

Writing reference

What to expect in the exam

The Writing paper is Paper 2. It lasts 1 hour and 20 minutes. You do two tasks.

- In Part 1, there is one task (an essay) which you must do.
- In Part 2, you choose one of three tasks.

Part 1: Essays

You write an essay. The purpose of an essay is for you to discuss a subject, express your opinion and give reasons for your opinion.

You are given an essay title and some notes.

- You must write an essay answering the essay question and using all the notes. The task will tell you: *In your English class, you have been talking about / discussing ... Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay.*

The notes outline three areas you must cover. The final note will always be your own idea.

- Your essay must be between 140 and 190 words.

The title will ask you to write one of **two** types of essay:

- 1 An essay in which you are asked to discuss a statement and give your opinion, e.g. *Private cars should be banned from city centres. Do you agree?*
- 2 An essay in which you are asked to discuss which of two things is better, e.g. *Is it better for students to study something they really enjoy when they leave school, or something which will give them a good job?*

You should:

- cover the two points you are given in the notes as well as your own idea in the third point
- organise your answer in a logical way using paragraphs and linking sentences and paragraphs appropriately
- express your opinion clearly on the subject of the essay
- give reasons and examples to support your ideas
- use a style appropriate for the situation (this should be quite formal, as it is an essay for your teacher)
- write grammatically correct sentences
- use accurate spelling and punctuation.

You have 40 minutes to do this part (the Writing paper lasts 1 hour 20 minutes, so if you spend more time on this part, you will have less time for the other part).

You studied and practised writing essays for Part 1 in Units 1, 5, 8, 11 and 14.

How to do Part 1

- 1 Read the instructions, i.e. the task (what you have talked about in class, the essay title and the notes) carefully.
- 2 Underline the areas you must deal with in the essay title and in the notes. You'll lose marks if you don't deal with them all.
- 3 Think and decide what your opinion or position is on the subject of the essay and why you have this opinion.
- 4 Think and make notes about how you can cover the points listed in the notes.
- 5 Organise your notes into a plan. When writing your plan, decide how many paragraphs you need and what each paragraph will cover. Your plan should include short introductory and concluding paragraphs (see Units 5 and 11).
- 6 Before writing your essay, check that your plan covers the three areas.
- 7 Write your essay following your plan.
- 8 Make sure you express your opinion clearly in your answer and that the arguments you express support your opinion.
- 9 When you have finished, read your answer carefully. Check you have written between 140 and 190 words and correct any mistakes you find.

Note: If you write fewer than 140 words, you probably haven't answered the question/task completely and you will lose marks. If you write more than 190 words in the time, you may make too many mistakes and risk being irrelevant. Also, if you write too much, the examiner will stop reading after about 200 words and you will lose marks for an incomplete answer.

Exercise 1

- 1 Read this writing task, which asks you to discuss an opinion, and underline the areas you must deal with.
- 2 Decide what your position or opinion is and why.
- 3 Think how you can cover notes 1 and 2 to support your position/opinion.
- 4 Think what your own idea is and how you can use this to support your position/opinion.

In your English class, you have been talking about how long young people should stay in education.

Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay.

Write an essay using **all** the notes and give reasons for your point of view.

Essay question

All young people should continue at school or college until at least the age of 18. Do you agree?

Notes

Write about:

1. *qualifications for jobs*
2. *students who don't like school*
3. (your own idea)

Write your **essay**.

Write a brief introductory paragraph where you:

- explain the present situation
- outline your position/opinion.

An essay for your teacher has quite a formal style, so don't use contractions.

Use linking words and phrases to help your readers follow the ideas.

Although in my country compulsory education finishes at the age of 16, I believe that young people should continue in education at least till they are 18.

There are two good reasons for encouraging young people to stay at school. Firstly, because jobs are becoming more and more specialised and technical, it is almost impossible for 16-year-olds to find work. Secondly, if they stay at school, they will receive the education and training which will create more opportunities for them in the future.

On the other hand, many students would like to leave school at 16. This is because they find school difficult or they **do not** enjoy studying. They would prefer to be working and earning money.

A **further point** is that unmotivated students disrupt lessons, and this causes problems for students who do want to study. **Therefore**, after 16 they should only study technical or practical subjects that interest them.

In conclusion, I believe it is a mistake for people to leave school too soon, because they will miss opportunities which may arise in the future.

Exercise 3

Read this writing task and underline the areas you must deal with.

In your English class, you have been talking about the advantages and disadvantages of travelling abroad on holiday.

Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay.

Write an essay using **all** the notes and give reasons for your point of view.

Essay question

Is it better to visit places in your own country or a foreign country when you go on holiday?

Notes

Write about:

1. *which is more interesting*
2. *which is cheaper*
3. (your own idea)

Write your **essay**.

Exercise 2

Read the essay in the next column and complete this plan for it.

Para. 1: Introduction: the situation now +

Para. 2: Why stay at school:

1st reason

2nd reason

Para. 3: Why leave school:

1st reason

2nd reason

Para. 4: My own idea: + solution:

Para. 5: My opinion + reason(s)

Exercise 4

Read this essay. It shows a different way of organising an essay from the sample answer in Exercise 2. How is this essay organised differently?

There are strong arguments in favour of both staying in your own country and travelling abroad. I personally think that people should do both.

There are several reasons for staying in your own country. Firstly, I think it's important to know, enjoy and feel proud of your country and there is usually a lot which is fascinating about its history and culture, which is important to learn and experience. Secondly, you may be able to save money by finding cheaper accommodation. Finally, because you speak the language, you will avoid many of the problems you might have when travelling abroad.

On the other hand, when you go abroad, you can learn from the way other people live. Also, **if you choose the right destination**, it may be just as cheap as travelling in your own country, especially if you use youth hostels. Finally, it gives you an opportunity to learn and practise other languages, **which is good for your education**.

For these reasons, I think that people should travel abroad from time to time, but also spend time visiting their own country to appreciate what is good and interesting in both.

You don't have to choose one option or the other if you think both have advantages.

It helps the reader if you have a short sentence or phrase at the beginning of the paragraph stating the topic.

Use a variety of grammatical structures, e.g. conditionals and relative clauses.

Giving reasons for your point of view

- ... because / since ...
- Because of this, ...
- For this reason, ...
- That is why ...
- One of the main reasons is that ...

Expressing results

- As a result/consequence, ...

Expressing consequences

- In consequence, ...
- Consequently, ...
- ... which means that ...

Introducing your conclusion

- In conclusion, ...
- To conclude, / sum up, / summarise, ...

Introducing a personal opinion

- In my opinion, ...
- I think ...
- I feel ...
- I believe ...
- From my point of view, ...

Ways of expressing contrasts

- However, ...
- On the one hand, ... On the other hand, ...

→ page 182 Language reference: Linking words for contrast

Introducing other people's opinions (often ones you don't agree with)

- Some people think/say ...
- Many people argue that ...
- It is sometimes/often argued/suggested/said that ...

Putting your ideas in order

- There are two good reasons for ...
- On the other hand, there are a number of reasons against ...
- Firstly ... / Secondly ... / Finally ...
- Also ... / Furthermore ... / What is more ...

Part 2

In Part 2, you must choose from one of three writing tasks.

- The tasks you choose from will be three of these four possibilities: an article, an email/letter, a report or a review. It is important to know how to write all of these possibilities so you can make the best choice in the exam.
- You must answer the task with your own ideas. In most tasks, there are two things you must deal with.
- You must write between 140 and 190 words.

This part tests your ability to:

- deal with the type of task you have chosen
- use an appropriate style for the task you have chosen
- organise and structure your writing
- express opinions, describe, explain, make recommendations, make suggestions, etc.
- use an appropriate range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

How to do Part 2

- 1 Quickly read the questions and choose the task you think you can do best.
- 2 Read the task you choose carefully and underline:
 - who will read what you write
 - the points you must deal with
 - anything else you think is important.
- 3 Decide if you need a formal or informal style.
- 4 Think of ideas you can use to deal with the question and note them down while you're thinking.
- 5 Decide which ideas are the most useful and write a plan. When writing your plan, decide how many paragraphs you need and what to say in each paragraph.
- 6 Think of useful vocabulary you can include in your answer and note it down in your plan.
- 7 Write your answer following your plan.
- 8 When you have finished, read your answer carefully. Check you have written between 140 and 190 words and correct any mistakes you find.

Emails and letters

You studied and practised writing an email/letter in Units 6 and 12.

Exercise 1

Read the writing task below and underline:

- 1 who the reader(s) will be
- 2 what points you must deal with
- 3 anything else you think is important.

You have received this letter from an English friend, Pat.
Read this part of the letter.

I'm doing a project on family life in different countries and I wonder if you could tell me a bit about family life in your country. I'd like to know what a typical family in your country is like and how family life is changing.

Write your **letter**.

Exercise 2

Read Teresa's answer below.

- 1 What details does she give of a typical family in Spain?
- 2 How is family life changing?

Dear Pat,

Thanks for your letter asking for information about family life in Spain. Families in Spain are still very close, and family members take a lot of trouble to spend time together and help each other. Families often get together at weekends, and young people normally live with their parents until they are 25 or 30. People tend to get married in their 30s, which means that they start to have children quite late. As a result, families usually have just one or two children.

However, family life is changing. One of the main reasons is that most women now work. **As a consequence,** men have to take more responsibility in the home.

Another change is that, because both partners work, people are richer, so more and more families are now moving out of the cities to larger houses in the suburbs.

I hope that answers your questions. Please write to me if you need any more information. I'd love to see your finished project and read what you say about family life in other countries too.

Love,
Teresa

Write a natural introduction and conclusion.

Use linking words and phrases, e.g.
As a result,
However,
As a consequence
...

Starting and finishing emails and letters

You know the person well

	emails	letters
start with	Dear/Hello/Hi + name: <i>Hi Magda, Hello Francesco</i>	<i>Dear Barbara,</i>
finish with	<i>Best wishes, / All the best,</i>	<i>Best wishes, / Love, / With love,</i>

You don't know the person well

	emails	letters
start with	Dear + first name: <i>Dear Barbara</i> (if you would use their first name when you speak to them) Dear + surname: <i>Dear Mr Hatton</i> (if you don't feel comfortable using their first name)	<i>Dear Mr Hatton</i> , (if you know the person's name) <i>Dear Sir or Madam</i> , (if you don't know the person's name)
finish with	<i>Best wishes, / Kind regards,</i>	<i>Yours sincerely, or Yours</i> , (if you know the person's name) <i>Yours faithfully</i> , (if you don't know the person's name)

Starting the first paragraph of a letter or email

- Thanks for your email ...
- Thank you for your letter about ...
- I am writing to request information about / complain about / apologise for / explain, etc.

Referring to something in a letter or email which you're replying to

- Your short film sounds an excellent idea and ...
- As for the audience, ...
- With reference to the audience, ...
- You mentioned/asked about the audience in your letter and ...

Making suggestions

- How about + verb + -ing:
How about holding the meeting on the 5th?
- What about + verb + -ing:
What about having a meal in a restaurant afterwards?
- It might also be a good idea to ...:
It might also be a good idea to visit the museum.
- Can I suggest that ...?:
Can I suggest that you give your talk on 5th May?
- I suggest + verb + -ing:
I suggest holding the meeting on 4th November.

Asking for information

- Could you tell me ...
- I would / I'd like to know if ...
- I would / I'd like information on ...
- Do you know if/whether/when/what, etc.

Complaining

- I'm not very happy about + noun/verb + -ing:
I'm not very happy about the price. I'm not very happy about paying so much.
- I would like to complain about + noun/verb + -ing:
I would like to complain about traffic noise in our street. I would like to complain about children playing football in our street.
- I am writing to complain about + noun/verb + -ing:
I am writing to complain about the service I received at your hotel recently.

Apologising

- Sorry about + noun / verb + -ing (informal):
Sorry about being late for the concert last Saturday.
- I would like to apologise for + noun / verb + -ing:
I would like to apologise for arriving late for the concert on Saturday.

Inviting

- How about ...?:
How about coming windsurfing with me next weekend?
- Would you like to ...?: *Would you like to travel together?*
- I would like to invite you to ... + noun/infinitive:
I would like to invite you to visit our town next summer. I would like to invite you to my house next weekend.

Giving advice

- You should ...
- If I were you, I would / I'd ...
- It would be a good idea to ... + infinitive

Reports

You studied and practised writing reports in Units 3 and 9.

Exercise 1

Read this task and answer the questions below.

Your teacher has asked you to write a report on things for young people to do in their free time in the area where you live. In your report, you should mention what free-time facilities there are and recommend improvements.

Write your **report**.

- 1 Do you think you should use a formal or informal style for this report?
- 2 Read Christine's report on the right.
 - Is the style formal or informal?
 - Does it answer the question completely?

Report on free-time facilities in my area

Introduction

The aim of this report is to outline what young people do in my area in their free time, what facilities exist for them and how **these could be made better**.

Free-time activities

My town, Beauvoir, is quite small, so it does not have a cinema or theatre and there is only one club for young people. As a result, young people have to take the train or bus to Nantes, which is about 30 kilometres away if they want these things. On the other hand, it is situated by the sea, so many young people spend their free time on the beach or doing water sports.

Other facilities

Beauvoir has a sports centre with tennis courts, a football pitch and a swimming pool. There are also a number of cafés where young people normally go to meet each other and spend their free time.

Recommendations

I recommend that the town council should set up a youth club where young people could meet, do other activities and also see films. **This would encourage young people to stay in the town at weekends and improve their social life.**

Notice the layout. The report has:

- a title
- is divided into sections
- each section has a heading.

Normally, we state the aim or purpose of the report at the beginning.

Avoid repeating exactly the words of the question, e.g. the question says *recommend improvements*, but the report says *how these could be made better*.

Give reasons for your recommendations.

Starting a report

- The aim of this report is + infinitive: *The aim of this report is to outline ...*
- The purpose of this report is + infinitive: *The purpose of this report is to describe ...*

Making recommendations and suggestions

- I recommend that: *I recommend that the town council should set up a youth club ...*
- I (would) recommend + verb + -ing: *I would recommend setting up a youth club ...*
- I suggest + verb + -ing: *I suggest buying more equipment for the sports centre.*
- I suggest that ... : *I suggest that the council should provide cheap transport for young people and students.*
- It would be a good idea (for somebody) + infinitive: *It would be a good idea for the council to provide cheap transport for young people and students.*

Reviews

You studied and practised writing reviews in Units 4 and 10.

Exercise 1

Read the writing task below.

- 1 Underline the points you must deal with.
- 2 Underline anything else you think is important.
- 3 Who will the reader(s) be, and where will your answer appear?

You see this announcement in your school's English-language magazine.

Have you seen a film or read a book recently that you think everyone would enjoy? We want to know about it! Write a review of the film or book saying what it's about and why we would all enjoy it.

Write your **review**.

Exercise 2

Read Franz's review below. Which paragraphs say:

- 1 what the book is about?
- 2 why we would all enjoy it?

'The Time Traveler's Wife' by Audrey Niffenegger

This is an **original and moving love story** told from the point of view of **the two main characters, Henry and Clare**. Henry is a librarian who has a genetic problem which causes him to move backwards and forwards in time. Without warning, he disappears leaving everything behind and arrives at another time in his life. He can't control when or where he's going.

When he travels, he often meets the same girl, Clare, at different times in her life. Eventually they fall in love even though sometimes when they meet he is much older than her and at other times they are the same age.

I think everyone will enjoy this unusual story because it combines a little science fiction with a wonderful romantic story. Henry's problem causes situations which are funny, sometimes frightening, usually awkward and often very strange. The novel is **fascinating** because it makes you think about the nature of time. At the same time, you see how the characters and their relationships change during their lives but how their love grows stronger.

Give your review a title.

Mention:

- the type of book/film
- the characters
- some of the story
- what makes the book/film different.

Use plenty of adjectives to describe:

- the book/film
- how you feel about it.

Ways of praising

- I think everyone will enjoy this ... (book/film/restaurant, etc.) because ... The ... (book/film/restaurant, etc.) is fascinating/wonderful/marvellous because ...
- This ... (book/film/restaurant, etc.) is really worth (reading/seeing/visiting, etc.) because ...

Articles

You studied and practised writing articles in Units 2, 7 and 13.

Exercise 1

Read this writing task.

You see the following announcement on your college noticeboard.

My Best Friend

Tell us about your best friend for the college newspaper. We want to know:

- *how you met this person*
- *why he or she is so special to you.*

We will publish the most interesting articles next week.

Write your **article**.

Match the beginnings (1–9) and endings (a–i) of these sentences to make advice about how to write articles.

- 1 Before writing, identify
- 2 You can identify the readers by
- 3 Decide what style
- 4 Write things you think your readers
- 5 Before writing the article,
- 6 In your plan, decide what you will put
- 7 Make sure that the plan
- 8 Write the article following
- 9 While you are writing, think about

- a answers the question.
- b in each paragraph.
- c make a plan.
- d looking at the type of newspaper or magazine you are writing for.
- e is suitable for your readers.
- f the effect on your readers.
- g who will read the article.
- h will find interesting.
- i your plan.

Exercise 2

Read Luis's article below and match the notes for his plan (a–d) with the paragraph numbers.

- Para. 1
 Para. 2
 Para. 3
 Para. 4

- a How we became friends – same table at school, playground, visit each other's houses
- b My first impressions of Thea – contrast with other kids
- c When I met Thea – on school bus
- d Why so special – share secrets, help each other, spend time together, sit together

An article should have a title.

Notice the adverbs. You will get higher marks if you use a range of vocabulary.

Instead of using the same word again, use different words with similar meanings, e.g. *shy* – *timidly*.

Good to have a small joke at the end!

An inseparable friend

Thea has been my best friend from that day when, aged seven, I climbed onto the school bus to go to my new primary school.

I wandered **nervously** down the bus, which was full of noisy kids shouting and laughing excitedly, and found a place beside a quiet girl with fair hair and friendly green eyes.

We were both very **shy**, so we didn't talk much to each other on the way to school, although we smiled at each other **timidly**. And when we went into class we naturally sat down together at the same table. **Gradually** we got to know each other; we played together in the playground, we visited each other's houses and our parents soon became firm friends as well.

We still share each other's secrets and we have complete confidence in each other. When either of us has a problem, the other is always ready to help. We have so much in common that we spend most of our free time together. We've even been on holiday together sometimes. **And we still share the same table at school ten years later!**