

Write it!

Cambridge B2 First for Schools writing task: ESSAY

Focus skill: organising text

Material extracted from: Compact First for Schools (textbook), published by Cambridge University Press

Main lesson steps:



Recognize:

Warmer to the topic – exercises 1-3

Lead-in to the task, checking understanding of requirements – exercise 4

Recognize main idea, retrieve text plan – exercises 5-6

Optional extra: also recognize linking and cohesive devices. Provide the texts with paragraphs jumbled, students sort them into two texts, then order them within each essay. Elicit from students what helped them sort out the paragraphs. For extra clues you can provide part of the answers in the plan of ideas (see table).

Which is more important to teenagers: family or friends?	Essay A	Essay B
Main points	friends	
1 time		
2 support		
3 ?	better relationship with friends	
Conclusion		family more important

Practise linkers:

Extract linkers from texts, then practise – exercise 7

You may also want to try a digital activity, levels B1-B2, practising discourse markers, here:

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/activities-for-learners/b2w001-organising-writing> - your students would need to access the internet either on PC's or on their mobile devices.

Write: Plan ideas, write essay on new task – exercise 8

Optional: chain writing. Each student writes the first paragraph on a loose piece of paper. Then they give the paper to another class mate, who has to continue the text with the second paragraph, which has to be properly linked to what the first student has already written. The chain goes on until the text is completed. The challenge may be that the ideas that they have planned to include may not easily fit in with what has already been written by the others. It will be up to them whether they stick to their plan, or write something else to fit the existing flow of ideas.

You can re-use these pieces of writing if you photocopy them and discuss organisation skills with a different class.

The complete sample lesson can be found here: <http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/resources-for-teachers/>

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WRITING

Part 1: Essay



“This is my new friend, Roger - he’s a real down-to-earth kind of guy.”

Work in pairs.

- 1 Describe your family. Which members of the family are most important to you? Why?
- 2 Talk about your friends. Do you have lots of friends, or just a few good ones? Where did you meet them?
- 3 Answer these questions. Write A for family and B for friends.

Who: takes care of you? gives you advice?
teaches you to do things?

Who do you: have most fun with? spend most time with? get on best with?

Discuss your answers with your partner. Are your answers true just at a certain stage of your life (baby, young child, teenager) or for all ages?

- 4 Now read the exam task at the top of the next column and answer the true/false questions below with your partner.

True or false?

- 1 You have a choice of question in Part 1 of the Writing paper.
- 2 You must write an essay of at least 190 words.
- 3 The first sentence of the task helps you to understand what you must write about.
- 4 You are asked to compare two things in this essay.
- 5 You should write about teenagers in general, and not just yourself.
- 6 When you give ‘your own idea’ it should be different from points 1 and 2.

You **must** answer this question. Write your answer in **140–190 words** in an appropriate style on the separate answer sheet.

In your English class you have been talking about your family and friends. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay for homework.

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



Which is more important to teenagers: their family or their friends?

Notes

Write about:

1. who teenagers spend most time with
2. who gives teenagers most support
3. (your own idea)

- 5 Look back at the questions you answered in Exercise 3. Discuss with your partner whether you could write about anything here as ‘your own idea’ in point 3 of the essay. Put a tick next to anything you could use, and a cross next to anything you could not use.
- 6 Read the two answers to the exam question and then complete the chart and answer the questions below with your partner.

A

By the time they are about 14, teenagers probably spend more time with their friends than with their family. They are at school every day and therefore in the company of their friends. In addition, they play sport with these friends, go into town with them or go round to their houses at the weekend.

Yet all teenagers still rely heavily on their families, and their parents especially, for support and advice. Parents have more experience and more knowledge to share than friends, and they can help with important decisions about every aspect of your life as a teenager. They will also be on your side if you fall out with your friends, which unfortunately can happen!

In general though, I would say that most teenagers get on better with their friends than their families. They are the same age, so they share the same tastes in music and clothes and so on. They have very similar ideas too. As a result, parents are often much less important to their children at this stage.

Therefore, I personally think that for most teenagers, their friends are more important than their family.

B

I'm a teenager, and I spend a lot of time with my friends during term time, both at school and outside school. Of course I also spend time with my family, especially during the school holidays, but overall I spend slightly more time with my friends. I think that's true for most teenagers.

As for support, I am lucky that my family have always helped me. Yet my best friend also helps me a lot now if I have problems. This happens with many teenagers, that gradually they start asking their friends for help and advice as well as their family.

One day every teenager will leave home and start a life without their parents and family, but for most people their family is always part of their life. In contrast, some of the friends you make when you are very young get forgotten when you grow up and you make new friends.

For that reason, I think that for me, and for teenagers in general, family are in the end more important than friends.

Which is more important to teenagers: family or friends?	Essay A	Essay B
Main points	friends	
1 time		
2 support		
3 ?		
Conclusion		

Are the essays written in a formal or informal style?

Which is more important to you personally, family or friends? Underline the points of view in the answers which you agree with.

- 7 Find these linking expressions in essays A and B and underline them.

as for for that reason in addition in contrast
in general overall therefore yet

Now choose the correct linking expressions below.

I love going out with my friends but (1) *in addition / in general* the rest of my family aren't as sociable as me. (2) *As for / Yet* my grandparents, they're much happier at home. (3) *In other words / In fact*, they're always busy as they've got lots of hobbies. (4) *For that reason / For example*, I always ring them before I go there in case they're in the middle of doing something. (5) *Yet / Therefore* if I do just turn up, they don't mind. (6) *Nevertheless / In contrast*, my friend's grandparents are always going away so she hardly ever sees them.

- 8 Read the exam task and think about what you can write about in points 1 and 2. Write some notes. Then write down your idea for point 3, and what your conclusion will be.

When you have finished, discuss your ideas with a partner. Then do the task.

Exam tip

It is important to decide what you are going to say in your essay before you start writing. In the exam, you can write your plan on the exam paper.

Exam task

In your English class you have been talking about the part grandparents and older people play in young people's lives. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay for homework.

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



'Young people learn a lot from their grandparents and other older people.'
Do you agree?

Notes

Write about:

1. the past
2. technology
3. (your own idea)

Exam tip

When you have finished writing, read your essay carefully to check for grammar and spelling mistakes.

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