task response (this assesses your ability to formulate and develop a position in response to the prompts given in the task);

**CC** – coherence and cohesion (this assesses whether your writing makes logical sense and whether the different parts of your writing are connected to each other correctly);

**LR** – lexical resource (this assesses your ability to use different vocabulary appropriately);

**GA** – grammatical accuracy (this assesses your ability to use different grammatical structures appropriately and accurately).

While **grammar** is one leg, **vocabulary** is the second leg for your writing to stand on. But note that simple, correct English is better than experimenting with sophisticated vocabulary and getting it wrong! You may try out unfamiliar vocabulary if you have a helpful teacher, but not during a test! There are certain words and phrases that you can make a special point of learning carefully because they are likely to be used in most, if not all essays. Make sure that you have enough vocabulary for each of the common categories:

**evaluation** (e.g. benefit, unsatisfactory);

**consequence, cause, reason** (e.g. outcome, produce, explanation);

**modifiers** (e.g. significant, majority);

**connectors** (under these circumstances, moreover);

**grouping nouns** (aspect, factor, feature).

The best way to learn these is to look for examples in your reading and then copy them into your own personal vocabulary book under the appropriate headings. Be careful to copy whole phrases, not just single words, so that you learn the correct use of the expressions.

# Writing the Essay – Useful Language

## **Giving your opinions / expressing**

### **attitude:**

- in my view/opinion, ...
- from my point of view, (personally.)
- I tend to think/believe/feel that ...
- I would argue that / I tend to think that ...
- I am not sure I agree with/that ...
- I tend not to believe that / It seems (to me) that,
- as far as I'm concerned,
- arguably,
- as a matter of fact,
- interestingly,
- to a certain extent.

## **Introducing arguments / ideas:**

- the main argument in favour of / against ...
- it is (certainly) true that ...
- it is (generally) believed/felt that ...
- the general view is / has been that ...
- experts/professionals would argue/say that ...
- some/most people argue/think/say that ...
- it is understood that ...
- it is generally accepted that ...
- there is a tendency to believe that ...
- one of the main arguments in favour of / against ...

## **Comparing:**

- the same as,
- at the same time,
- compared with,
- in the same way,
- in comparison with.

## **Showing the consequence:**

- therefore it would appear that,
- it does not necessarily follow that,
- as a result,
- therefore it would appear that
- consequently.

## **Presenting reasons/examples:**

- one of the main reasons why ...
- the main reason why ...
- there are a number of reasons why/for ...
- for this reason, ...

## **Making concessions**

- it could be argued that ...
- admittedly / certainly ... but / however ...
- even though ...
- it may be true that ...

## **Emphasising**

- what we/people/governments need to / should do is ...
- all that X needs to / should do is ...
- it is X that ...

**Presenting a counter argument**

- having said that / made this point / these points, - despite (the fact that) / In spite of this, ...
- while/although...
- nevertheless
- however,
- on the contrary.

**Presenting more arguments:**

- moreover,
- as well as this,
- it is also true that,
- in addition,
- in particular,
- besides.

**Contrasting:**

- by contrast,
- conversely,
- in contrast to this,
- on the other hand,
- on the contrary.

**Drawing a conclusion and generalizing:**

- overall, ... / all in all, ...
- ultimately, ... / in the end, ...
- in conclusion,
- finally,
- clearly,
- it is clear / obvious that ...
- on the whole,
- in other words,
- generally speaking

**Expressing purpose**

- with the aim of / in order to / so as to

## PRACTICE

**Task 1. A lot of people find it difficult to write letters and often avoid doing so altogether. Letter writing is a dying art. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.**

Read the following essay. Complete the answer by filling the gaps with an expression or word from the box below.

**however, firstly, furthermore, such as, because of, particularly, as a result, in addition, consequently, because, nevertheless**

It is true that many people struggle to produce letters and often avoid writing letters completely. \_\_\_ I don't agree that this skill is gradually disappearing.

\_\_\_ let us consider the reasons why people find it so difficult to write. To begin with, writing letters is less frequent nowadays thanks to modern technology. These days we are much more likely to email someone than write a letter. \_\_\_ our business communications have become more informal than in the past. \_\_\_ a less formal style of writing is more acceptable. Other forms of modern communication \_\_\_ text messaging have reduced our writing skills even further.

\_\_\_ I still feel that letter writing is an important skill to learn \_\_\_ there are many parts of the world where it is very important to be formal. This is \_\_\_ true if you are involved in international business. \_\_\_ globalisation, the business world is becoming more and more international and it is not always possible to pick up the telephone to talk to people. \_\_\_ I believe that letter writing will never die out completely. And, even though these letters may be written on computers rather than by hand, we still need to learn and practise this skill.

To sun up, even though many people think writing letters is quite difficult, there are things they can do to improve their writing skills if they find it too difficult. Personally, I believe that if you want to make a good impression in any situation, then you need good writing skills.

**Task 2. In many parts of the world there is continuous coverage of sports on television. Some people believe this discourages the young from taking part in any sport themselves. Discuss this view and give your own opinion.**

Read the following essay. Complete the answer by filling the gaps with an expression from the box below.

**by contrast, it is also true that, in conclusion, moreover, because, in spite of the fact that, it does not necessarily follow that, as well as this, in my experience, therefore it would appear that**

Nowadays, in most countries, there are numerous television channels to choose from and these include non-stop broadcasting of sport.

\_\_\_ many people must be interested in watching sport throughout the day and night. However, \_\_\_ watching sport makes people less keen on participating in it. Teachers and parents may be concerned when they see teenagers spending time watching sport on television and fear that they are not active enough. While there may be some justification for this, \_\_\_ young people are often under pressure, for example to do well in exams. They need to relax and give their minds and bodies a break.

\_\_\_ the young do not tend to watch sport rather than participating in it. The teenagers in my neighbourhood regularly play football after school and at weekends they play in matches or go to the tennis courts or the swimming pool. \_\_\_ they all support various famous clubs and admire sports stars. These stars are their role models and watching them on television encourages participation in sporting activities \_\_\_ the young try to emulate the people they admire.

\_\_\_ I have observed that some older people spend their evenings and weekends in front of the television, following sports such as international golf or motor racing. \_\_\_ many of these are middle-aged men (it tends to be men) who spend their days sitting at a desk in an office and who get very little exercise \_\_\_ they need it more than most.

\_\_\_ although I accept that there are some people who may be discouraged from participating in sport because they can watch it on television instead, in my view this does not generally apply to the young.

**Task 3.** Read the text below, in which somebody is trying to decide whether to go straight to university from school, or spend a year travelling around the world. Put their argument into the correct order. The first one and last one have been done for you.

A) I'm ready in two minds about what to do when I leave school. Should I go straight to university or should I spend a year travelling around the world? (1)

B) It is often said that knowledge is the key to power, and I cannot disagree with this.

C) On the one hand, I would experience lots of different cultures.

D) Unfortunately, another point is that if I spent a year travelling I would need a lot of money.

E) And I'm not alone in this opinion. Many consider a sound career and a good salary to be an important goal.

F) However, it could be argued that I would also meet lots of interesting people while I was travelling.

G) Secondly, if I go straight to university, I'll learn so many things that will help me in my future life.

H) First of all, there are so many benefits of going straight to university.

I) But I believe that it would be easy to make a bit while I was travelling, giving English lessons or working in hotels and shops.

J) Moreover, I'll be able to take part in the social activities that the university offers, and meet lots of new friends who share the same interests.

K) The most important point is that the sooner I get my qualifications, the quicker I'll get a job and start earning.

L) Nevertheless, these inconveniences would be an inevitable part of travelling and would be greatly outweighed by the other advantages.

M) In my opinion, starting work and making money is one of the most important things in life.

N) On the other hand, I could end up suffering from culture shock, homesickness and some strange tropical diseases.

O) Furthermore, if I spent a year travelling, I would learn more about the world.

P) All right, I've made my mind up. Now, where's my nearest travel agency? (16)

**Task 4.** Use a dictionary to check the meaning of the “expressions with time” in the box. Then complete sentences 1-11 with the correct phrase.

**by the time, time-consuming, took so long, spend time, at times, the right time, in time, take your time, save time, lose track of time, on time, from time to time**

- 1) I am not in regular contact with him; I just send him an email \_\_\_.
- 2) Excuse me, do you have \_\_\_? I have a job interview at 9 o'clock and I really want to get there \_\_\_.
- 3) I prefer to shop online to avoid the crowds and \_\_\_.
- 4) He can get a bit bad-tempered \_\_\_.
- 5) \_\_\_ we get home this pizza will be cold!
- 6) I arrived just \_\_\_ to watch a spectacular sunset.
- 7) I ordered a book for my sister's birthday, but it \_\_\_ to get delivered that it missed her birthday.
- 8) Every time I go to the library, I \_\_\_. Once, I stayed there for 6 hours!
- 9) Going to university is now very expensive, and looking for the right course can be very \_\_\_.
- 10) If you get up very early, you can \_\_\_ getting ready and may even have enough time to cook a proper breakfast.
- 11) After school, I would \_\_\_ with my family, rather than hanging out with friends.

**Task 5.** Look at these sentences. They all use 'if'. Rewrite each sentence, replacing 'if' with the words in bold. You may need to remove some of the other words.

- 1) You can borrow my dictionary if you return it before you go home. (providing that)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) You can't go to university if you don't have good grades. (unless)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Pollution will get worse if we continue to live in a throwaway society. (as long as)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Many developed countries are willing to waive the Third World debt if the money is reinvested in education and medicine. (on condition that)

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5) Some countries will never be able to rectify their deficits even if they work very hard. (no matter how)

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6) Computers are difficult things to understand, even if you read a lot of books about them. (however many)

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7) Crime is a problem, even if you go to relatively safe countries. (wherever)

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*B. Now rewrite each sentence beginning with the words in bold.*

For example: Providing that you return it before you go home, you can borrow my dictionary.

*C. Complete these sentences using an appropriate word or expression from above and your own ideas.*

1. British universities will accept students from abroad.
2. Working for a large company can be a fulfilling experience.
3. Most banks are happy to lend customers money.
4. The government will reduce income tax.
5. The environmental situation will continue to worsen.
6. There will always be long waiting lists at our hospitals.
7. Travelling helps you understand more about the world around you.

*D. Some nouns can be used to express condition. Complete these sentences 1-3 with one of the words from A, B or C.*

- 1) Being able to drive is one of the of the ..... job of salesman.  
A. prerequisites B. prerequisites C. prescriptions
- 2) Before you accept a job, it is important that you agree with the ..... of the contract.  
A. conditionals B. conditions C. conditioners
- 3) It is a ..... of the university that you attend an interview.  
A. requirement B. requisite C. requiem

**Task 6.** Use a dictionary to check the meaning of the phrases in the box. Then complete sentences 1-8 with the correct phrase.

**there is something to be said for, you can say that again, having said that, have a say, when all is said and done, needless to say, that is to say, to say the least**

1. John: That was a delicious meal!

George:\_\_\_.

2. Swimming was not permitted in the lake. However, \_\_\_, many people did use the lake for swimming.

3. Of course you want to look good when out on the pull, but \_\_\_ not wearing too much makeup.

4. While you are studying abroad, you are certainly going to want somewhere to stay and looking for housing can be stressful, \_\_\_.

5. \_\_\_, I believe I had a very enjoyable time on my vacation.

6. My father passed away when I was 16, \_\_\_ this had a devastating effect on my life.

7. An essay should be an argument. Ask yourself what are the important questions in any particular issue. \_\_\_, you should discuss a problem and not simply narrate events or the stages of an argument.

8. We live in a democratic country, which means we all \_\_\_ in how the country is run.

**Task 7.** Identify what type of essay you have to deal with, suggest the possible structure and the mindmap to each type of the essay.

1) In some countries it is thought advisable that children begin formal education at four years old, while in others they do not have to start school until they are seven or eight. How far do you agree with either of these views?

2) Some people choose to eat no meat or fish. They believe that this is not only better for their own health but also benefits the world as a whole. Discuss this view and give your own opinion.

3) Some people think that there are things individuals can do to help prevent global climate change. Others believe that action by individuals is useless and irrelevant and that it is only governments and large businesses which can make a difference.

4) More and more qualified people are moving from poor to rich countries to fill vacancies in specialist areas like engineering, computing and medicine. Some people believe that by encouraging the movement of such people, rich countries are stealing from poor countries. Others feel that this is only part of the natural movement of workers around the world. Do you agree or disagree?

5) Countries such as China, India and Japan have unsustainable population growths. In fact, many experts are of the opinion that the population 'explosion' which is now a very worrying concern, is the most serious threat to life on this planet. Give some suggestions to address this problem.

6) People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, new experiences, career preparation, increased knowledge). Why do you think people attend college or university? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

7) Using a computer every day can have more negative than positive effects on your children. Do you agree or disagree?

8) In some countries young people have little leisure time and are under a lot of pressure to work hard in their studies. What do you think are the causes of this? What solutions can you suggest?

9) Some people say that advertising encourages us to buy things that we really do not need. Others say that advertisements tell us about new products that may improve our lives. Which viewpoint do you agree with?

10) In some countries, marriages are arranged by the parents but in other cases, people choose their own marriage partner. Discuss both systems.

11) People who have original ideas are of much greater value to society than those who are simply able to copy the ideas of others well. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

12) Some people think that it is important to have a single language as an international official language. Others think that it will make it difficult to identify countries and cause a loss of culture. What are your opinions on this?

13) The government has announced that it plans to build a new university. Some people think that your community would be a good place to locate the university. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a new university in your community. Use specific details in your discussion.

14) The earth is being filled with waste material such as plastic bags and other rubbish. Is this really happening? What are some solutions to this problem?

15) 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.

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### Electronic resources:

10. ielts-exam.net [Электронный ресурс] – Режим доступа : <https://www.ielts-exam.net>.
11. ielts [Электронный ресурс] – Режим доступа : <https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/>
12. How to Write an Essay [Электронный ресурс] – Режим доступа : <https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/writing/how-to-write-an-essay.html>.
13. Strategies for Essay Writing [Электронный ресурс] – Режим доступа : <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/strategies-essay-writing>.





