

Writing Part 1 – Essay

Overview: A sequence of steps to guide students through from discussion to producing a well-controlled essay.

General relevance:

- Using ideas in writing
- Planning and structuring an essay
- Work on improving written style

Part of exam: Advanced Writing Part 1

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student, an assortment of images illustrating influences of the internet on education (optional)

Time: 45–90 minutes (can be divided into two lessons or can include homework)

Procedure

1. Get the topic going. Depending on where you are, ask the class if or how they have already used the internet today or during their English course. Perhaps take a quick vote on whether the internet is a force for good or bad.
2. Give out a copy of the worksheet to pairs or groups of three. Ask students to analyse the exam task. If necessary, provide prompt questions, for example:
 - *What is the general topic?* (the internet and education)
 - *What kind of writing do you need to produce?* (essay)
 - *Who will the reader be?* (probably your university tutor)
3. After students have finished analysing the exam task, get them to work in groups and brainstorm ideas to include in their essays. Tell them to work on each of the paragraphs in turn. If necessary, use prompt questions to help get the discussion started, e.g. *How has the internet helped education?; How has the internet changed education?; Are all types of students benefiting equally from the internet? Why / Why not? Do you think the internet will have a positive or negative impact on education in the future?*
4. Point students towards Exercise 1. Explain that this is a model plan that they can populate with their own ideas. However, there is no one correct way of planning an essay, so students could also use their own structure if they prefer. Point out that they only need to make notes at this stage. They should select the best ideas generated during the brainstorming session and, in particular, any ideas that they can support with examples.
5. Point students towards Exercise 2 and explain that students also need to consider the register of the language they will use in their essay. Ask the class: *Who will read the essay?* (probably their tutor); *Should the essay be formal or informal?* (fairly formal); *Should it be factual, or entertaining?* (probably more factual). Tell students to work through the checklist and tick the items they agree with. Go through the answers as a class.
6. Students can now write their essay based on the original exam task. Remind them to use their plan and the guidelines on style. When they have finished, tell students to swap their essays with a partner and to offer feedback. If necessary, they can rewrite their essay to improve it.

KEY

Ticked items: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

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Exam task

You have attended a talk in your university about the internet and the effect it has had on education. The presenter included some opinions from students. You have made some notes below.

Some topics the presenter covered:

- Sharing and collaboration
- Convenience for learners and/or teachers
- Student engagement

Some comments made by students:

“We can watch recordings of our lectures so if I miss one, I can watch it later.”
“I don’t enjoy reading things online; I find it difficult to concentrate.”
“If I want some feedback, I can upload my work to our class blog and my classmates can comment on my work online.”

Write an essay discussing two of the topics in your notes above. You should explain which topic the internet has had most effect on giving reasons in support of your answer.

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

220–260 words

Worksheet

Writing Part 1 – Essay

Exercise 1

Model plan

Introduction: (rephrase/explain the topic and ask the exam task question in your own words)

Para 1: (topic 1 argument - for/against)

Para 2: (topic 2 argument - for/against)

Conclusion: (summarise your points, answer the question posed in the introduction)

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Exercise 2

Tick the sentences below you think are true.

A successful essay ...

1. ... asks a question at the start.
2. ... uses formal language.
3. ... addresses the reader as 'you' to make the writing seem more direct.
4. ... has information clearly organised into paragraphs.
5. ... uses examples, facts, figures and quotes to support the main arguments.
6. ... is a chance to practise creative writing.
7. ... leaves the reader with something to think about.