


# Writing an article

## Exercise Six

# How to attempt this question!

1. You will be given a reading booklet insert containing the passage for the article writing. Read through the passage carefully. The adjacent question will be provided in the question paper booklet.
2. You would have to choose relevant points from the passage after having a thorough understanding of the question.
3. Now, convert the passage's selected points into your own words. After that, you can start putting the points together in a cohesive manner in the form of an article.

- 
- Before you start it is a good idea that you come up with a **plan**. Use the blank space below the question to make your plan, in pencil. In your plan write down the answers to these questions

**You will be given a topic (more like a question to ponder up on) on which you **might** write your views and opinions.**

**Exercise 7**

It has been suggested that the times of the school day should be changed, to start and finish one hour later.

Here are two comments from your friends about this:



We find it difficult to get up early so always arrive at school very tired.



If school finished later there would not be enough time for after-school activities.

**Write an article for the school magazine, giving your views.**


The comments above may give you some ideas, and you should try to use some ideas of your own.

**Your article should be between 150 and 200 words long.**

You will receive up to 10 marks for the content of your article, and up to 9 marks for the style and accuracy of your language.

# Note that!

- ▶ If the question requires you to write your opinion, you **HAVE** to mention it in the end. It is crucial that you read the question carefully. If it doesn't mention that your views on the topic have to be written, you don't have to include them. However, if you added your opinion, it wouldn't be a problem anyways.
- ▶ Try not to scribble words. Keep it neat.
- ▶ Everything should be written on the lines provided in the questions. Don't write in the blank space.
- ▶ It is very important that you mention the opinion of “the other” which could be known from the topic itself or the audience. For example,
  - \*If it is school related, write: “many teachers believe.....**
  - \* If it is related to psychology, “psychologists explain that.....**



**The topics usually given for this exercise are easy enough that you can come up with points right there in the exam, but it is good if you read upon various issues from around the world (obesity, technological influences, environmental issues, animal welfare, teenager issues etc).**

- The **audience**: this will be specified in the question (it is almost always a school magazine).
- So when you write, keep in mind that you need to write to that audience. Your language, tone and vocabulary should reflect this.

# Give a suitable title!

- ▶ Between two to three words, only in capitals.
- ▶ Think of a catchy title if you have time, or just keep it simple.
- ▶ Underline the article.



Organize your points into paragraphs!

# A two-sided article

## **Paragraph 1: Introduction**

- **Paragraph 2: Advantages/'For'**
- **Paragraph 3: Disadvantages/'Against'**
- **Paragraph 4: Conclusion- Summary and final opinion**

# How do I introduce the topic?

- ▶ **Start off by saying what the topic is and how important the topic is in today's world. Why it is such a problem? Or is it a problem?**
- ▶ **An effective introduction should begin with a query that entices the reader's interest. It should tempt them to continue reading. Then you can offer a short overview of the main topic to be discussed.**

# What is in the body?

1. The body should compose of one or two paragraphs. For the body paragraphs, it is not favorable to use the ones mentioned in the question. They are there just to help understand the topic. You have to think of other pros and cons.
2. Think of three pros for the first body paragraph and three cons for the second one.
3. Begin the first paragraph with adverbial time phrases such as now, recently, in the past, ten years ago, and so on. After that, state your main point and substantiate it with evidence.
4. When starting your second paragraph create a contrast with a different point of view compared to the first paragraph if the nature of the question is argumentative. Use joining points such as however, on the other hand, nevertheless, and so on to begin the second paragraph.

How will I **conclude** the article?

- ▶ You need to sum up your points and give your final opinion

# Use a variety of connecting words and argumentative phrases.

► **Expressing opinions: *I agree/ disagree with***

- *In my opinion*
- *I believe that*
- *I am in favour of*
- *I am against the idea of*
- *It seems to me that*
- *I sympathize with*

# Presenting and contrasting opinions: *The main argument in favour/ against is*

- *It is often said that*
- *First of all*
- *Apart from that*
- *Even though*
- *Furthermore*
- *In addition*
- *Moreover*
- *Nevertheless*

- *And*
- *Or*
- *But*
- *Finally*
- *Lastly*
- *Despite the fact that/ In spite of*
- *On the other hand*
- *On the contrary*
- *Whereas*
- *What is more*
- *After all*

## Reasoning

*Because of*  
*As a result of*  
*Owing to*  
*Through*  
*Due to*  
*Consequently*  
*On account of*  
*Therefore*  
*Hence*

## Concluding

*To sum up*  
*To conclude*  
*It can be concluded*  
*that*  
*I believe that*  
*Thus, I am of the*  
*opinion that*



**Argumentative verbs (use these instead of say/tell):**

- *Claim*
- *Assert*
- *Insist*
- *Argue*
- *Allege*
- *Suggest*
- *Point out*
- *Maintain*

# **Tips**

- **Use your own points, words and phrases as far as possible. The more original your content is, the better.**
- **Keep to the word limit 150-200 words. Exceeding a little over 200 is not a problem.**
- **Always have an introduction and conclusion**
- **Always organise your points into paragraphs. All advantages in one para and disadvantages in another para. (Two-sided) is the ideal format.**
- **A final opinion has to be given.**
- **Punctuation, spelling and grammar is very important. Check your writing once you're done**
- **Rhetorical questions are useful for the person writing the article (i.e. they help you come to grips with the topic), but it is best to rephrase them as statements or as indirect questions.**

# Don't!

- ▶ Don't use colloquialisms. They are phrases and words which are commonly used in conversation but have a non-literal meaning (e.g 'bucketing down').
- ▶ Don't use everyday abbreviations. Write "do not" instead of "don't". Spoken English is not formal enough for an article.
- ▶ Don't use 2nd Person "you" in an article. In spoken English, this is used for generalisation: 'You would expect that...' or 'You don't win by giving up'. The word you, however, tends to pull the reader into your argument and distracts from what you are saying. 'You must not disrespect the gods.'
- ▶ Don't use 1st Person Plural. Avoid using we or us in an essay. Saying 'Let us now turn to the issue of manumission' sounds pretentious. If you must guide the reader through your argument, use: 'Turning (now) to the issue of manumission'.

## 1st Person Singular

Some say not to use the word I in an essay. Others say it is fine. If you do use it, it is best to use I only in an introduction (and to a lesser extent, the conclusion), rather than in the body of the essay. But use it sparingly; otherwise you can come across as too self-important.

## Too vague

Using vague terms makes your writing imprecise and may cause people to interpret it in different ways. Always try to be as specific as possible.

<u>Taboo</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Alternative</u>
A bit	The interviews were a <b>bit</b> difficult to schedule	The interviews were (difficult/somewhat difficult) to schedule
A lot of, a couple of	A lot of studies	(Many/several/a great number of/eight) studies
Isn't, can't, doesn't, would've (or any other contraction)	The sample isn't	The sample is not
Kind of, sort of	The findings were kind of significant	The findings were (somewhat significant/significant to some degree)
Til, till	From 2008 till 2012	From 2008 (until/to) 2012
You, your (i.e., the <u>second-person point of view</u> )	You can clearly see the results	One can clearly see the results The results can clearly be seen

## Informal sentence starts

Some words are acceptable in certain contexts, but become too informal when used at the beginning of a sentence. You can replace these with appropriate transition words or simply remove them from the sentence.

<u>Taboo</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Alternative</u>
Plus	<b>Plus, the participants were in agreement on the third question</b>	<b>(Moreover/Furthermore/What is more), the participants were in agreement on the third question</b>
So	<b>So, it can be concluded that the model needs further refinement</b>	<b>Therefore, it can be concluded that the model needs further refinement</b>
And	<b>And the participants were all over the age of 30</b>	<b>The participants were all over the age of 30</b>
<u>Besides</u>	<b>Besides, we asked all the participants to sign an agreement</b>	<b>Additionally, we asked all the participants to sign an agreement</b>

## Too exaggerated

Academic writing is usually unadorned and direct. Some adverbs of frequency (such as *always* and *never*) and intensifiers (words that create emphasis, such as *really*) are often too dramatic. They may also not be accurate – you're making a significant claim when you say something is *perfect* or *never* happens.

These terms do sometimes add value, but try to use them sparingly.

### Taboo

Always, never

### Example

Researchers *always* argue that

### Alternative

Researchers (*frequently/ commonly/ typically*) argue that

Perfect

The *perfect* solution to the problem

(*An ideal solution/one of the best solutions*) to the problem

Really, so, super

This theory is *really* important

This theory is (*important/critical/crucial*)

## Too subjective

Some words and phrases reveal your own bias. For instance, if you state that something will *obviously* happen, you are indicating that you think the occurrence is obvious – not stating a fact.

Expressing your opinion is appropriate in certain sections of a dissertation and in particular types of academic texts (such as personal statements and reflective or argumentative essays). In most cases, though, take care when using words and phrases such as those below – try to let the facts speak for themselves, or emphasize your point with less biased language.

### Taboo

Beautiful, ugly, wonderful, horrible, great, boring

### Example

A review of the literature yielded many *great* articles

### Alternative

A review of the literature yielded many *relevant* articles

---

Obviously, naturally, of course

The results *obviously* indicate

The results *clearly* indicate



## Generally incorrect

Certain words and phrases are often used incorrectly, even by native speakers of a language. If you're exposed to such mistakes often enough, you may start to assume they are correct – but it's important that you don't let them creep into your writing.

You should also bear in mind that some of these mistakes relate to things we all frequently mishear (for instance, we often think the speaker is saying *would of* instead of *would have*).

Taboo	Example	Alternative
Literally	The students <i>literally</i> did not understand	The students did not understand
Would of, had of	The study <i>would of</i> considered	The study <i>would have</i> considered

## ▶ Are E-Vehicles a better choice?

- ▶ **Do you think electric vehicles are safe? Electric cars are becoming more mainstream, and you're likely not alone in wondering whether an electric car is right for you. There are concerns raised about the environment. But does it have the capacity to cater the needs of a common man with average wage? Let us see the advantages and disadvantages of both of these types of vehicles.**
- ▶ **Recently, people are switching to electric vehicles due to many reasons such as cost cutting, environmental factors, the growing scarcity and high rates of fuels, maintenance and so on. Even though e-vehicles cost more compared to conventional gas vehicles they are a long term investment. There are studies showing the maintenance of an e-vehicle is less compared to a gas vehicle. There is no need for gas, no oil changes, no smog tests, and fewer moving parts to break or wear out. Automotive giants such as Volvo are voicing their commitment to converting to electric car-only production in the very near future; and even luxury electric vehicles like Tesla are offering more affordable options to the consumer, altering public perception of electric cars as something only approachable by the elite.**
- ▶ **However, gas-powered cars remain relevant even as the EV revolution comes in full swing. Automakers can make proclamations about the robust future of EVs as much as they desire, but there are more than 100 years of history behind gas-powered cars. Which not even the biggest auto brands in the world, can just sweep under the rug. Electric cars offer advantages in a handful of ways, but they still have a long way to go to prove to the people that they're better than gas-powered cars. The problem with electric cars, at least compared to their gas-powered counterparts, is that they're less likely to sustain that quickness because of the lack of a transmission to channel that power to higher notches. Gas-powered cars, on the other hand, don't have that problem.**
- ▶ **Personally speaking I'd rather have a hybrid vehicle any day, if you're stuck somewhere without access to electric charging, a traditional mode will come in handy, and once the crisis situation is averted you can switch to charging your vehicle. There are discussions on this happening all over the world. Some people support the revolution and are open to reform, while others are adamant in their ever so convenient way. What are your thoughts on this? Will we achieve 100% electric car usage by 2050.**