IELTS Writing Part Two Tips and Useful Language

What advice would you give someone about the IELTS Writing exam? Discuss in pairs.

Possible topics:
- Timing
- Making sure you answer the question
- Coming up with ideas
- Planning and paragraphing
- Introduction
- Giving your opinion
- Supporting your opinion
- Summary/ Conclusion
- Editing
- Number of words
- Appropriate English/ Academic English

Choose one of the possible IELTS Writing Part Two tactics below and ask your partner's opinion on it. Try to extend the discussion, e.g. by asking them to justify their opinion, then switch roles.

Before the exam
- Learn model answers and just change a few sentences to fit the question in the exam
- Decide on one paragraph structure (e.g. introduction/ good things/ bad things/ conclusion) to use whatever the question is in the exam

Planning and paragraphing
- Underline important words in the question
- Decide on the paragraph structure right away then brainstorm ideas
- Brainstorm before you decide on the paragraph structure
- Choose a less obvious way of organising the paragraphs
- Stop brainstorming when you have three ideas per paragraph
- Continue brainstorming if your ideas seem silly
- Spend 10 minutes planning
- Always stick to four paragraphs
- Make sure the paragraphs are similar lengths
- Avoid one sentence paragraphs

Introduction
- Use basically the same introduction paragraph whatever the question is
- Give your own opinion in the introduction
- End the introduction with a sentence that explains the structure of the essay

Writing
- Write views which you don't really have
- Make up data to support your arguments
- Make up quotes to support your arguments
- Make up personal experience to support your argument
- Use lots of linking phrases ("On the other hand" etc)
- Write as much as you can
- Use lots of passives
- Avoid "I", "me" and "my"

Conclusion
- Write the conclusion that what you have written leads to rather than your real own opinion
- Unless it is really obvious, explain why you have drawn those conclusions from the things you have written
- If you've already given your opinion in the introduction, write a summary rather than a conclusion

Editing
- Leave five minutes for editing
- Make sure your work is really neat
- Use an eraser for any mistakes
- Rewrite words that might be difficult to read because of your handwriting etc
- Count the exact number of words
- Add another sentence at the end if you are short of words
- Insert extra sentences with an arrow to improve the structure or reach the minimum number of words
- Add more complex language while you edit

Useful language
Initial question
Do you think that people should…?
Would you advise someone to…?
Would you recommend…?
Do you think it is a good idea to…?
What is your opinion on…?
What do you think about the idea of…?

Follow up questions
In my own experience,…
Do you have personal experience of this?
Why do feel that way?
Are there any particular reasons for that?
But isn't it also true that…?

Ask your teacher about any of the points you aren't sure about.

What language did you use to give your opinion in the discussion above? What other language could you have used?

How did you support your arguments? What other support could you have given?

Brainstorm useful phrases for giving opinions in the discussion you just had:
Giving strong opinions/ Expressing certainty

Giving weak opinions/ Expressing uncertainty/ Speculating

Giving your experience

Giving other people's opinions and experiences/ Quoting

Clarifying what you mean

Giving examples

Explaining reasons and consequences