

FCE Writing Part One Essays Advice and Useful Phrases

Give your opinion on getting a good mark in this part of the exam, including topics like those below and see if your partner agrees. Make sure you show the strength or weakness of your opinions and support them with reasons, examples, personal experience, things you have heard or read, etc.

- Abbreviations (= short forms of words)
- Accuracy (= avoiding errors)
- Brainstorming (mind maps, lists, etc)
- British and American English
- Clever ideas
- Connecting your ideas
- Counting the number of words
- Doing Writing Part Two before Writing Part One
- Editing
- Formality/ Academic language
- Informal language (such as slang and modern online language used on Twitter and in SMS messages)
- Introduction
- Language
- Looking at both sides
- Making notes
- Making sure you answer the question/ complete the task
- Making things up (using imaginary personal experience etc)
- Neatness (= Tidiness)
- Number of paragraphs
- Phrases that can be used in all Writing Part One essays
- Planning
- Quoting people
- Rephrasing
- Starting paragraphs
- Subtopics (the two that are given and the one that you should think of)
- Summary/ Conclusion
- Supporting your arguments
- Thinking of ideas
- Timing
- Title/ Headings
- Underlining
- Using ambitious/ high level language
- Using an eraser
- Using personal pronouns ("I" etc)
- Using statistics
- Using your personal experience
- Word limit
- Writing Part One v Writing Part Two
- Your own real opinions on the essay question

Continue the discussion by giving your opinion using one of the phrases below. You can also make negative statements. Does your partner agree with your ideas?

Starting/ Planning/ Essay structure

- Underline important words in the question to make sure you do exactly what you are told to
- Do Writing Part Two first if you have a mental block with the Writing Part One essay, coming back to the first task later
- Skip the Writing Part One essay and do two tasks from Writing Part Two instead
- Brainstorm ideas before you start writing
- Make sure that you think of one more subtopic to include before you start writing
- Just write about the two subtopics given, not bothering with your own third subtopic
- Start writing as soon as you can think of one reasonably good third subtopic (rather than wasting time brainstorming better options)
- Plan for one paragraph in the body for each of the two sides of the argument
- Plan for one paragraph in the body of the essay for each of the three subtopics
- Write about whichever opinion seems easier to support (even if it is not your real opinion)
- Write about the subtopics in the same order as they are given on the question sheet

Introduction

- Rephrase the question in the introduction
- Give some background to the question by describing in the introduction how it is important, interesting and/ or topical
- Make sure that any description of the background to the question is true
- Give your own opinion in the introduction
- Only give your own opinion in the conclusion (not in the introduction)
- Explain the structure of your essay in the last sentence of the introduction (= the topic of each paragraph in the body of your essay)
- Make sure that your introduction has at least two sentences

Content

- Show the strength or weakness of your opinions
- Use different kinds of support (further explanation, reasons, logical arguments, examples, personal experience, other people's experience, things you have read or heard, etc) for each of your arguments
- Make sure that you look at both sides of the argument
- Look at both sides of all three subtopics
- Give academic references with author's names and page numbers
- Make up statistics, quotations or page numbers of books to support your arguments
- Make up your own personal experiences to support your arguments
- Make sure that you stay on topic
- Make sure that all your ideas are good, clever ones
- Assume that the reader knows a lot about your country and city

Language

- Be ambitious with the language that you use (= try to use high level/ advanced language)
- Just use basic language to make sure that you don't make mistakes
- Use a neutral level of formality
- Use formal language
- Use some slightly more informal high-level language such as phrasal verbs
- Use very academic language used in published journal papers like using "The author..." to refer to yourself
- Use Latin abbreviations such as "e.g." and "etc"
- Avoid personal words like "I" and "my"
- Use questions etc to make the essay more interesting for the reader
- Underline words to emphasize what you are saying
- Write words in capital letters to emphasize what you want to say
- Use exclamation marks
- Avoid repeating words and expressions in different parts of the essay
- Use paragraph headings
- Start paragraphs with multipurpose phrases like "Secondly" and "On the other hand"
- Memorise useful phrases for this part of the exam and use them in every essay you write

Summary/ Conclusion

- Include a final paragraph with a summary and/ or conclusion
- Make sure that your summary/ conclusion has at least two sentences
- If your summary/ conclusion is only one sentence, add the consequences of your conclusion for the government, society, etc
- Use exactly the same words in your summary as in the body of your essay
- Include other arguments in your summary/ conclusion which you didn't mention in the body of your essay

Finishing/ Editing

- Leave editing Part One until you have written Part Two too
- Spend as much time as you need to make Writing Part One perfect, then use whatever time is left on the Writing Part Two email, letter, review, article or report
- Make sure the essay is tidy enough to understand without needing to read anything twice
- Make sure that your writing is perfectly neat
- Add higher level/ advanced/ ambitious language during the editing stage
- Cross things out and use little arrows to insert missing words (rather than erasing)
- Add whole missing sentences to the middle of the text by putting the sentence in a box at the top or bottom of the page and drawing a long arrow to show where it should go
- Count every word that you have written to make sure you are within the word limit
- Spend a few minutes editing the essay down if you go over 190 words
- Leave five minutes for the final edit
- Leave one minute for the final edit
- Try to think of an interesting title

Write *G* for "good", *B* for "bad" or *?* for "It's okay" or "It depends" next to each line above.

Compare your ideas with those below.

Suggested answers

Starting/ Planning/ Essay structure

- Underline important words in the question to make sure you do exactly what you are told to G
- Do Writing Part Two first if you have a mental block with the Writing Part One essay, coming back to the first task later ?
- Skip the Writing Part One essay and do two tasks from Writing Part Two instead B
- Brainstorm ideas before you start writing ?/ B
- Make sure that you think of one more subtopic to include before you start writing G
- Just write about the two subtopics given, not bothering with your own third subtopic B
- Start writing as soon as you can think of one reasonably good third subtopic (rather than wasting time brainstorming better options) G
- Plan for one paragraph in the body for each of the two sides of the argument ?
- Plan for one paragraph in the body of the essay for each of the three subtopics ?
- Write about whichever opinion seems easier to support (even if it is not your real opinion) ?
- Write about the subtopics in the same order as they are given on the question sheet ?

Introduction

- Rephrase the question in the introduction G
- Give some *background to the question* by describing in the introduction *how it is important, interesting and/ or topical* G
- Make sure that any description of the background to the question is true G
- Give your own opinion in the introduction ?
- Only give your own opinion in the conclusion (not in the introduction) ?
- *Explain the structure of your essay* in the last sentence of the introduction (= *the topic of each paragraph in the body of your essay*) G
- Make sure that your introduction has at least two sentences G

Content

- *Show the strength or weakness of your opinions* G
- Use different kinds of support (*further explanation, reasons, logical arguments, examples, personal experience, other people's experience, things you have read or heard, etc*) for each of your arguments G
- Make sure that you *look at both sides of the argument* ?
- Look at both sides of all three subtopics B
- Give academic references with author's names and page numbers B
- Make up statistics, quotations or page numbers of books to support your arguments B
- Make up your own personal experiences to support your arguments ?
- Make sure that you stay on topic G
- Make sure that all your ideas are good, clever ones B
- Assume that the reader knows a lot about your country and city B

Language

- Be ambitious with the language that you use (= try to use high level/ advanced language) G
- Just use basic language to make sure that you don't make mistakes B
- Use a neutral level of formality ?

- Use formal language G
- Use some slightly more informal high-level language such as phrasal verbs G
- Use very academic language used in published journal papers like using “The author...” to refer to yourself B
- Use Latin abbreviations such as “e.g.” and “etc” ?
- Avoid personal words like “I” and “my” B
- Use questions etc to make the essay more interesting for the reader G
- Underline words to emphasize what you are saying B
- Write words in capital letters to emphasize what you want to say B
- Use exclamation marks B
- Avoid repeating words and expressions in different parts of the essay G
- Use paragraph headings B
- Start paragraphs with multipurpose phrases like “Secondly” and “On the other hand” B
- Memorise useful phrases for this part of the exam and use them in every essay you write B

Summary/ Conclusion

- Include a final paragraph with a *summary* and/ or *conclusion* G
- Make sure that your summary/ conclusion has at least two sentences G
- If your summary/ conclusion is only one sentence, *add the consequences of your conclusion for the government, society, etc* G
- Use exactly the same words in your summary as in the body of your essay B
- Include other arguments in your summary/ conclusion which you didn't mention in the body of your essay B

Finishing/ Editing

- Leave editing Part One until you have written Part Two too B
- Spend as much time as you need to make Writing Part One perfect, then use whatever time is left on the Writing Part Two email, letter, review, article or report B
- Make sure the essay is tidy enough to understand without needing to read anything twice G
- Make sure that your writing is perfectly neat B
- Add higher level/ advanced/ ambitious language during the editing stage G
- Cross things out and use little arrows to insert missing words (rather than erasing) G
- Add whole missing sentences to the middle of the text by putting the sentence in a box at the top or bottom of the page and drawing a long arrow to show where it should go ?
- Count every word that you have written to make sure you are within the word limit B
- Spend a few minutes editing the essay down if you go over 190 words B
- Leave five minutes for the final edit ?
- Leave one minute for the final edit B
- Try to think of an interesting title B

Brainstorm language to do the things in italics on the pages above.