

Writing Workshop How to do a writing task

A GET IDEAS

- Read the task carefully and identify what kind of text you need to write. For example, *an informal email, a review*, etc.
- Make notes of any key ideas. Don't write full sentences.
- If you can't think of many ideas straight away, don't panic! Remember, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. You will get marks for the way you *organize* and *express* your ideas.

B PLAN

- Choose the best ideas from your notes.
- Think about useful language to include.
- Organize your ideas into a paragraph plan. Always include a clear beginning and end. For example:

Essay: Is homework necessary? Discuss.

Paragraph 1	Introduction	most students do it – many dislike
Paragraph 2	Arguments for	helps you to remember info good way of testing progress
Paragraph 3	Arguments against	can take a lot of time extra stress for students
Paragraph 4	Conclusion and personal opinion	not too much! overall, good idea

C WRITE

- Use your paragraph plan as a guide.
- Use linkers to create longer sentences.
- Use a variety of language, including different tenses and grammatical structures as well as vocabulary.

D CHECK

Read your composition carefully afterwards.

- Have you fully answered the task?
- Have you used the right number of words (if you've been given a word count)?
- Is your composition easy to read and logically organized?
- Have you avoided repetition where possible?
- Do your grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and word order seem correct?

USEFUL LINKERS

Adding ideas

To begin a sentence: Also, ... • Moreover, ...
• Furthermore, ... • In addition (to this), ...
• What's more, ...

To join words / clauses: ... and (also) ... ,
• ... as well as ... , • ... in addition to ...

To end a sentence or clause: ..., too. • ... as well.

Contrasting ideas

To begin a sentence: However, ... / Nevertheless, ... /
Nonetheless, ... • On the one hand, ... • On the other hand, ...

To join words / clauses: ... but ... • ... yet ... • ... although /
though / even though / despite / in spite of ...

Expressing reason

To begin a sentence: Because ... • Since ... • As ...
• Due to / Because of (+ *noun*) • For this / that reason, ...

To join clauses: ... because / since / as ... • ... due to /
because of (+ *noun*) / because (+ *clause*) ...

Expressing result

To begin a sentence: Therefore, ... • As a result, ...
• As a consequence, ... • Consequently, ...

To join clauses: ... , so ...

Expressing reason and result

... so (+ *adjective*) that ... • ... such ((a / an) (+ *adjective*) +
noun) that ...

Expressing purpose

To begin a sentence: In order that ... • In order to
(+ *infinitive*) • to (+ *infinitive*)

To join words / clauses: ... in order that ... • ... so (that) ...
• ... in order to / to (+ *infinitive*) • ... so as to ...

Making conditions

To begin a sentence: If ... • As long as ...
• Provided that ... • Unless ...

To join clauses: ... if ... • ... ,but only if ...
• ... as long as ... • ... provided that ... • ... unless ...

Ordering an argument

• First of all, ... • Firstly, / Secondly, / Thirdly, ... • Next, ...
• Thirdly, ... • Finally, / Lastly, ...

Ordering a narrative

To begin a sentence: At first, ... / To begin with, ...
• Then / Next, / After that ... • In the end, ... / Finally,

To join clauses: ... before ... • ... after ... • ... , then ...
• ... as soon as ... • ... as ... • ... while ...

Writing Workshop A narrative

In a **narrative** you describe a past event or tell a story.

Example task: Write about an exciting experience that you've had.

A GET IDEAS

- Think of an event or story to write about. Remember, it doesn't have to be true.
- Make notes to answer these questions:
What happened? **When** did it happen?
Where did it happen? **Who** did it happen to?
How did people feel? **What** happened afterwards?

B PLAN

- Put your ideas in order. What happened first / next / in the end?
- Organize your ideas into paragraphs. For example:

Paragraph 1	Introduction to the story
Paragraph 2-3	The main events (before / during / after)
Final paragraph	How the experience affected you

C WRITE

Give an interesting beginning

Use time expressions and sequencers to connect events

Use different narrative tenses

Describe feelings as well as events

Say how the event affected you

Bring your narrative to a clear end

The day of my achievements ceremony at school was the most exciting day of my life so far. In my neighbourhood, we celebrate this day in a very unusual way.

Every year, local teenagers hire luxury cars to take them to the ceremony. Weeks beforehand, everyone had been boasting about the cars they would hire. Unfortunately, I didn't have enough money to do the same.

On the big day, I was getting ready, when I heard excited voices from outside. I rushed out to see my brother who was greeting the driver of a black Ferrari. I thought I was dreaming when he hugged me and opened the door for me to get in. I have never been so excited in my life.

Riding in a Ferrari was unforgettable and the experience of a lifetime for me. But apart from being thrilled, I also realized how cool my brother is!

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Describing feelings

I was / felt (*terrified, delighted, etc.*)

It was a terrible shock / wonderful surprise.

I've never been / felt so ... before / in my whole life.

... was so (adjective, e.g. *sad*) that ...

Adverbs to comment on events

Amazingly, ... Incredibly, ...

Luckily, ... Fortunately, ...

Sadly, ... Unfortunately, ...

Time expressions

I (past simple) while / when / as I (past continuous)

for / since / just / ever / never / already / yet (with past perfect or present perfect)

Last year / Yesterday / A few days ago (with past simple)

Before I (past simple), I (past perfect)

After / Because / By the time / When I (past perfect), I (past simple)

Suddenly, ... / Just then, ... / At that moment, ...

Other narrative sequencers

At first, / First, / In the beginning, / First of all, ...

Next, ... / Then, ... / After that, ... , Later ...

Eventually, ... / Finally, ... / In the end, ...

Reflecting on events

It was the (*best, worst, most frightening, etc.*) day of my life!

It was a day / time I'll never forget.

I'll remember this day / time forever.

Tips for ... narratives

- ✓ Choose a simple story.
- ✓ Give your story a clear beginning, middle and ending.
- ✓ Use the past continuous to set the scene and to show longer actions, the past simple for main events, and the past perfect for events that happened earlier.
- ✓ Describe atmosphere and feelings as well as what happened.

Writing Workshop A review

In a **review** you give your opinion of a book, film, concert, etc., and say whether or not you recommend it.

Example task: Write a review of your favourite book.

A GET IDEAS

- Think of a book, film, etc. to write about. Choose something you know well.
- Make notes about what you remember about the book, film, etc. Then choose the most essential details.
- Decide whether you generally liked or disliked it. It might help you to choose a rating: ☆☆☆☆☆
- Make notes about what you liked and didn't like, and why.

B PLAN

Organize your ideas into paragraphs. For example:

- Paragraph 1** Introduction, including the title, author / director etc., characters and setting
Paragraph 2 Summary of the plot
Paragraph 3 What you liked and didn't like
Paragraph 4 Conclusion and a recommendation to others

C WRITE

Start with a general description

Use a range of extreme adjectives and / or modifying adverbs to emphasize your opinion

Talk about how you / other people felt

Give reasons for your opinion

Sum up your opinion

Give a clear recommendation

My favourite book is *The Maze Runner*, the first book in a futuristic trilogy by James Dashner.

The main character is a brave young boy called Tom, who arrives in the Glade, which is an open area surrounded by huge walls leading to a monster-filled maze. Like the other Glade boys, Thomas can't remember anything before he arrived there. He's determined to become a maze runner in order to find a way to get out of the Glade.

The book is written from Thomas's point of view, which can make things slightly confusing at the beginning as he's lost his memory. However, this is what I loved about it as it adds to the suspense of the novel and makes you want to keep reading to find out what happens.

In my opinion, it's a very well-written modern classic. Anyone who's a fan of futuristic novels should get a copy of it.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Describing books / films / TV programmes

It's set in ...

It's based on the (*book*, etc. *by* ...)

It's about / It tells the story of ...

The main character is ...

(film / TV) It stars ...

It's written / directed by ...

It's a (*thriller*, *comedy*, *romance*, etc.).

It's a (*science fiction*, *fantasy*, *crime*, etc.).

Giving opinions

What I loved / hated about ... was ...

The best thing about ... was ...

The most memorable part was ...

The ... could have been better.

One criticism (*I have*) is ...

Adjectives

- + action-packed / believable / excellent / exciting / gripping / interesting / realistic
- average / badly-acted / badly-written / boring / disappointing / dull / predictable

Making comparisons

... isn't (*quite*) as good as ...

... is just as good as ...

... is even better than ...

... reminds me of ...

Making a recommendation

This will / won't appeal to ...

I (*strongly*) recommend that ...

I certainly wouldn't recommend ...

Don't bother reading / seeing ...

Tips for ... reviews

- ✓ Don't include too much factual information about the plot, etc.
- ✓ Don't tell readers what happens at the end!
- ✓ Readers want to know your opinion, not just read a summary!
- ✓ Remember to end with a recommendation to your readers. It can be positive, negative, or mixed.

Writing Workshop A formal email

In a **formal email** you write to a person in an official role (for example, an employee at a company) for a particular purpose (for example, to make an enquiry).

Example task: Write a formal email to Mr Colin Blackwell, Head of Customer Services, to complain about a product you have bought online recently and ask for your money back.

A GET IDEAS

- Think about **why** you are writing. For example, to find out information (what?), to apply for a job (which?), etc.
- Make notes of key things to include (e.g. statements or questions to ask).

B PLAN

Organize your ideas into paragraphs. Use a new paragraph for each new main idea. For example:

Paragraph 1	Greeting (<i>Dear ...</i>)
Paragraphs 2-3	Why you are writing
Final paragraph	Your main ideas and questions
	What you would like to happen next (e.g. <i>I look forward to hearing from you.</i>)
	Closing expression (e.g. <i>Best regards, Yours sincerely</i> , etc.)

C WRITE

Always include a name if you are given one

Use a range of tenses and structures

Organize your ideas with sequencers

Use formal verbs and expressions

Use modal verbs to make polite requests

Use an appropriate closing expression to match the greeting

Dear Mr Blackwell,

I am writing to complain about a games console which I bought recently from your online store. Although I set up the console using the instructions included, it did not work properly. As a result, I called your helpline and spoke with one of your technicians who asked me to send the console back to be tested. He explained that the company had been experiencing problems with the specific model and that if they could not repair it, they would replace it.

I received the replacement this morning and I have attempted to set it up. However, the new console does not work either. I have also attempted to call the helpline again, but I have not been able to get through.

Therefore, I would like you to refund my money as I have lost confidence in this product. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Jan Krakowicz

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Greetings and endings

If you know their name:

Dear Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms (+ surname),

Yours sincerely, (your full name)

If you do not know their name:

Dear Sir or Madam,

Yours faithfully, (your full name)

You can end formal emails with:

Best wishes, (your full name)

(*Best / Kind*) regards, (your full name) (use with either greeting)

Giving a reason for writing

I am writing to enquire about / apply for / complain about ...

... which I read about in ...

... which was advertised in ...

Polite requests

I was wondering if it would be possible ...

I would like to know more about ...

Would you be able to ... ?

I would be grateful if you could ...

Adding and sequencing ideas

In addition, ... Moreover, ...

Furthermore, ... Firstly, / First of all, ...

Secondly, ... Finally, ...

Including other documents

I have attached a CV / photo / sample of work for your reference.

Next stages

Please contact me if you require any further information.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Tips for ... formal emails

- ✓ Use appropriate greetings and closing expressions.
- ✓ Use full forms (*I am*) not short forms (*I'm*).
- ✓ Use indirect structures to sound more polite.
- ✓ Use formal structures, expressions and linkers.

Writing Workshop An opinion essay

In an **opinion essay** you say what you think about a statement or a topic, giving reasons for your views.

Example task: 'A lot of schools now have CCTV cameras. Is this a good or bad thing for students?' Discuss.

A GET IDEAS

- Think about the statement or topic. What do you already know? (= *the background information*)
- Decide what your own opinion is. Remember, there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer!
- Think of as many arguments as you can to support your opinion.
- Choose two or three of your best ideas.

B PLAN

Organize your ideas into paragraphs. Use a new paragraph for each main subject or argument. For example:

- Paragraph 1** Introduction to the topic and your general opinion
Paragraph 2 Your first main argument
Paragraph 3 Your next main argument
Paragraph 4 Conclusion: summary of your opinion

C WRITE

Use linkers of reason, addition and contrast to connect ideas

Give the main idea of the paragraph in the first sentence

Use a variety of opinion expressions

Give examples or reasons to support your ideas

Sum up your own opinion at the end

Nowadays, it is becoming more and more common for schools to have CCTV cameras installed in order to prevent certain behaviours. However, the question we need to answer is whether this is an invasion of privacy.

Personally, I believe that CCTV cameras can prevent students from acting badly towards others while they are in school or on school grounds. For example, according to many people, there are some students who would bully others if it weren't for the fact that they were being 'watched' by the cameras.

Furthermore, in my opinion CCTV cameras can stop students from damaging school property. For instance, it is clear to me that some students would write on desks or paint graffiti on school walls if it weren't for the fact that they would be seen by the cameras.

All in all, I think privacy, which everyone has a right to, is very important. However, I am of the opinion that if you are not doing anything wrong while you are at school, then you have no reason to feel that CCTV cameras are a threat to you or your privacy.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Giving background information

Some / Many people believe (*that*) ...
According to (*the media*, etc.), ...
Studies show / suggest that ...
It is generally agreed that ...

Expressing opinions

I think / believe / feel (*that*) ...
Personally, I think (*that*) ...
I (*strongly*) agree / disagree that ... / with the statement that ...
In my opinion / view, ...

Adding and ordering ideas

Furthermore, ... / Moreover, ... /
What is more, ...
In addition (*to this*), ...
Firstly / First of all ..., Secondly ..., Finally ...

Contrasting ideas

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

Giving examples

For example, ... / For instance, ...
..., such as ... (e.g. *illnesses, such as colds.*)
..., like ... (e.g. *illnesses, like colds.*)

Highlighting specific ideas

..., especially ... (+) / ..., particularly ... (+)
..., apart from ... (-)

Concluding

All in all, / To sum up, ...
In conclusion, / To conclude, ...
In general, I think However, ...

Tips for ... writing articles

- ✓ Keep on topic and discuss the ideas in the question – do not introduce new ideas!
- ✓ Introduce the topic at the start. Give background information or say what other people think.
- ✓ Use a variety of opinion expressions.
- ✓ End with a clear conclusion. You can qualify your opinion if you don't 100% agree or disagree.

Writing Workshop An informal email

In an **informal email** you write to a friend or relative about personal news.

Example task: Write an informal email to a friend, telling him / her your news.

A GET IDEAS

- Think about *who* you're writing to and why you're writing.
- Make notes about the key things you want to include.
- Think of some questions to ask or some suggestions to make.

B PLAN

Organize your ideas into paragraphs. For example:

	Greeting (<i>Hi ...</i>)
Paragraph 1	A personal message, e.g. <i>How are things?</i> Why you're writing: <i>Right now, I'm ...</i>
Paragraphs 2-4	The main topics you want to discuss.
Final paragraph	A closing message, e.g. <i>Let's meet up soon.</i> Closing expression (e.g. <i>Write soon! Bye for now, etc.</i>)

C WRITE

Use an informal greeting and closing expression

Use chatty colloquial language

Ask questions and make suggestions

Use a variety of tenses and structures (not just the present simple)

Include phrasal verbs and idioms to add interest

Just write your first name

Hi there,

How have you been lately? Sorry I haven't been in touch for ages, but it's been an exciting time here.

Did you see the photos of my eighteenth birthday party on Facebook? I wish you could have been there – what a night! I had been feeling down in the dumps as I didn't do so well in my exams this year, but the party really cheered me up.

Have you noticed that I changed my status? Well, Rob brought his cousin Mari along to the party and ... it was love at first sight. We were flirting all night, so I decided to ask her out and she said 'yes'! We've been going out now for a couple of weeks and we're getting on really well.

How about you and Lauren come double dating with us some time? I'm sure Lauren and Mari'll have loads in common. How are you two getting on, by the way?

Call me!

Ross

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Greetings

Hi / Hi there / Hey / Hiya / Dear ...

Responding to a message

Thanks for your letter / email.

It's great to hear from you.

Sorry it's taken me so long to reply.

Catching up after a break

Sorry I haven't written for so long, but ...

I haven't heard from you for ages!

Asking about your reader

How's it going?

What's new?

Talking about you

All good here.

Guess what!

I've got some great / amazing / sad news.

Asking about others

Hope everyone's doing well.

Say 'hi' to ... for me!

Endings

Bye for now,

See you soon!

Take care,

Conversational expressions

Anyway, ...

Well ...

Remember I told you ...

Oh yes, ...

Tips for ... informal emails

- ✓ Use appropriate greetings and closing expressions.
- ✓ Use short forms (*I'm* not *I am*).
- ✓ Use a chatty style – avoid formal expressions and linkers.
- ✓ Use phrasal verbs and idioms.
- ✓ Ask your reader questions or show interest in what they're doing.

Writing Workshop A discussion essay

In a **discussion essay** you consider a topic or statement from opposite points of view, before giving your own opinion.

Example task: 'The internet is making people better informed.' Discuss.

A GET IDEAS

- What do you already know about the statement or topic?
- List as many arguments as you can *for* and *against*.

For	Against
help to learn language	freedom to choose?

- Now choose your *two* strongest arguments in each category.
- Decide what your own opinion is.

B PLAN

Organize your ideas into paragraphs.

- Paragraph 1** Introduction to the topic
- Paragraph 2** Arguments *for* / advantages
- Paragraph 3** Arguments *against* / disadvantages
- Paragraph 4** Your own opinion

C WRITE

Give a general introduction

Use linkers of contrast

Separate arguments for and against into two paragraphs

Give your own opinion at the end

Use modals to make suggestions and recommendations

Qualify your opinion if necessary

Many people believe that thanks to the internet, people are better informed than they used to be. Others, however, argue that the opposite is true.

On the one hand, by surfing the internet, we have access to information and the latest news at the push of a button. As a result, people no longer have to spend a great deal of time researching a specific subject. As a result, they can be fully informed about it promptly.

On the other hand, some people say that many websites publish information so quickly that they do not have time to edit it properly. The result of this is that some of the information we have access to is inaccurate.

In my opinion, we must be careful when using the internet as a source of factual information. Only by double-checking information on various sites can we be properly informed about an issue.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Introducing the topic

Some / Many people think / believe / consider (*that*) However, others ...

There are (*strong*) arguments for and against this idea.

Adding ideas

Furthermore, / Moreover, / What is more, / In addition (*to this*), ...

Giving reasons and results

... , because / as ...

Because of / As a result of this, ...

One result / effect of this is that ...

Introducing contrasting ideas

On the one hand, On the other hand

In spite (*of the fact that*)

Despite (*the fact that*)

One (*dis*)advantage of ... is ...

An(*other*) argument for / against ... is ...

Giving examples

According to ...

It has been shown that ...

(*Research*) has shown that ...

Making suggestions or recommendations

... should (*not*) / ought (*not*) to ...

Would (noun / + *-ing*) be a better solution / alternative?

Expressing your own opinion

In my opinion / view, ...

Although I partly agree that ... , overall, I think ...

Tips for ... writing articles

- ✓ Just give a general introduction in the first paragraph – don't give your own opinion.
- ✓ Don't mix up arguments *for* and *against* in the same paragraph.
- ✓ Organize your ideas and give examples to support them.
- ✓ Only give your own opinion in the final paragraph.

Writing Workshop An article

In an article, your aim is to inform, interest and engage the reader, and give your opinion or comment.

Example task: Social media – does it make people better connected?

A GET IDEAS

- What do you already know about the topic?
- Make a list of points or ideas to include.
- Now choose *three* of your best ideas.
- Think of examples to support or illustrate your ideas.

B PLAN

Organize your ideas into paragraphs. For example:

Paragraph 1 General introduction to the topic

Paragraph 2 Your opinions and ideas with examples

Paragraph 3 Conclusion and summary

C WRITE

Introduce
the topic

State your
opinion

Order your
ideas

Give
examples

Involve the
reader

Restate your
opinion at
the end

Social media: keeping us connected

Have you ever wondered what life would be like without social media? People are social creatures and, over the ages, humans have continued to invent ways to connect with others. If you ask me, I am of the opinion that people are better connected to one another due to one of those inventions – social media.

First of all, social media makes us more connected with people that we know well. Because of Instagram we can send photos to friends and family quickly and easily. In addition, we can use Zoom or WhatsApp to see and talk to them instead of calling them on the telephone. Another advantage is that social media allows us to connect with old friends and classmates. Facebook gives us a way to find people from our past and communicate with them. Moreover, we can use YouTube to upload videos to show them what we have been doing since we last saw them. On top of that, social media lets us connect and make friends with people that we don't actually know. As a result of social media networks, we can meet people anywhere in the world. What's more, we can find people who share our interests in group chats and chat rooms.

It's clear that social media can help to bring people closer together. Personally, I believe that all of us want to be better connected with others, and social media gives us an easy and efficient way to do this.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Ordering your ideas

Firstly, / First of all, ...
Let's start with ...
Another advantage of ...
On top of that, ...

Adding ideas

Furthermore, / Moreover, / What's more, /
In addition (*to this*), ...

Giving reasons and results

... , because / as / since
Because of / Due to ...
As a result of this, ...
Therefore, ... / Consequently, ... / , so ...

Involving the reader

Just imagine ... / Imagine you are ...
Have you ever ... ?
How often do you ... ?
How would you feel if ... ?
Are you somebody who ... ? If the answer is ... , you should ...

Expressing your own opinion

(*Personally*), I (*don't*) think / believe / feel (*that*) ...
I am of the opinion (*that*) ...
I personally believe ...
It seems to me that ...
In my opinion / view, ...
If you ask me, ...
It is clear to me that ...

Summarising

To sum up, ...
In conclusion, ...
All in all, ...

Tips for ... writing articles

- ✓ Give your article a title.
- ✓ Organize your ideas and give examples to illustrate them.
- ✓ Support your ideas by giving evidence or thinking about the possible consequences of any changes.
- ✓ Give a conclusion and summary in the final paragraph.