

Essay (Part 1)

Test 1, Part 1, Question 1

You **must** answer this question. Write your answer in **220–260** words in an appropriate style. In the exam, you write your answer **on the separate answer sheet provided**.

- 1 Following a class discussion on how technology has affected the way we live today, you have made the notes below.

Which aspect of our daily lives has been affected most by technology?

- communication
- relationships
- working life

Some opinions expressed in the discussion:

'It's great to be able to communicate with people 24 hours a day.'

'It's so hard to make personal relationships – everyone's online all the time.'

'People have an easier working life because they can work from home.'

Write an essay discussing **two** of the points in your notes. You should **explain which aspect of daily life you think has been most affected** by technology, **giving reasons** in support of your answer.

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.

Exam help

Part 1

- Make sure that you have enough ideas about the topic to write 220–260 words. The point of an essay is to present an argument clearly and provide evidence for your point of view. You may be asked to agree or disagree with a statement, or write about issues on a given topic.
- Read the question carefully, choose the two points you want to discuss, and then plan your answer in paragraphs. It is easy to organise your essay if these paragraphs are the points you have chosen from the task. You are presenting an argument, so you need to explain your ideas clearly and justify them. This means you should use suitable connectors.
- Use a formal or semi-formal style. It may be appropriate to use rhetorical questions to lead into your argument or ideas.
- Use a range of vocabulary and try to think of interesting details to support your ideas.
- Try to present a balanced argument, showing that you are aware of all the possible issues.
- Don't begin your essay giving your opinion, but finish with a conclusion summarising your own point of view. This should be the one you have argued for in your essay.

Essay

- The purpose of an essay is to present an argument. It should highlight and discuss important points or issues on a topic, supporting and developing the argument with extra points which are clarified through reasons and examples. The reader should understand the opinion of the writer through the argument presented in the essay.
- An essay should be well-organised with an introduction, clear development of ideas and an appropriate conclusion to round off the argument. It should use appropriate connectors and range of language.
- It may be written as a result of an activity like taking part in a class discussion, listening to a radio programme or watching a film.
- The style is usually formal or semi-formal.

Sample answer

Technology is such a feature of everyday life that it is difficult to remember what we did without it. It impacts on almost every aspect of our daily lives. But where has technology's greatest impact been?

Use suitable connectors to link points.

Firstly, technology has affected the way we make relationships and our expectations of them. It is increasingly common to find people with more friends on the internet than in real life, and they spend more time chatting to cyber friends than they do to real world friends. Although feeling part of a wider community like this can be positive, it could also have a negative effect on people's ability to relate to others on a personal level.

Support your ideas with examples.

In turn, this could make it hard not only to establish relationships initially but to maintain them. The impact of this development on society is clearly enormous.

Use clear paragraphs for each discussion point or issue.

Another area in which technology has affected people's lives is in the workplace. Sitting in open-plan offices working at computer screens creates an unsatisfying and unsupportive environment. On the plus side, technology also enables people to work from home, which can lead to a healthier work/life balance.

Show that you appreciate other points of view as it strengthens your argument.

Of course, people may also find this difficult as it can lead to isolation.

To sum up, it appears that the impact of technology has been greatest on the way we form relationships, because this affects people emotionally as well as practically. However, given that it is impossible to return to a world without technology, we must accept its increasing impact on our lives in as many areas as we can.

Introduce the topic in general terms, using rhetorical questions to lead in to the discussion.

Useful language

Introduction

It is often said that ...

This is a hotly-debated topic.

This is a topic that is often discussed but rarely solved.

Many people feel that ...

Linking ideas

While many may agree with this, it may still be a mistake.

Conversely, it may be inappropriate for this situation.

On the contrary, it is seen by many as an excellent solution to the problem.

While I can see some benefits, these may be outweighed by the disadvantages.

Giving opinions

It seems to me that ...

In my opinion, this is ...

From my perspective, this seems to be ...

To be honest, I feel that ...

Conclusion

To sum up, it seems to me that ...

On balance, I feel that ...

Taking all the arguments into account, I would say that ...

Don't give your own opinion until the final paragraph. Make sure your conclusion follows your argument clearly.

Proposal (Part 2)

Test 1, Part 2, Question 2

You are on the social committee of your college. You have been asked to write a proposal for your college principal on the kind of social and sporting activities the college should provide for new students. You should assess the current situation, describe the needs of new students and suggest activities the college should provide.

Write your **proposal**. Write your answer in **220–260** words in an appropriate style.

Sample answer

Introduction

Starting at a new college can be daunting for new students. The purpose of this proposal is to evaluate the social and sporting activities already on offer, describe the needs of new students and suggest further activities the college should provide.

Current social and sporting activities

There are football and tennis clubs in college, where new students can make friends. However, if they are not particularly interested or talented, these may not be of interest to them. On the social side there are meeting places like the café, but they are not particularly welcoming. Finally, there are two music clubs which are generally popular, but they only meet weekly and the type of music is limited to jazz and pop. The worst thing is that accessing information about social activities can be difficult.

Needs of new students

New students must establish social contacts otherwise they can be lonely. Apart from finding out about activities on offer, they may be unaware of existing facilities.

Recommendations

- The range of social opportunities should be extended to include a dance club and a debating club. The latter would be particularly effective as it would also develop life skills.
- Music clubs should meet more frequently and include types of music like classical and choral. Singing has been proved to be effective in bringing people together.
- I would recommend displaying information in the Student Union and on the college intranet.
- The café should be refurbished to improve the atmosphere.

Conclusion

The recommendations above would be simple to implement, and would not only improve the lives of new students, but current ones too.

It is useful to state the purpose of the proposal in the introduction.

Headings make the proposal easy to read.

The style is formal because it is for a proposal. An introduction stating the aims of the proposal is important for clarity.

Support your recommendations with reasons.

Include an appropriate conclusion.

Exam help

Part 2

- Read through all the questions before choosing which one to answer. You should think about what type of writing you are best at, and then any ideas you have for each topic.

Proposal

- The purpose of a proposal is to give information and not engage the reader, so techniques like rhetorical questions are not appropriate.
- A proposal is usually for the future, and recommendations may be expressed using modal verbs.
- The style is usually semi-formal or formal.
- It's a good idea to use headings so that you present information clearly.
- Don't use too many bullet-points as you need to show a range of language. Bullet points are useful for recommendations because they are clear and easy to find in the proposal.
- Support your recommendations with reasons.

Useful language

Making formal recommendations

It would be a good idea to ...
One suggestion would be to ...
It would be useful to ...
I would recommend that ...
It might be possible to ...

Providing useful information

We hope to ...
High among our future plans is ...
One of our future priorities is ...
One key aspect of our future is ...
Our future plans include ...

Giving reasons

This would mean that ...
This would not only ... but also ...
In this way ...
This addresses the issue of ...
This would enable ... to ...

Conclusion

In the light of ...
If these recommendations were to be implemented ...
While there may be issues still to resolve, following these suggestions would mean ...

Review (Part 2)

Test 1, Part 2, Question 3

Reviews wanted: best film ever!

We are planning to produce a set of DVDs of the ten best films of all time. Send us a review of your favourite film. What was it about? What made it so good? Why should we include it in the set of DVDs? The best reviews will be included with the set of DVDs.

Write your **review**. Write your answer in **220–260** words in an appropriate style.

Sample answer

This introduction gets the reader interested before revealing what the film is.

Don't give too much detail about the plot – just enough to give an idea of what happens.

I am a great fan of science fiction films, and although I know these particular films are now old, the original trilogy is so iconic that I don't see how any set of the best DVDs ever could fail to include them. Of course, I'm talking about *Star Wars*.

Who doesn't know the plot? Evil Darth Vader is building the massive Death Star space station to help the Empire overcome the Rebel Alliance, which has been formed to fight back against tyranny. Vader captures Princess Leia, who has stolen the plans to the Death Star and hidden them in the robot R2-D2, who is later bought by Luke Skywalker. Luke accidentally triggers a message put into the droid by Leia, asking for assistance. Luke later trains to be a Jedi and with his friends sets out to crush the Empire. What follows is an action-packed roller coaster, crammed with special effects and enthralling plot twists.

The film has to be included in the set of DVDs because everything about it was fresh and new at the time, the special effects were totally spectacular and, amazingly, it still has the power to thrill the audience today. The music is instantly recognisable, and still sends a shiver down my spine. The characters are powerful and interesting and have made stars of some of the actors. The technical effects were well ahead of their time and have influenced many films since they were first seen on screens all over the world.

Do you really think any set of 'The best films ever' would be complete without this trilogy?

Use interesting and dramatic language to support your points.

This rhetorical question in the conclusion is effective in reinforcing the writer's opinion.

Exam help

Review

- A review is often of a book or film, but it can also be about an exhibition, an event, etc.
- Plan your ideas carefully before you start to write and remember that the focus of a review is usually to interest or inform the reader, and to give your opinion of whatever you are reviewing.
- Try to involve the reader by using techniques such as rhetorical questions, though don't use too many as they can become boring. You can talk to the reader directly.
- The style of a review depends on the context, type of publication and who the reader is. It may be semi-formal or informal, but should use a range of language.
- Add examples to support your ideas.
- Try to finish in an interesting way, and remember to make your opinion clear.

Useful language

Making recommendations

I would recommend ...

The ... has to be included ...

I can't see how ... can be ignored

This is an iconic film/book ...

It's well ahead of its time ...

It's been very influential ...

Using interesting and dramatic language

It's totally spectacular and amazing ...

It still has the power to thrill ...

It sends a shiver down my spine ...

The music is instantly recognisable ...

Talking directly to the reader

We're all supposed to hate reality shows but do we really?

I'm fairly sure that you will all agree with me when I say ...

Why not think about it? You'll find that ...

Have you ever seen anything like this? So is this really true?

So what do I really think about the whole thing?

Concluding a review

For all the reasons given, I recommend ...

It must be clear that this is the ... to win the competition.

How could the ... be considered complete without this ...?

Letter (Part 2)

Test 1, Part 2, Question 4

You have received a letter from an English friend:

Hi!

I remember that you worked in a ski resort last winter, and I'm thinking of doing the same this year. Were there any drawbacks? Did you meet interesting people? What opportunities were there for skiing? Would I gain much from doing it for just four months? Should I apply for it?

Thanks for your help

Jack

Write your **letter**. Write your answer in **220–260** words in an appropriate style. You do not need to include postal addresses.

Sample answer

Try to use interesting language and idioms.

This is an informal letter, so use informal language.

Add your own ideas to create interest.

You have been asked for advice, so summarise your position.

Finish with an appropriate phrase – in this case, it is an informal letter. If you were writing a formal letter you would finish with 'Yours sincerely' or 'Yours faithfully'.

Hi Jack,

Great to hear from you. So you're thinking of applying for my old job – there are positive things about it, but there are loads of downsides.

I know how much you love skiing, but to be honest you'll be lucky to get more than a couple of days in all. And you have to buy your own ski pass, which is pricey – no freebies! I got pretty frustrated when snow conditions were good and I could've been on the slopes.

It can be stressful because you're dealing with clients the whole time, getting equipment sorted, stuff like that. They come from all over the world and lots of them are really interesting to talk to – like one was a professional singer, and another was a journalist who told fascinating stories. But when snow conditions are poor, you have to find entertainment for them, and they may not be thrilled about the situation! When I was there they complained a lot. It's true I got the chance to pick up a smattering of other languages but in four months you don't learn a whole lot! I guess I did improve my people skills, but I hated the paperwork, which was really time-consuming. Filing isn't my thing, and there was piles of it.

I don't really know what to advise. You won't get much skiing, it's stressful, but it's paid employment and learning to deal with people in difficult situations is a bonus.

It's your call! Let me know if I can do anything, or if you want any contact names.

All the best

Carlo

Exam help

Letter

- The style of a letter could be semi-formal, formal or informal depending on the purpose of the letter and the context. Make sure you read the instructions carefully, and identify the target reader and reason for writing. Keep the style consistent throughout.
- Use clear paragraphs and appropriate opening and closing phrases.

Useful language

Beginning an informal letter

Thanks so much for your email ...

Sorry not to have contacted you earlier ...

Thought it was time I dropped you a line ...

Referring to a previous letter

You said in your letter that you want to ...

Last time you wrote, you mentioned ...

I remember that you spoke about ...

Ending an informal letter

I think that's all for now.

Do write soon!

Once again, thanks for contacting me.

Give my love to ...

Speak to you soon.

Ending a formal letter

Yours sincerely (if beginning with the person's name)

Yours faithfully (if beginning with 'Dear Sir/Madam')

Report (Part 2)

Test 2, Part 2, Question 4

You have just finished a short period of work in a company abroad as part of your business course. You have now been asked to write a report for your course organiser.

In your report you should explain what you did and how you benefited from the period of work, describe any problems you had and make recommendations for other students on the business course who will be working in the same company abroad later.

Write your **report**. Write your answer in **220–260** words in an appropriate style.

Sample answer

You can use headings for clarity.

State the aim of the report and who it is for.

Introduction

The aim of this report for the course organiser is to outline my work experience abroad, identify the benefits and problems and make recommendations for students doing the same thing in the future.

Background information

I was assigned to a large office in the city centre in order to gain experience in management. My daily duties involved shadowing the office manager and learning different procedures. I also took part in a specific project aimed at building up new clientele, which was particularly interesting as it linked to my current course module.

Benefits and problems

Explain the benefits and problems, with examples.

I gained a great deal from seeing different management styles in action, which enabled me to put the theoretical aspects of the course into a practical context. It was also valuable in giving me independence and responsibility, and in a global world it is particularly useful to experience the working environment of another country.

I found a few problems in adapting to the cultural differences as I was only there a short time, and in being accepted as a full member of the office team. This may be inevitable, and I certainly did not feel unwelcome.

Recommendations

Give reasons to explain your recommendations.

I would suggest making contact with members of the office before joining them, and asking for an overview of the office culture. This would avoid the feeling of being an outsider, and create more of a feeling of teamwork.

If students were given a schedule before the period of work experience, they could prepare more thoroughly. This would make the secondment run smoothly.

Finish with an appropriate conclusion.

Conclusion

Overall it was a positive experience, which I recommend to other students.

Exam help

Report

- Read the context carefully to decide what style to use. It will probably be semi-formal.
- Try to think of interesting and appropriate details to support your ideas.
- Remember that the purpose of a report is to inform the reader about an existing situation in order for them to make some kind of decision. You should make recommendations, and give your own personal opinion in order to help the reader to their decision.
- Plan your report carefully, thinking about the best layout to use. You can use bullet points and headings, but the format and style should be appropriate for the context and the person you are writing the report for.
- Although you want to be clear, don't use language that is too simple. You still need to show a range of language.
- Include a conclusion, possibly with a final evaluation.

Useful language

Introducing the report

The aim of this report is to ...

In this report, I will ...

This report presents ...

This report is for ...

Making recommendations

In the light of ... it seems to me that the best approach to take is ...

I would recommend ... as ...

I would suggest ...

I definitely recommend this book/film because ...

Finishing the report

For the reasons stated, I feel that ...

In conclusion, I feel that ...

In short, I feel confident in recommending ...

Cambridge English: Advanced Writing Examiners use the following assessment scale, extracted from the one on the previous page.

C1	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task with sufficient flexibility to communicate complex ideas in an effective way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, fulfilling all communicative purposes.	Text is a well-organised, coherent whole, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with flexibility.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, effectively and precisely. Uses a wide range of simple and complex grammatical forms with full control, flexibility and sophistication. Errors, if present, are related to less common words and structures, or occur as slips.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		