

Typical writing tasks in exams at level B2 include a story, a description of a place, person or event, a review (of a book or a film), a 'for and against' essay, an opinion essay, an article, and various types of formal and informal letters.

GENERAL TIPS: HOW TO WRITE A GOOD COMPOSITION IN AN EXAM

- 1 Read the rubric carefully. It will state what kind of text you are supposed to write and may specify the points which you have to include in your composition. Depending on the exam task, the rubric may also give you the title, the first or the last sentence, or a word limit. Look at the following sample exam task:

You are planning to go to the cinema with your English friend Mark this weekend. He has sent you links to information about three films and would like to know which one you would like to see.

FAKE EVIDENCE

A fast-paced thriller set in Bangkok. A former spy is falsely accused of smuggling drugs and forced to run. While he is trying to prove his innocence, he meets a beautiful customs officer...

ACCIDENTAL LOVE

A romantic comedy with a plot which you can actually believe in. Jim has an accident skiing and is taken to hospital where he meets Anne, who is working there as a nurse...

REPENTANCE

A powerful psychological drama set in Italy during World War II. A lieutenant with the German army helps rescue civilians from a besieged Italian town...

Write an email of 120 and 180 words to Mark. Include the following information:

- say which film you would like to see and explain your choice,
- ask when it is on,
- suggest a place where you can meet.

Begin your email like this: *Hi Mark,*

The instructions require you to write an email to a friend, so you can use informal language. There are three points that you have to include, listed as bullet points. There is a word limit you must not exceed and an opening you have to use. You may underline all these elements in the exam task and check if you have included each of them after you finish writing.

- 2 If you have a choice of topics, choose one which will give you the best chances of success. The following questions will help you:
 - Do I know what I would like to write on this topic?
 - Do I know the formal features of this type of text (essay, description, etc.)?
 - Do I know enough vocabulary associated with the topic?
- 3 Think about the content of the composition. Read the rubric carefully one more time to make sure you have not overlooked any key points. You can note down various ideas and then choose the best ones.
- 4 Make a plan of your composition:
 - Have a look at the ideas you have noted down. Choose the ones that best suit your purpose. Think about how they are connected. Number them in the order in which you want to put them in your text. Decide how many paragraphs there will be.
 - Decide what you are going to write in the introduction and in the conclusion.
- 5 Think about what style is appropriate for the text you are going to write.
- 6 Note down or recall some sophisticated words or phrases, appropriate to the subject and the text type.
- 7 Write a rough draft of your text. Try to vary your vocabulary and structures.
- 8 Count the words in your draft. If it is a bit too long, look for words you can delete (e.g. uninteresting adjectives). If it is much too long, you will need to delete whole sentences; but be careful not to delete content required by the exam task. If the text is too short, think about which ideas you can develop further.
- 9 Read the whole text carefully; check that the division into paragraphs is logical and that they are of a similar length. Correct any grammar, spelling or punctuation mistakes. If you spot any repetition, try to replace the repeated word with a synonym.
- 10 Write the final version of your composition. Write legibly. Remember that the division between paragraphs must be visible and always marked in the same way (space or indentation, or space *and* indentation, but not a mix of styles).
- 11 While working on the rough draft, keep an eye on the time. If you realise you have too little time to complete it and then rewrite it, move on to the final version, so that you do not end up handing in an unfinished text.

EXAM TIPS

- 1 First think of the main points of your story: *what* is going to happen, *where*, *when*, and *who* the character(s) will be.
- 2 Details make a story come alive. They can be details of the scenery, not only visual, but perceived by all the senses, e.g. sounds or smells. Or you can add details about people, their appearance and their behaviour; or about characteristic objects. In such a short story it is not possible to fit in many details, but even a few will make it more attractive.
- 3 It makes sense to describe the most important event in detail. Developments that lead up to the main event should be described concisely to avoid exceeding the word limit.
- 4 Use different narrative tenses. In most sentences you will need the Past Simple to present the events in chronological order, but try to use the Past Continuous to set up the scene at the beginning, the Past Perfect for retrospection, and *would*+infinitive to show that the characters are thinking or talking about the future.
- 5 In the ending you may mention, for example, reactions to the event, its consequences, or the conclusions that the characters drew from it.
- 6 The style of the story may be literary or somewhat colloquial, but it should be consistent.

examTASK

- 1 Write a story about a dangerous accident with a happy ending, entitled 'Lucky to be alive'.

LUCKY TO BE ALIVE

It was a dark and stormy night in November. It was raining so hard that the windscreen wipers were no longer coping. My brother Charlie and I were driving down a small country road in Lancashire, trying to get home in time for supper.

Suddenly a dark shape came into view, just metres ahead of us. Someone had left a trailer with no lights on the side of the road. Charlie slammed on the brakes and swerved. The car skidded on the wet tarmac and soared into the air.

It couldn't have lasted more than a few seconds, but I remember it as an eternity. As the car turned over in the air, I thought about our mother waiting for us. In the morning a policeman would come and tell her we were dead. Then the car hit the soft ground and rolled over. There was a terrible noise of shattering glass and breaking steel, but still no pain. Finally everything was still. I was suspended upside down in my seatbelt, uncomfortable but unhurt. I heard Charlie's voice.

'Jerry?'
'Charlie? Are you OK?'
'I've lost my glasses.'

I laughed with relief. We got out of the car, which was a complete wreck, and walked the remaining three miles home in the rain. In the morning we would have to go to the police station and report the accident. But for now, the pure joy of being alive carried us through that November night.

INTRODUCTION: TIME, PLACE, CHARACTERS

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE MAIN EVENT

DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN EVENT

CONCLUSION: REACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

TASK ANALYSIS

- 2 In the above sample answer underline:
 - a examples of the tenses mentioned in tip 4,
 - b two or three examples of details mentioned in tip 2.

EXAM TIPS

- The person, place or event you describe can be real or imaginary. The advantage of choosing a real subject is that you do not have to imagine it (or him/her). The advantage of writing about an imaginary subject is that you can give it characteristics which will allow you to show off the sophisticated vocabulary you know.
- The rubric may tell you to focus on a specific aspect of the place, person or event described, e.g.: *Describe a teacher you admire for his or her ability to interest students in his/her subject and for his/her approach to young people's problems.* Remember to take this aspect into account in your description.
- Your description should have a clear structure. This might be for example:
 - first a general impression, then the details;
 - a mistaken first impression followed by a revised, more accurate view of the person or place;
- what the person or place looked like in the past and what he/she/it looks like now;
- chronological order in describing an event.
- The style of the description should be consistent.
- When describing a place it is worth concentrating on what is special about it, especially if a specific aspect is required by the rubric.
- When describing a person do not list all the possible physical characteristics. It is better to concentrate on a few characteristic features, especially those which say something about his or her personality, e.g. the smile. When describing personality traits, remember to illustrate each one with an example of the person's behaviour. The topic may suggest the characteristics you will focus on.
- A description of an event will be livelier and more interesting if it contains colours, smells, sounds and feelings.

examTASK

- Describe a person your negative first impression of whom was wrong.

I remember how I first saw him. We were gathered in the big hall for some school event, and he was taller than everyone there. 'Who's that?' I asked my friend Miriam. 'Don't you know him? That's Chris, captain of the football team.'

He certainly looked like a footballer. Tall, muscular, with close-cropped hair, wearing some sort of sports outfit and trainers. Primitive macho, I thought, not my kind of person at all. Probably arrogant as well.

I couldn't have been more wrong, as I soon discovered. He was talking to his friend – about the latest match, I assumed, until I heard him mention the name of a little-known poet whom I was also reading. That's how I found out Chris is intelligent and well-read. Not only are his academic results outstanding, but he's also seriously into literature and cinema, and his conversation is fascinating.

Despite all his sporting and intellectual achievements, he's appealingly modest. Everything I know about those successes I've learned from other people, because he doesn't talk about them.

Most importantly, he's a gentle, considerate person, always careful not to hurt anyone's feelings. Thanks to his tact and mediating skills there are very few conflicts in the football team.

By getting to know Chris better, by talking to him and observing his interactions with people I've learned that my first impression of him was entirely mistaken. I'm glad I've had the opportunity to realise that and to gain such a wonderful friend.

INTRODUCTION: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERSON BEING DESCRIBED (NAME, FUNCTION, HOW YOU KNOW THEM)

FIRST IMPRESSION: PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, FIRST OPINION (NEGATIVE AND FALSE)

TRANSITION FROM THE FALSE FIRST IMPRESSION TO THE TRUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSON BEING DESCRIBED

PERSONALITY – CHARACTERISTICS SUPPORTED BY EXAMPLES

CONCLUSION: ALTERED (POSITIVE) OPINION WITH JUSTIFICATION

TASK ANALYSIS

- Underline in the text:
 - three characteristics the writer ascribed to Chris based on her first impression,
 - five of Chris's true characteristics backed up with examples,
 - phrases and sentences which refer to the first, false impression.
- Which of the structures a–d described in tip 3 does the description follow?

EXAM TIPS

- At the beginning, provide the basic information about the work you are reviewing, such as the title and the author's name, the genre, perhaps the awards it has won.
- A common error in writing a review is to summarise the entire plot of a book or film. This has two effects: firstly, it makes the review boring and secondly, there is not enough space to analyse and evaluate the work. The plot summary should be concise and should never reveal the ending. It should be written in the Present Simple tense.
- Analyse and evaluate various aspects of the work, for example the plot, the characters, the acting, the directing, the moral dimension. Notice whether the rubric requires you to focus on a particular aspect.
- To get high marks, you should use some vocabulary appropriate to the art form you are writing about. If you do not know any, it may be better to choose a different topic.
- The style of the review may be more or less formal depending on the reader you are writing for, but it should be consistent.

examTASK

- Write a review of a film which combines interesting action with the presentation of some element of the culture of an English-speaking country.

Inside Man by Spike Lee

Inside Man is a thriller, which is perhaps surprising from Spike Lee, a director known for more serious films depicting the experiences of African Americans. However, this first attempt at cinema as entertainment is a great success, and an attentive viewer will also discover in it a wealth of cultural background.

The movie tells the story of a bank robbery. Masked attackers hold up a bank in Manhattan, taking all the staff and customers hostage. Detective Keith Frazier, brilliantly played by Denzel Washington, negotiates with the robbers, while at the same time trying to work out what they are really up to. The director guides us through a maze of confusing clues to a surprise ending.

The film is exciting, with fast action and many unexpected twists and turns. Denzel Washington gives a spectacular performance, as do Clive Owen as the leader of the gang and all of the supporting cast.

But in addition to being a first-rate thriller, the movie offers a picture of life in New York. Apart from beautiful shots of Manhattan, the viewer sees a gallery of minor characters of many races, nationalities and languages. Their interactions, whether marked by prejudice, resentment, tolerance, or friendship, give a real sense of both the tensions and the richness of life in the most cosmopolitan city on Earth.

I sincerely recommend this movie to everyone who likes a good and not necessarily brutal thriller, but also to those interested in getting an insight into life in multicultural New York.

INTRODUCTION: BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE FILM

PLOT SUMMARY, WRITTEN IN THE PRESENT SIMPLE

ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE FILM, USING VOCABULARY APPROPRIATE TO THIS GENRE

CULTURAL CONTENT

CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATION

TASK ANALYSIS

- Read the sample review and underline the sentences in which the writer refers to the aspects of the film required by the exam task: a) interesting action, b) an element of the culture of an English-speaking country.
- Underline the phrases used to analyse and assess the following aspects of the film: the plot, the acting, the cinematography, the educational value.

EXAM TIPS

- 1 If the exam task requires you to present the 'advantages and disadvantages' or 'arguments for and against', the introduction should state the topic or issue, but *not* your opinion (keep that for the conclusion). The topic can be introduced in the form of a question.
- 2 The main body of the essay should consist of two paragraphs of approximately the same length: one 'for' and one 'against'. Which arguments should be presented first? Here are two possible solutions:
 - a First the arguments 'for' and then 'against'.
 - b Present the arguments you agree with second – they will appear stronger as well as providing a smooth transition to the conclusion, where you state your opinion.
- 3 The conclusion should not introduce new arguments, as this gives the impression that the text is unfinished. It should sum up the discussion and give your opinion on the issue in question.
- 4 An essay should be written in a formal style. Do not use colloquial language or contractions (*don't, haven't, etc.*).

examTASK

- 1 Many young people start work before finishing their studies. Write an essay presenting the advantages and disadvantages of such a step.

Many young people nowadays do not wait to graduate before they start work. They find their first job while still at university. **What are the advantages and disadvantages** of taking such a step?

The main benefit, of course, is that you have your own income and do not have to rely on your parents to cover all your expenses. It is easier for them and for you. **Moreover**, if the job is connected with the area you are studying, you can gain valuable skills which may be useful to you in the future. **Not only that, but** when you start applying for full-time jobs after graduating, your CV will already show previous experience.

On the other hand, having a job while studying **has its drawbacks**. For one thing, it may affect your studies. You have less time to study and you may be tired in class. **In addition**, it leaves you less time for your social life, which is such an important part of the student experience. **Finally**, it may mean you have to give up the long holidays and with them the opportunity to travel.

In conclusion, it seems that working while studying has as many benefits as drawbacks. **In my opinion**, it is worthwhile if the job is interesting or relevant to your future career. Ultimately, however, it is a matter of personal choice.

INTRODUCTION: INTRODUCE THE PROBLEM, SIGNAL THAT THERE ARE PROS AND CONS WITHOUT GIVING AN OPINION

ARGUMENTS FOR

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

CONCLUSION: SUM UP THE DISCUSSION AND GIVE YOUR OPINION

TASK ANALYSIS

- 2 In the above sample essay, replace the highlighted phrases with others with the same function.

EXAM TIPS

- 1 If the exam task asks you to present your opinion, in the introduction you should state that opinion and in the conclusion – repeat it using different words.
- 2 The main body should contain arguments to support your opinion – one argument per paragraph. It is also a good idea to mention one or two arguments for the opposing view and explain why you disagree with them.
- 3 The style should be formal (no colloquial language, no contractions), to the point, neutral and unaggressive. Even if you have a very strong opinion on the issue you are writing about, avoid emotive expressions and exclamation marks.
- 4 The conclusion should not introduce new arguments, as this gives the impression that the text is unfinished.

examTASK

- 1 More and more countries are introducing smoking bans in enclosed public places, including restaurants and cafés. Write an essay in which you give your opinion on this topic.

More and more countries are introducing a ban on smoking in all enclosed public spaces, including restaurants, cafés and clubs. **In my opinion**, this regulation is beneficial to society.

First and foremost, there is the issue of public health. Smoking has been proved to cause lung cancer, heart disease and a number of other illnesses. Any measure to reduce this dangerous addiction must therefore be regarded as a positive step.

What is more, the risks are not restricted to smokers themselves. 'Passive smoking' – inhaling another person's tobacco smoke – is almost equally dangerous. In particular, smoking anywhere where children are present is extremely harmful to their health and development, as is exposing a pregnant woman to cigarette smoke.

Finally, with regard to smoking in restaurants, non-smokers find tobacco smoke disturbs them while they are eating, as to them its smell is disgusting.

In some countries, café owners have opposed the smoking ban on the grounds that it is bad for business. Some people also complain about the crowds of smokers gathering on pavements outside cafés and office buildings, forcing all passers-by to walk through a cloud of tobacco smoke. **However, to my mind** these are minor problems, which will surely be solved in time, and their importance is incomparable with that of the health impact.

To sum up, I strongly support the smoking ban. **It seems to be** a move in the right direction and I hope it can be extended to even more places that are open to the public.

INTRODUCTION: INTRODUCE THE PROBLEM AND YOUR OPINION

ARGUMENT 1

ARGUMENT 2

ARGUMENT 3

OPPOSING ARGUMENT AND WHY IT IS WRONG

CONCLUSION: SUM UP THE DISCUSSION AND RESTATE YOUR OPINION IN DIFFERENT WORDS

TASK ANALYSIS

- 2 Write the introduction to an essay on the same topic but expressing the opposite opinion.

EXAM TIPS

- 1 The exam rubric sometimes reminds you to write your letter 'in an appropriate style'. But what is 'an appropriate style' in a letter? In very formal contexts, such as a job or university application or a serious complaint, use a full formal style:
 - avoid all colloquial and emotional language;
 - do not use contractions (write *do not* rather than *don't*, *he is* rather than *he's*);
 - finish with 'Yours sincerely' or 'Yours faithfully'.
- 2 Most correspondence today is written in a semi-formal style. Examples of semi-formal contexts could be a letter to a company about a minor issue, such as an object you left in a hotel room, or a personal letter to an adult you do not know well.

When writing in such contexts:

- be polite and friendly;
- avoid extremes: do not use colloquial expressions, but also avoid very official language, which would make your letter sound cold and distant;
- you can use some contractions, but not very many;
- finish the letter with 'With best wishes' or 'Kindest regards'.

The sample letter below is written in a semi-formal style.

examTASK

1 Do the exam task.

While on holiday in England, you found an animal. You have looked after it, but you cannot take it home with you. Write a letter to an animal welfare organisation called Animal Aid to ask if they can help you find a home for it. In your letter:

- say why you are writing;
- describe the animal;
- explain why you cannot keep it;
- ask for help in ensuring the animal's well-being.

Write your letter in an appropriate style.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to ask your help in finding a good home for a dog I found while staying here in Worthing. She is a small black poodle. She was very thin when I found her, but apart from that she seems in good health, and she is also very well-behaved.

I will be returning to my country soon and cannot take her with me. Unfortunately, I don't know anyone who could look after her here, and I certainly wouldn't like to leave her in an animal shelter. I was wondering if you could help me place her with someone who would really care for her.

Thank you for your help.

With best wishes,
Daniel Wagner

STATE THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER IN THE FIRST SENTENCE

USE VERY POLITE LANGUAGE WHEN ASKING A FAVOUR

INCLUDE A BRIEF BUT FRIENDLY CONCLUSION

TASK ANALYSIS

- 2 Circle and number the parts of the model letter in which the writer includes the information required by each bullet point in the rubric.
- 3 Find three examples of the features of a semi-formal style in the model letter (use the list in exam tip 2).

EXAM TIPS

- 1 An informal context can be a letter to a friend, or a personal letter to someone more or less your own age. Write in an informal, friendly style; you can use colloquial language and slang expressions.
- 2 Use contractions (*I'm*, *don't* etc.).
- 3 There is a lot of freedom regarding the way you finish your letter. 'Love' and 'All the best' are popular phrases.

examTASK

1 Do the exam task.

You are going on a short visit to Liverpool, to stay with your English friend Sally. She has sent you links to information about some of the museums you could visit, and wants to know which ones you are interested in.

Merseyside Maritime Museum

Liverpool was once one of the greatest ports of Europe. You can see objects from the Titanic, find out about smugglers and how they are caught, learn about life at sea in past centuries, and admire an enormous collection of model ships in the museum.

International Slavery Museum

The exhibitions tell the harrowing story of the transatlantic slave trade, of the life of black slaves in the Americas and their long road to freedom. The museum also documents contemporary forms of slavery, human trafficking and forced labour.

The Beatles Story Liverpool

The award-winning Beatles Story experience is an atmospheric journey into the life, times and music of the Beatles. Join us on a magical mystery tour into the 1960s and see how four young boys from Liverpool became the greatest band of all time.

Write a letter to Sally. Include the following information.

- Say which museum(s) you would be most interested in.
- Give reasons for your choice.
- Ask for more information about the museums.

Dear Sally,

Thanks a lot for inviting me, and for all the info about the museums. I wish I could see them all, but I don't think we'll have enough time.

There's no sea where I live, so the Maritime Museum seems really interesting, exotic and romantic. And of course it'd be fascinating to see real objects from the Titanic. Can you tell me more about it? For example, is there a real historic ship that you can visit? That'd be brilliant.

I'm also interested in the Slavery Museum – it sounds like a unique place; I've never visited one before. What sort of objects can you see there? It looks as if the Beatles may have to wait till my next visit.

What about you? Which museum would you recommend? It'd be nice to do something we both enjoy.

Thanks again, and see you very soon.

Love,
Andrea

INTRODUCTION: REFER TO THE INPUT

MAIN BODY: DISCUSS THE INPUT IN SOME DETAIL

INCLUDE A FRIENDLY ENDING

TASK ANALYSIS

- 2 Circle and number the parts of the model letter in which the writer includes the information required by each bullet point in the rubric.
- 3 Find three examples of the features of an informal style in the model letter.

EXAM TIPS

- In the introduction, refer to the information from the input using your own words. Do not copy the extract. Do not present your opinion yet.
- Develop each of the points required by the rubric in one paragraph, giving your opinion as required.
- Support your opinions with arguments and examples.
- A good conclusion may do one or more of the following:
 - return to the idea from the introduction;
 - restate your opinion;
 - suggest solutions;
 - refer to the future.
- The style of an article may be more or less formal, depending on the reader it is intended for. It should, however, be consistent.

examTASK

1 Do the exam task.

In response to the growing problem of obesity among children, the UK media regulator Ofcom has decided that all advertisements for foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar will be banned in and around TV programmes for children up to the age of 16.

Write an article of 200–250 words in which you give your opinion. Include the following points:

- whether you think the consumption of unhealthy foods by children is a serious problem;
- whether a ban on the advertising of such foods is an appropriate solution;
- what else could be done to stop children becoming obese.

This is the title of your article: *Towards a slimmer society*

TOWARDS A SLIMMER SOCIETY

OFCOM, the organisation that regulates the media in the UK, has announced its decision to ban the advertising of foods high in fat, salt and sugar from children's television in an effort to reduce child obesity.

Clearly, there is a problem. We see more and more overweight, unhealthy-looking children around us. And if you're not sure what is causing this obesity epidemic, count the number of children you pass in the street who are munching on crisps or chocolate bars. Or look into the nearest hamburger place on a Saturday and see how many families are having lunch there.

Advertising is at least partly to blame, as it tempts children to consume snacks whether they are hungry or not. But should it be banned? Advertisers don't think so. They cite freedom of speech and say children must be educated about healthy eating instead. But freedom of speech may be restricted in the public interest. And the impact of education is weakened when it is constantly undermined by advertising campaigns with budgets far greater than that of any government-funded educational project.

Other steps can be taken to reduce child obesity. In supermarkets sweets should not be displayed by the checkout at a child's eye level. Healthier meals should be on offer in schools. And perhaps most importantly, children should have more opportunities to do sports.

But this advertising ban is a sensible move, which other countries might consider imitating. Let's hope it helps us bring up slimmer, healthier future generations.

DEVELOP EACH POINT IN ONE PARAGRAPH

INTRODUCTION: REFER TO THE INFORMATION FROM THE INPUT, USING YOUR OWN WORDS.

USE EXAMPLES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE.

YOU CAN STATE THE PROBLEM IN THE FORM OF A QUESTION.

SUGGEST POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

CONCLUSION: RETURN TO THE IDEA FROM THE INTRODUCTION; RESTATE YOUR OPINION; REFER TO THE FUTURE.

TASK ANALYSIS

- Underline the examples used by the writer to show why many children are overweight.
- According to the writer, what three steps can be taken to stop children from becoming obese?
- Find phrases in the conclusion which serve the following functions: returning to the idea from the introduction, restating the writer's opinion, referring to the future.

STORY

SEQUENCING EVENTS

As soon as ... All of a sudden, ...
 While I was ... ing ... Immediately, ...
 No sooner had we ... than ... Within minutes ...
 Suddenly, ...

OTHER

It all started when ... I'll never forget ...
 I had never imagined I would ...

DESCRIPTION

The first thing you notice about (him / her / the place) is ...
 (He / she / this place) is special for a number of reasons.
 He / she is the kind of person (who ...)
 It is the kind of place that / where ...
 The place I like best is ...
 I'll never forget ... (a person / an event)
 It was an unforgettable (day / event / occasion).
 The most [unusual] person I've ever met / place I've been to is ...

REVIEW

INFORMATION ABOUT THE BOOK/FILM AND ITS CONTENT

It tells the story of ...
 The story / the action takes place in ... / is set in ...
 It is based on real events / on a true story / on a book.
 It has been made into a film (by ... / starring ...)

ASSESSMENT

I was impressed by ... One weakness (of the book / film) is that ...
 I couldn't put it down.
 It's a classic / a masterpiece.

ASSESSMENT – ADJECTIVES

+	-	+/-
BRILLIANT	PREDICTABLE	VIOLENT
SPECTACULAR	UNCONVINCING	SLOW
STRIKING	FAR-FETCHED	SENTIMENTAL
IMPRESSIVE	DULL	SERIOUS
POWERFUL	BLAND	
CONVINCING	DISAPPOINTING	

'FOR AND AGAINST' ESSAY OPINION ESSAY

INTRODUCTION – FOR AND AGAINST

What are the arguments for and against this idea?
 What are the benefits and drawbacks of such a step?
 This step / idea / solution can be said to have both advantages and disadvantages.

INTRODUCTION – OPINION

In this essay, I am going to argue that ...
 In my opinion ...

INTRODUCING THE FIRST ARGUMENT

First of all, ... One (dis)advantage is that ...
 First(ly), ... The main argument in support of ... is that ...
 First and foremost, ...
 For one thing, ... On the one hand, ...
 To begin with, ...

MORE ARGUMENTS

Secondly, ... Furthermore, ...
 Thirdly, ... What is more ...
 Another (dis)advantage is that ... In addition, ...
 Moreover, ... Not only that, but ...

FINAL ARGUMENT

Finally, ... Last but not least, ...

PRESENTING THE OPPOSING OPINION

On the other hand, ... However, ... Nevertheless, ...

EXPRESSING YOUR OPINION

In my opinion, ... To my mind, ...

EXPRESSING AN OPINION CAUTIOUSLY

It seems / appears that ...
 It would seem / appear that ...
 It is believed / recognised that ...
 There is little / some / no doubt that ...

SUMMARY

To sum up, ... All things considered, ... On balance, ...
 In conclusion, ... All in all, ... On the whole, ...

FORMAL AND SEMI-FORMAL LETTERS

Very formal phrases have been marked with an *.

OPENING PHRASES

Dear Sir or Madam, Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Jones,

INTRODUCTION

I am writing (in order) to...
 I am writing in connection with...

ASKING FOR INFORMATION

Could you please let me know... I would like to know...

REQUESTS

I would be (very) grateful if you could...
 I was wondering if you could...

PROBLEMS

I am afraid... (the camera does not work properly)

CONCLUSION

*I look forward to hearing from you.
 Thank you (very much) for your help.

CLOSING PHRASES

*Yours faithfully, (if the letter begins Dear Sir or Madam)
 *Yours sincerely, (if the letter begins Dear Mr/Ms...)
 (With) best wishes, (semi-formal)
 (With) kindest/best regards, (semi-formal)

INFORMAL LETTERS

OPENING PHRASES

Dear Peter, Hi Sue,

INTRODUCTION

Thanks for your letter. / It was good to hear from you.
 Sorry I haven't written for so long.
 I hope you're OK.

CONCLUSION

I must be going now. Say hello to...
 Write soon. Have a nice trip.
 Looking forward to your news/ Thanks again.
 to hearing from you again. See you (soon/ in the summer).

CLOSING PHRASES

All the best, Love from... Cheers,
 Love, Best, Bye for now.

ARTICLE

RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

Have you ever (wondered why/if...)?
 What would you do if...?
 Should... (it be forbidden/encouraged)?

QUOTING OPINIONS

(The proponents of the idea) believe/say...

CONCLUSION: REFERRING TO THE FUTURE

What will the future of... be?
 Let's hope...
 Hopefully, ...