

## What is an essay?

When you write an essay, you make arguments and support them with reasons and ideas.

You must agree or disagree with the ideas you are given in a formal/neutral style.

In an essay for the C1 Advanced exam you are given three points and you must choose two of them to write about. You must also make a choice between the two points, saying which one is more important/effective/useful/significant/advantageous (depending on the task) and explaining why.

Your class has had a debate on how schools can educate young people to care more about the environment. You have made the notes below:

Ways that schools can educate young people to care more about the environment:

- watching documentaries
- doing projects
- banning plastic from schools

Some opinions expressed in the debate:

"If children can see and learn about the damage being done to the planet, they will be more likely to change their behaviour."

"It's impossible to totally ban plastic from schools, and it's a waste of time trying."

"By asking students to research and learn about how they can take action, we empower them to care for the environment."

Write an essay discussing **two** of the ideas for educating young people in your notes. You should explain which way you think is more effective, giving reasons to support your opinion.

You may, if you wish, make use of the opinions expressed in the discussion, but you should use your own words as far as possible.

Write your **essay** in 220-260 words.

Now, more than ever, it is **vital** that young people are aware of the importance of caring for the planet. It is a sad fact that more and more damage is being done to the environment and it is the next generation who will suffer the consequences the **most**. So, what **part** can schools **play** in educating young people about the environment?

First and foremost, **there is no better way to understand a problem than to learn about it and teach others**. Therefore, doing group and individual projects at school would provide students with the opportunity to educate themselves and their classmates regarding ways to protect the environment. **Were** teachers to guide their students towards important themes, such as **the overuse of** plastic or the **destruction** of the rainforest, to name a couple, they could help them to become informed and caring citizens.

Enjoying well-made documentaries is **a further way** in which young people can become informed about the **serious issues** facing the planet and, **although watching a screen is a passive activity**, it can be turned into a vital tool for learning when teachers **make an effort** to **encourage** discussions and critical thinking about the matters presented.

**Taking** all of the above **into consideration**, there is no doubt that participation in projects is the best way to help children learn and encourage them to take action to protect our most **vital resource** - the planet on which we live. Documentaries have their place, but there is no replacement for learning by doing.

A short introduction suitable for the theme of the essay.

Idea 1

Idea 2

Explain which way is more effective, giving reasons.

**Q. How should I structure/organise an essay?**

A.

Paragraph 1 - introduction

Paragraph 2 - idea 1

Paragraph 3 - idea 2

Paragraph 4 - making a choice between the two ideas

**Q. Do I have to write an essay? Can't I choose another task?**

A. The essay task is obligatory. That means you must write it and you don't have any choice of task.

**Q. Can I invent my own ideas instead of using those in the task?**

A. No. You must choose two of the three ideas given.

**Q. There are three ideas in the task. Can I write about all of them?**

A. No. You must follow the instructions and only write about two of the points.

**Q. Do I have to use the opinions given in the task?**

A. No you don't; you can use them if you want to but it's not a requirement. However, it's a good idea to read them as they can give you some quick ideas. If you do decide to use them, don't copy the words directly from the task. Think about the idea they are communicating and write that idea using your own words.

(a) The key thing you have to do in an essay is to have an opinion on the two ideas and then explain or justify these opinions with examples or information. You can mention contrasting views as a way to show that you have thought about all sides of the argument.

(b) Introduction

It should be **short** - no more than two or three sentences long.

It should introduce the topic with a suitable general statement but it's not a good idea to learn a sentence and use it for all introductions because it might not fit with the situation. For example, **not everything is a controversial issue!** It's better to practise many different types of introductions so that you feel confident on the day of the exam.

Your introduction **doesn't have to** mention the two points you're going to write about. You can decide on the style of introduction you want to use.

Overall the idea is to inform the reader about the **topic** of the essay and to **grab their attention**.

### (c) Main paragraphs

The first sentence is the **topic sentence**. The sentences that follow should **support** your point of view. There should be **cohesion** within a paragraph and between paragraphs. What that means is that each paragraph should be **well organised** and also that the paragraphs should connect to each other.

Within each paragraph you need to use **different grammatical structures** and different organisational patterns. This means varying the language you use.

Use **clear, objective, neutral/formal** language.

Both main paragraphs should be **similar in length**.

**Don't** write about the same thing in paragraphs two and three or repeat sentences from these paragraphs in the conclusion. Sometimes students accidentally **repeat ideas**. If you plan your essay well, you won't end up doing this.

### (d) Conclusion

In the conclusion it is **essential** that you answer the part of the task where you are asked to **make a choice** between the two things you have written about.

**Do not introduce any new ideas** in the conclusion.