

Write it!

Cambridge C1 Advanced writing task: ESSAY

Focus skill: organising text

Material extracted from: Complete Advanced (textbook), published by Cambridge University Press. The complete sample lesson can be found here: <http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/resources-for-teachers/>.

Main lesson steps:



Recognize:

Lead-in to the task, checking understanding of requirements – exercises 1, 3

Lead-in to the topic – exercise 2

Recognize main idea, retrieve text plan – exercise 4

Optional extra: also recognize linking and cohesive devices. Provide the text with paragraphs jumbled, students order them. Elicit from students the linking and reference devices that helped them - this is also done by exercise 6.

Analysis of the answer essay – exercise 5. You can do this step very briefly, if you don't wish to spend time on this aspect, but rather focus on organisation.

Practise linkers:

Additional handout on pages 7-8 of this material. You may also want to try a short gap-text focusing on reference and cohesive devices, levels C1-C2, in a digital format, here: <http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/activities-for-learners/c1r002-science-fiction> - your students would need to access the internet either on PC's or on their mobile devices.

Write:

Plan ideas, write essay on the same task – exercises 7-8. Alternative: write essay on new task – see page 9. Task is taken from the Cambridge Advanced Handbook for Teachers.

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 is continued until 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.

This material includes (pages 4-6) the Teacher's Book instructions for the Writing section and an extra follow-up writing activity from the Workbook.

Writing | Part 1

An essay

Exam information

In Writing Part 1 you write an essay in which you discuss a question or topic. You are given

- three areas to consider and you must discuss two of them
- three opinions which you can use if you wish.

This part tests your ability to develop an argument or discussion, express your opinions clearly and support your ideas with reasons and examples.

1 Underline the key ideas in the writing task below.

Your class has taken part in a seminar on whether the education system does enough to help young people to find jobs which fit their abilities and interests. You have made the notes below.

Methods schools and universities use to help students find suitable jobs

- providing courses and qualifications
- work experience programmes
- careers advice

Some opinions expressed in the seminar:

'We study lots of things which we'll never use in any future job.'

'Without work experience you'd have no idea what to study at university.'

'Some of my teachers can't give me advice because they've never done any job other than teaching.'

Write an essay discussing **two** of the methods in your notes. You should explain **which method is more effective**, giving **reasons** in support of your answer.

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

Write your answer in 220–260 words in an appropriate style.



2 Work in small groups.

- Discuss each of the methods and whether or not you agree with the opinions expressed in the seminar.
- During your discussion, express your own opinions on the methods and give reasons for your opinions.
- Take notes on the main ideas which arise during the discussion.

3 Read the writing task in Exercise 1 again. Do you think the following sentences are true (T) or false (F)? Why?

- 1 You must discuss all three methods.
- 2 You must decide which is the best method.
- 3 You must say whether you agree or disagree with the opinions expressed.
- 4 If you use any of the opinions, you should express them in a more formal style.
- 5 When you express your opinion, you should say why you hold that opinion.
- 6 You can expand the topic to talk about other issues related to work that interest you.
- 7 You can write your answer using a bulleted list of points instead of formal paragraphs.
- 8 The task contains a word limit, but if you write 300 words you will get higher marks.

- 4 Read Cristina's essay. Then complete the plan she wrote beforehand by matching the notes (a–e) with the paragraphs.

For many young people it is hard to find the sort of job they aspire to. ¹This is in part due to a mismatch between what education provides and what employers believe ²they require.

Schools and universities should offer students courses which provide ³them with qualifications which will attract potential employers. However, employers often complain that courses are too theoretical and do not teach students the practical skills ⁴they will need in the workplace.

While I understand ⁵this viewpoint, I do not entirely share ⁶it. I believe that the purpose of education is primarily to develop critical thinking skills, including the ability to analyse and solve problems. ⁷These abilities will be useful throughout people's working lives. To achieve ⁸this, I do not think it matters whether someone studies history or theoretical physics as long as the right teaching methods are used. Students will then pick up the specific job skills they require very quickly once they are in full-time employment.

It is often suggested that young people need to gain work experience in order to make an informed choice of university course and career. Although I believe ⁹this helps to focus students' minds on what working life will be like, generally speaking it is not possible for students to get a wide enough range of experience to be able to choose ¹⁰their career wisely.

I would therefore argue that the best way to help young people find suitable jobs is to give them an excellent general education while ensuring that employers realise how valuable ¹¹it is.

Plan

Para 1: Introduction:

Para 2:

Para 3:

Para 4:

Para 5: Conclusion:

- a education should teach students to think – useful for every job
- b provide a good all-round education + persuade employers of its importance
- c employers say courses not practical enough
- d difficulty finding jobs – education vs. employers' needs
- e work experience often too limited for students to make informed choices



- 5 Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.

- 1 Why is it important to underline the key ideas in the writing task?
 - 2 Why should you write a plan before you write your essay?
 - 3 Did Cristina follow her plan exactly?
 - 4 Has she dealt completely with the instructions in the writing task?
 - 5 What words and phrases does she use in her essay to introduce her opinions?
 - 6 To what extent do you agree with Cristina's point of view?
 - 7 Why is it important to make your opinions clear in an essay?
- 6 When you write, it is important that each paragraph should cover a different aspect of the subject and that sentences should be linked together using clear references. What do the underlined reference words in Cristina's essay refer to?
- 7 Write your own plan for the writing task in Exercise 1. When you have finished, compare your plan with a partner's.
- 8 Read Cristina's essay in Exercise 4 again and highlight any words or phrases you would like to use in your essay. Also, copy them to your plan and to your notebook.

Then write your essay following your plan.

➔ page 186 Writing reference: Essays

Writing | Part 1

An essay

1 **As a warmer** With books closed, ask students:

- *What help or advice does the education system in your country give to help young people decide on a career?*
- *How useful or helpful is the system?*

With books open, tell students that one of the key assessment criteria for the Writing exam is 'content' which focuses on how well the candidate has achieved the task. It is therefore very important to analyse the task and be certain what it is asking and what it involves before starting to write. Underlining the key ideas helps with this.

Suggested underlining

education system does enough to help young people to find jobs / fit / abilities and interests / courses and qualifications / work experience / careers advice / study things / never use in any future job / without work experience / no idea what to study / teachers can't give me advice / two methods / more effective / giving reasons / own words

2 If your students did the warmer in Exercise 1, tell them they can add ideas which arose then to their discussion and notes.

3 **Answers**

- 1 F (You should discuss two methods.)
- 2 T ('explain which method is more effective')
- 3 F (It's not obligatory – you can use the opinions if you wish.)
- 4 T (They're written in an informal style, whereas an essay should be fairly formal.)
- 5 T ('giving reasons in support of your answer')
- 6 F (You should ensure that everything you write is relevant to the task.)
- 7 F (You should write in a formal academic style using complete sentences and structured paragraphs.)

4 Tell students that they are also assessed in the exam for 'organisation'. It is therefore essential to think and plan before they start writing, so that their ideas are organised in a logical and coherent way.

Answers

Para. 1: d Para. 2: c Para. 3: a Para. 4: e
Para. 5: b

5 This exercise recaps some of the points made earlier. Point out also that the purpose of an essay is to develop and express an opinion on a subject and that students should ensure that their opinions are:

- logically developed
- supported by reasons and examples
- clear to the reader.

If they have managed these things, they have fulfilled the requirements of the task.

Answers

- 1 To make sure you deal with the task as exactly as possible
- 2 You will score higher marks if you write a coherent, structured answer.
- 3 Not exactly – she also included how students can learn necessary skills while working.
- 4 Yes
- 5 While I understand this viewpoint, I do not entirely share it; I believe; I do not think; I would therefore argue that
- 6 *Students' own answer*
- 7 An academic essay always requires students to develop and express their opinion. If this is not done, the task has not been completed.

6 Point out to students that organisation involves linking ideas together in paragraphs which make it easier for the reader to follow the argument of the essay.

Tell them they also score marks for 'communicative achievement', so that clear writing which convinces the reader of their point of view is also essential.

Answers

- 1 the fact that many young people find it hard to find the sort of job they aspire to
- 2 employers
- 3 students
- 4 students
- 5 the idea that courses are too theoretical and do not teach students the practical skills they will need in the workplace
- 6 this viewpoint
- 7 critical thinking skills
- 8 developing critical thinking skills
- 9 work experience
- 10 students'
- 11 an excellent general education

7 Give students five minutes or so to write their plan. Tell them that when they compare their plans, they can also make amendments to them.

- 8 This task is probably best done as homework. Encourage students to use the essay in Exercise 4 as a model and especially to use words and phrases from it in their own answers. Point out that it is important to follow the plan they have written in order to achieve a well-organised answer to the task and to answer within the word limits set by the exam, i.e. 220–260 words.

For more on writing reports, refer students to page 190 (Writing reference – Reports).

- 1 What aspect of Guy's personality is the writer reinforcing when he says 'if he is feeling particularly emotional, he may perform all three together' (lines 12-13)?
 - A His facial expressions are difficult to interpret.
 - B His speech is always backed up by non-verbal expressions.
 - C He is very controlled when expressing his feelings.
 - D He can give out conflicting messages about what he is thinking.
- 2 What is meant by many people giving Guy 'a wide berth' (line 19)?
 - A People were staring at him because of the way he looked.
 - B People were getting annoyed with him because he was in their way.
 - C People did not understand what he was doing there.
 - D People did not feel comfortable getting too close to him.
- 3 How does the writer feel when Guy complains about his bag?
 - A He knows he shouldn't take the complaint seriously.
 - B He thinks Guy is making an unnecessary fuss.
 - C He wishes Guy had not greeted him with a complaint.
 - D He is embarrassed about bringing so much luggage.
- 4 As they walk towards the car park, the writer realises that
 - A he is not being sensitive enough about Guy's situation.
 - B there is a change in Guy's normal behaviour.
 - C Guy's expression seems more worried than usual.
 - D he had more reason to be concerned about Guy than he initially thought.
- 5 What does the writer exaggerate when he is describing the back of the van?
 - A the combination of items
 - B the size of some of the contents
 - C how old some of the contents were
 - D how many items were unnecessary
- 6 What does the writer say about the journey in the van?
 - A He preferred to look out at the countryside rather than talk.
 - B He didn't speak to Guy because the driving conditions were difficult.
 - C The fact that they travelled in silence seemed to make it longer.
 - D It was much slower than usual because of the weather.

Writing | Part 1

An essay

Read this essay written by a student and the teacher's notes and then rewrite the essay, making the corrections that the teacher suggests.

Essay: Is it better to travel alone, or with other people?

In my opinion, travelling is very exciting, and all people, including me, likes to travel, because it is allowing you to meet new countries and cultures. But that which you have to decide is if you should travel alone, or with others. There are advantages and disadvantages to each. If you travel alone, you are free to going anywhere; there is no one who will deny to follow you to the place you want to go! However, you may feel extremely lonely. You haven't got anyone to enjoy the trip with. Except from that, a solo trip is more expensive, because you have to pay for everything yourself and you can't divide the cost with anyone. In case you travel with your friends, you will enjoy the journey more than if you are alone. Humans are social creatures and to be with someone else is good for your mind. With friends, the travel will not be boring! In fact, there aren't many disadvantages to travelling with friends. The only one is that you might be disagree with them about the places you want to visit. This isn't a serious disadvantage, because sooner or later you have to reach a decision. Finally, you could travel with your parents. This is the best case because you aren't responsible for anything and you go everywhere your parents go. You probably haven't to pay for anything yourself. However, if you are above the years of eighteen, you won't want to travel with your parents, because this will guide you, which is something you don't want. You must want to decide what to do and this is impossible with your parents around.

This is a good essay, but there are a few things you can do to improve it.

- 1 In several places I've underlined where you've used the wrong word or expression, and you need to replace them with one of these words:
age, apart, discover, everyone, if, journey, refuse, restrict, share, solution, what, whether.
- 2 I've shown six verbs where you've used the wrong form or tense.
- 3 Please divide your essay into four paragraphs!

Linking ideas, building texts

1. Finish these sentences in a meaningful way.

We took an umbrella with us...

- in case
- so that.....
- although.....
- so as to.....
- in spite.....

I'll let you know when my train arrives...

- so.....
- unless.....
- even though.....
- for.....
- if.....

2. Provide content in the gaps below, but make sure your sentences stay within the space provided. Each sentence must make a clear point.

Learning a foreign language

Some people think that the best way to learn a foreign language is to live for a while in the country where it is spoken. Obviously,

.....

Others, however, claim that

.....

I for one tend to think that

.....

Tourism development

There are advantages and disadvantages that tourism development brings to a region. First,

.....

Similarly,

.....

On the other hand,

.....

All in all,

.....

.....

Optional: now take one sentence and expand it into a full paragraph, by adding any supporting detail you think is necessary.

3. Here is another essay to write. Plan your ideas and paragraphs, and think of the linking devices and discourse markers that you will use. Afterwards, write the essay.

Your class has attended a panel discussion on facilities which should receive money from local authorities. You have made the notes below:

<p><u>Which facilities should receive money from local authorities?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• museums• sports centres• public gardens	<p>Some opinions expressed in the discussion:</p> <p>“Museums aren’t popular with everybody!”</p> <p>“Sports centres mean healthier people.”</p> <p>“A town needs green spaces – parks are great for everybody.”</p>
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Write an essay discussing **two** of the facilities in your notes. You should **explain which facility it is more important** for local authorities to give money to, **giving reasons** in support of your answer.

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