

WRITING GUIDE

OPINION ESSAY

I. STRUCTURE

1. Title.

- Be brief and clear.
- Avoid using the same words that appear in the exercise question.

For example: In class you have had a group discussion about education in your country. Write an essay giving reasons for your opinions. Title: How can the education system be improved in your country?

2. First Paragraph (Introduction)

- Start with a fact/example about the topic in today's world.
- Clearly state your opinion in a simple and easy to understand way.

3. Second and Third Paragraphs (body)

- Each paragraph should have one main idea.
- The ideas in both paragraphs **MUST** be different.
- After giving the idea, give an example to explain it.

4. Last Paragraph (conclusion)

- Summarise the ideas of the essay.
- Say your opinion again in a different way.
- Keep it short and clear.

II. TIPS

- Do not use contractions.
- Use formal language and linkers.
- Try to include advanced grammar (modal verbs, conditionals, relative clauses...).
- Avoid using the same words: use synonyms.
- Avoid vague words like "things": be precise. Do you mean... solutions? issues? problems? situations?
- Always specify the person or group of people acting: that is, do not forget the subject!: Teachers consider..., students point out ..., I believe..., scientists realise..., experts suggest...

III. OPENING REMARKS

- Nowadays, we live in a world in which...
- The concept of — is not an easy one to explain.
- For the vast majority of people...
- It is common knowledge that...
- It goes without saying that...
- How to say your opinion?
- As far as I am concerned...
- I am on the side of...
- From my point of view...
- My impression is that...
- I strongly/firmly agree/believe/disagree
- It is clear to me that...

IV. PRESENTATION OF IDEAS

- There is no doubt that...
- To begin with...
- It is important to bear in mind that...
As starting point....
- The second reason...
- ... play(s) a vital part in ...

V. HOW TO INCLUDE FACTS

- A minority of...
- A considerable number of
- There is a rise in...
- X out of ten...
- Thousands of...

VI. CLOSING REMARKS

- The issue of — should be regarded as an important priority...
- There are many hidden dangers in...
- Society as a whole must work together to...
- In conclusion, it is essential to take action before it is too late.

VI. An example of an opinion essay. The underlined sentences or words can be used in any other opinion essay.

Smoking should be completely banned.

There is no doubt that smoking is a serious problem in many countries. In Europe, several countries and cities have banned smoking in public places. However, I believe that governments should do more to stop smoking and make it completely illegal.

To begin with, it is important to bear in mind that smoking is very harmful to health. It can cause a considerable number of serious illnesses, such as lung cancer, heart disease, and breathing problems. Smoking can also shorten people's lives. If smoking were banned, people would live longer and healthier lives. Hospitals and doctors would also benefit, because they would not need to spend so much time and money treating diseases caused by smoking.

Another telling argument in support of this idea is that smoking damages the environment. For example, smoky places can be unpleasant, and cigarettes make rooms, clothes, and hair smell bad. In addition, smokers create extra litter when they throw away cigarette ends, which pollutes streets and parks.

Taking all this into account, smoking is a very unhealthy and antisocial habit. Governments should urgently make smoking illegal to protect both people's health and the environment.

VII. PRE WRITING ACTIVITIES.

EXERCISE 1. Fill in the blanks with the correct sentences from the list below. Once you have done this, you will have another example to help you write your opinion essay.

Can we use our free time better nowadays than in the past?

Nowadays, we live in a world in which people have more opportunities for leisure than ever before. [A] For example, nearly 50 percent of young people spend more than three hours a day on social media, reducing the time they could use for hobbies or sports.

[B] In previous generations, individuals had fewer opportunities because the standard of living was lower, and schools offered fewer activities.

Another telling argument is that, [C]. The internet and new technologies make it very easy to waste free time on activities that are not relaxing or meaningful.

Speaking personally, [D], people do not necessarily use their free time in a better way.

Sentences:

1. To begin with, it is important to highlight that people today have more time and money to enjoy leisure activities than in the past.
2. It is a well-known fact that technology and social media have changed the way we spend our free time.
3. I strongly believe that, although we have more time and resources than in the past.
4. Despite having more facilities, people face more distractions that prevent them from enjoying their free time fully.

[A]__

[B]__

[C]__

[D]__

EXERCISE 2

Improve the sentence by using linkers (e.g., however, although, because, in addition, despite, nevertheless, while, not only...but also, furthermore).

1. I like sports. Sports are good for health and they help you stay active.
2. Technology is useful. Technology can be harmful.
3. People should eat healthy food. Fast food is popular.
4. Reading is fun. Some people prefer watching TV.
5. I enjoy traveling. Traveling is expensive.
6. Students need to study. They also need to relax.
7. Pollution is a problem. Governments are trying to solve it.
8. Social media is interesting. People waste too much time on it and it can affect attention and focus.
9. Learning languages is important. It takes time and effort.
10. Schools should have more activities. Some students are bored. Extracurricular activities help improve motivation and social skills

VIII. WRITING.

Write an opinion essay of 110 - 130 words on the following question: Do mobile phones have a positive or a negative influence on people's lives? include your opinion, reasons, facts or examples to support it. Include at least 2 conditionals.