

Schematic layouts for essay writing

1. Descriptive writing

Describing an object, topic, (political/historical/artistic) movement or place

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
major aspects of the subject.	description of aspect A description of aspect B description of aspect C etc.	summary of main points

Describing a process

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Definition of process Main equipment/Main steps	Step One ... leads to Step Two ...leads to Step Three	Summary of process

Describing and explaining

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Introduction to causes of A	Cause 1 + example Effects 1 Cause 2 with example Effects 2 Cause 3 with examples Effects 3 etc.	summary

Sequences of events

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
background	First situation then A happened then B happened, etc.	Final situation

2. Argumentative or persuasive writing

Argumentative writing

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Introduce the argument	Reasons in favour of the argument Reasons against the argument	Summarise the two sides, State your own opinion, explaining why you think this

Persuasive presentation of a viewpoint

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Introduce the topic ; state what you plan to prove in the essay	Briefly set out the main objections to your case.	Conclusion (no need to re-state your opinion)
	Set out arguments to support your own view, using evidence and examples.	End your essay with something memorable e.g. a quotation or a direct question.

Assessment of a problem (“to what extent...”)

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Introduction to problem	Aspect 1 - true Aspect 1 - false	a ‘subtraction’ sum:
	Aspect 2 - true Aspect 2 - false	
	Aspect 3 - true Aspect 3 – false (etc)	

3. Comparing and contrasting**Comparing**

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Introduction to similarities between A and B	Compare A & B in terms of first similarity	Summarise points and assess similarity
	Compare A & B in terms of second similarity	
	Compare A & B in terms of third similarity etc.	

Contrasting

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Introduction to differences between A and B	Compare A & B in terms of first difference	Summarise points and assess differences
	Compare A & B in terms of second difference	
	Compare A & B in terms of third difference etc.	

Compare and contrast (1)

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Introduction to similarities & differences between A and B	Difference 1; 2; 3 etc Similarity 1; 2; 3 etc	Summarise points and assess overall similarity/difference

Compare and contrast (2)

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Introduction to similarities & differences between A and B	Aspect 1: similarities/differences Aspect 2: similarities/differences Aspect 3: similarities/differences etc	Summarise points and assess overall similarity/difference

TASK 1: ESSAY PREPARATION

Essays are written in response to an essay question (a question or statement which provides the topic). Academic papers are written in response to an unstated question (often the title of the article). The following is a fairly typical question for an argumentative essay:

Children who start learning a foreign language at primary school have an advantage over those who learn a language later in life.

Discuss this statement in groups of 3 or 4. What pros (positive points) and cons (negative points) can you identify?

TASK 2: WRITING INTRODUCTIONS

From your own discussion notes, and write an introductory paragraph to this essay.

If you **agree** with the statement, use this structure:

One sentence to introduce your paragraph	topic sentence
One sentence to indicate the cons you intend to cover.	specifics, plus support
Some further detail regarding these cons.	
One sentence to cover the pros you intend to cover.	specifics, plus support
Some further detail regarding these pros.	
A short concluding statement	Conclusion/link to next paragraph

(i.e. negative comments first then the positive comments, and your conclusion will follow logically from your positive comments)

If you **disagree** with the statement, use this structure:

One sentence to introduce your paragraph	topic sentence
One sentence to indicate the pros you intend to cover.	specifics, plus support
Some further detail regarding these pros.	
One sentence to cover the cons you intend to cover.	specifics, plus support
Some further detail regarding these cons.	
A short concluding statement	Conclusion/link to next paragraph

(i.e. positive comments first then the negative comments, and your conclusion will follow logically from your negative comments)

[illegible]

TASK 3: WRITING CONCLUSIONS

From your essay plan and introductory paragraph, write a concluding paragraph to the essay.

If you **agreed** with the statement, use this structure:

One sentence to summarise the content/topic	topic sentence
One or two sentences to indicate the cons you mentioned	<i>Use concessive adverbs (although, while, even if...)</i>
One or two sentences to restate the pros, and to clarify and outstanding points	<i>Use adverbs of contrast (however, nevertheless...) and addition (furthermore, as a result...)</i>
A short concluding statement	<i>Sum up content (over all, all things considered, thus...)</i>

(i.e. negative comments first then the positive comments, and your conclusion will follow logically from your positive comments)

If you **disagreed** with the statement, use this structure:

One sentence to summarise the content/topic	topic sentence
One or two sentences to indicate the pros you mentioned	<i>Use concessive adverbs (although, while, even if...)</i>
One or two sentences to restate the cons, and to clarify and outstanding points	<i>Use adverbs of contrast (however, nevertheless...) and addition (furthermore, as a result...)</i>
A short concluding statement	<i>Sum up content (over all, all things considered, thus...)</i>

(i.e. positive comments first then the negative comments, and your conclusion will follow logically from your negative comments)

[illegible]

TASK 4: HOMEWORK

Complete the essay “Children who start learning a foreign language at primary school have an advantage over those who learn a language later in life.” with three body-text paragraphs