

You must be able to:

- Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively
- Adapt your writing for different forms, purposes and audiences.

The Task

- Paper 2 of the English Language exam includes one writing task. It gives you the opportunity to express your views on a theme explored in the reading section of the exam.
- You will be given a statement or scenario, and instructions which include details of purpose, form and audience:

School holidays create problems for parents and damage children's education.

Write an article for a student website in which you argue for or against this view.

Audience

- Sometimes the task specifies an **audience**:

Write a letter to your head teacher.

- Sometimes the audience is implied by the form:

– Write an article for your school website.

- Your intended audience determines what sort of language you use. Think about whether a formal or informal tone is called for.
- You would write informally for people you know well, using the sort of language that you use when chatting with them. However, you should avoid using 'text language' (**abbreviations**, emoticons etc.) in the exam.
- It can be appropriate to write informally for people you don't know, as if you were their friend, for example, in a magazine article aimed at teenagers.
- For almost everything else use a formal tone and write in Standard English (see pages 14–15).
- Whether you are writing formally or informally, be aware of your audience's interests and points of view. For example, if you were writing for a local audience you would focus on known local concerns:

Here in Bingley, we have always been proud of our green spaces.

- You would expect school governors to be concerned about the school's reputation:

I know that you are just as concerned as I am about recent complaints of unsocial behaviour.



Key Point

You are free to agree or disagree with the stimulus you are given. The important thing is to try to convince the reader of your view.

- And a little flattery can go a long way:

I have always been impressed by your commitment to our community.

Purpose

- The purpose of your writing is to express your point of view. The wording of the task might give a slightly different emphasis. For example, 'argue' sounds more passionate than 'explain', while 'persuade' suggests more emphasis on the audience.

Constructing Your Argument

- In constructing your **argument**, start with a powerful opening paragraph, which grabs your audience and makes your point clear.
- Make sure you offer a number of points in support of your argument, starting a new paragraph for each.
- Acknowledge other points of view but then give your **counter-arguments**, pointing out why you think they are wrong:

Some people argue that school uniforms stifle individuality. However,...

- Structure your argument in a logical order, using **discourse markers** to 'signpost' the development of your argument:

Another point I would like to make is...

- Back up your points with evidence if you can. You can use the sources for the reading question to help you with this.
- Give appropriate examples, including **anecdotes**:

Only last week, I encountered such behaviour...

- Address your audience directly (**direct address**), using 'you', and show your own involvement by using 'I' and 'we'.
- Use a full range of **rhetorical devices**, including lists of three, repetition and **hyperbole** (see pages 28–29).
- Use humour if you think it is appropriate.
- Use a variety of sentence structures, and use the passive as well as the active voice.
- Finish with a strong conclusion, summing up the main points and strongly stating your opinion.

Quick Test

Your head teacher has banned packed lunches. You want to write to the governors giving your reaction. What would be the:

1. purpose?
2. audience?
3. form?



Key Point

Spend a few minutes (but only a few!) planning your answer, using whatever method works best for you.

Key Words

audience
 abbreviation
 argument
 counter-argument
 discourse marker
 anecdote
 direct address
 rhetorical device
 hyperbole