

Course Companion

IGCSE English

Every topic handout in one volume

exercises.lol

Contents

1. Reading skills	2
2. Writing: purpose, audience and accuracy	7
3. Writing an informal email	11
4. Writing a formal letter or email	15
5. Writing a report	19
6. Writing an article	23
7. Writing a review	27
8. Writing an essay	31
9. Listening skills	35
10. Speaking skills	40
11. Vocabulary and text types	44

Reading skills

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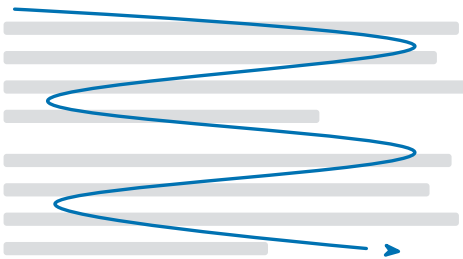
Reading for specific information

In the exam you do not read every word slowly. You change your speed to fit your goal.

Skim first, then scan

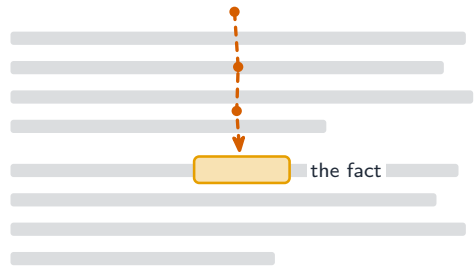
- First **skim** the text. Read it fast to get the **gist** — the general idea. Look at the title, the first line of each paragraph, and any pictures.
- Then **scan** to find one piece of information. Move your eyes quickly down the page. Do not read every word. Stop when you see what you need.
- Use scanning for facts like names, numbers, dates, times and places.

Skim - read fast for the gist



one fast sweep over every part:
"what is this text about?"

Scan - jump to one fact



eyes hop down the page and
stop only at what you need

Skim sweeps over everything for the gist; scan jumps straight to one fact



A departure board is a real text you scan: you do not read every line — you jump straight to the one flight time or gate you need

Match the question to the text

- Read the question first. Decide what kind of answer it wants: a name? a number? a reason?
- **Predict** the answer before you look. This helps your eyes find it faster.
- Find the part of the text that talks about the same idea. The answer is usually there.

Write short, exact answers

- Here you write a single word or a short **phrase**, not a full sentence.
- Copy the exact word from the text when you can.
- Answer only what the question asks. Extra words can lose the mark.

Connecting ideas across a text

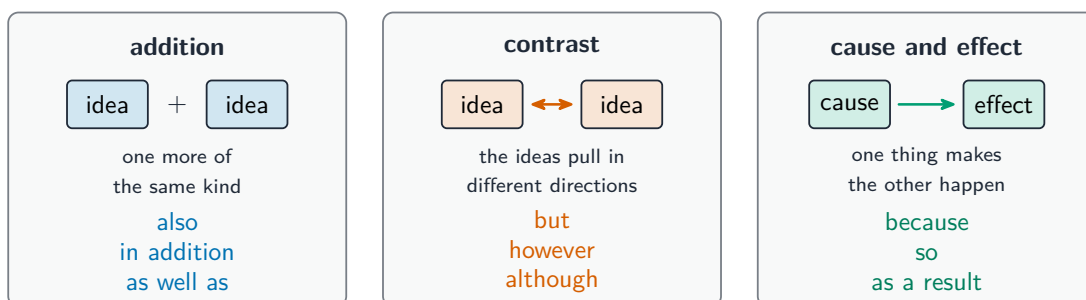
A long text is not just a list of facts. The ideas link to each other, and you must follow how.

Multiple matching

- In a **multiple matching** task you read several short texts, or several parts of one text.
- Each question describes an idea. You choose the text or part that matches it.
- The words in the question are usually different from the words in the text. Look for the same meaning, not the same words. This is called a **paraphrase**.

Signal words

- Writers use small words to show how ideas connect. These are **signal words**.
- Some show **addition** (also, in addition, as well as). Some show **contrast** (but, however, although). Some show **cause and effect** (because, so, as a result).
- When you notice these words, you can see how the writer's ideas fit together.



The three signal-word families and what they do to ideas

Making notes and summaries

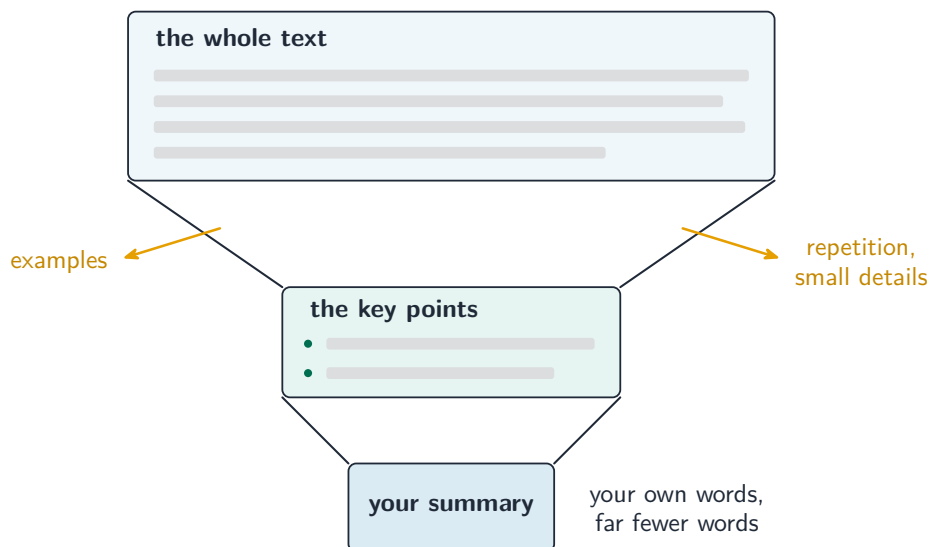
Sometimes you must take the main points out of a text and write them in a short form.

Note-making

- In a **note-making** task you complete notes under headings.
- Write short notes, not full sentences. A word or a short phrase is enough.
- Choose only the points that fit the heading. Leave out examples and extra detail.

Summary skills

- A **summary** gives only the most important ideas, in fewer words.
- Find the key points. Ignore examples, **repetition** and small details.
- Use your own words where you can. Do not copy whole sentences.



A summary keeps only the key points, in your own words

Reading between the lines

Some answers are not written directly in the text. You must work them out. This is called **inference**.

Implied meaning

- Sometimes the writer **implies** something without saying it openly. The meaning is there, but it is hidden.
- Read the words around the idea. Ask: what does the writer want me to understand here?

The writer's attitude

- The writer's **attitude** is how they feel about the topic — for example, excited, worried, or unsure.
- You find the attitude in the writer's **word choice**. Strong or emotional words show feelings.

- In a **multiple-choice** question about attitude, read all the options. Choose the one that fits the whole text, not just one line.

Unfamiliar words

- You will meet words you do not know. Do not stop.
- Use the **context** — the words around it — to guess the meaning of the new word.

Exam tips

- Read the question before the text. Underline the key word: a name? a number? a reason?
- Answers usually come in the same order as the text, so do not hunt backwards for question 1.
- Copy the exact word from the text when you can; a changed word can lose the mark.
- Check how many answers the question wants: “Give TWO reasons” needs two, not one.
- In multiple matching, the text usually does not repeat the question’s words. Hunt for the same idea said differently.
- Never leave an empty line. A guess can win a mark; a blank never can.

Writing: purpose, audience and accuracy

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Purpose, audience and register

Before you write, ask two questions: why am I writing, and who will read it?

Know your purpose

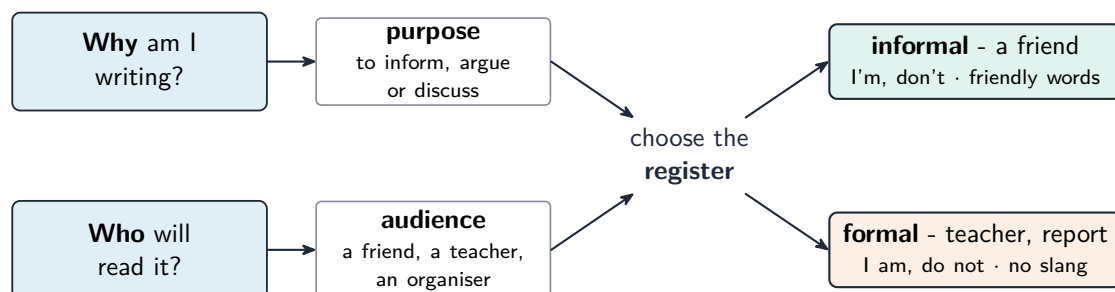
- Every writing task has a **purpose** : to inform , to argue , or to discuss .
- The purpose decides what you write and how you write it.
- The task tells you the purpose. Read it carefully and underline it.

Know your audience

- The **audience** is the person who will read your writing — a friend, a teacher, or an event organiser.
- Write in a way that suits them. You write to a friend in a different way from a teacher.

Choose the right register

- **Register** means how formal or informal your language is.
- Use informal language for a friend: short forms (I'm, don't) and friendly words.
- Use formal language for a teacher or a report: full forms (I am, do not) and polite words. No slang .



Purpose and audience together decide how formal your writing should be



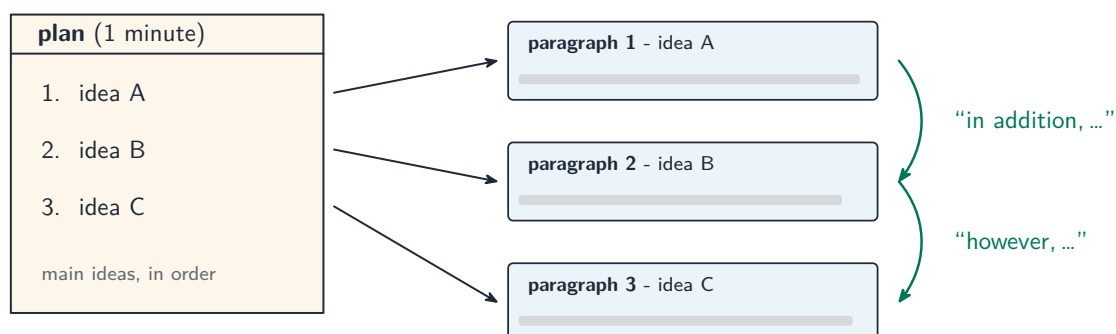
Writing at a desk: decide purpose and audience before you organise ideas on the page

Organising your ideas

Good writing is not just correct. It is also easy to follow.

Plan before you write

- Spend one minute on a **plan** . Write down your main ideas and put them in order.
- A plan stops you from forgetting a point or repeating yourself.



A one-minute plan becomes your paragraphs: one idea each, joined by linking words

Use paragraphs

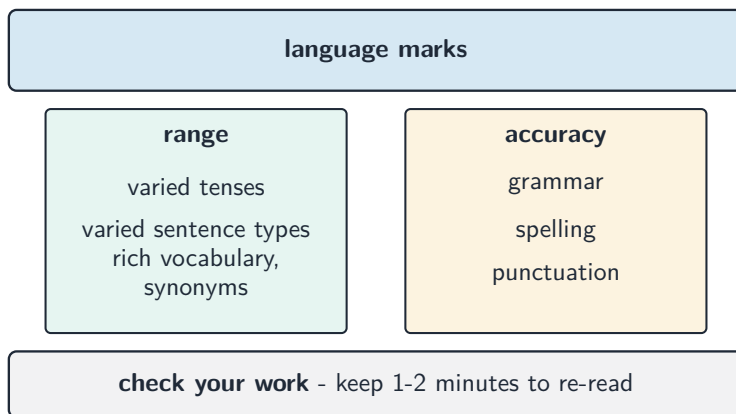
- Put each main idea in its own **paragraph** .
- Start a new paragraph for a new idea. This makes your writing clear.

Link your ideas

- Use **linking words** to join your ideas smoothly.
- For adding: in addition, also, as well as. For contrast: however, but, although. For results: so, therefore, as a result.

Accuracy: grammar, vocabulary and checking

Language marks come from **range** and **accuracy** .



Language marks rest on two pillars: range and accuracy

Show a range

- Use different **tenses** and sentence types. Do not write every sentence the same way.
- Use a range of **vocabulary** . Choose a better word than the easy one, and use **synonyms** to avoid repeating yourself.

Be accurate

- Check your **grammar** , **spelling** and **punctuation** .
- Common errors are subject–verb agreement, verb tenses, and missing capital letters.

Check your work

- Leave one or two minutes to read your work again.
- Look for small mistakes you can fix quickly. Checking can save several marks.

Exam tips

- Before you write, say your job in one line: “an informal email to a friend, to invite him to a picnic”.
- Cover every content point in the task. Examiners tick each point; a missing one costs marks at once.
- Learn what 120 to 160 words of your handwriting looks like, so you never count in the exam.
- Save the last five minutes to check your usual errors: verb -s, past forms, a / an / the.
- A short correct sentence beats a long broken one every time.

Writing an informal email

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Why and to whom you write

The first writing task asks you to write an **informal email** to a friend or a family member.

Cover every prompt

- The task gives you some **prompts** — short points you must write about.
- You must cover every prompt. If you miss one, you lose content marks.
- Tick each prompt as you write it, so you do not forget one.

Use a friendly tone

- An email to a friend is informal . Use a warm, friendly **tone** .
- Write as if you are talking to the person. Ask them questions too.



Writing on a laptop: informal emails still need a clear purpose, order and friendly tone

How to build your email

A good email has a clear shape.



The shape of a good informal email

Greeting and ending

- Start with a **greeting** : *Hi Sam*, or *Dear Anna*,
- End with a friendly **closing** : *Write back soon*, or *See you soon*, then your name.

Paragraphs

- Use short **paragraphs** . Put one main idea in each one.
- Do not write one long block of text.

Useful language

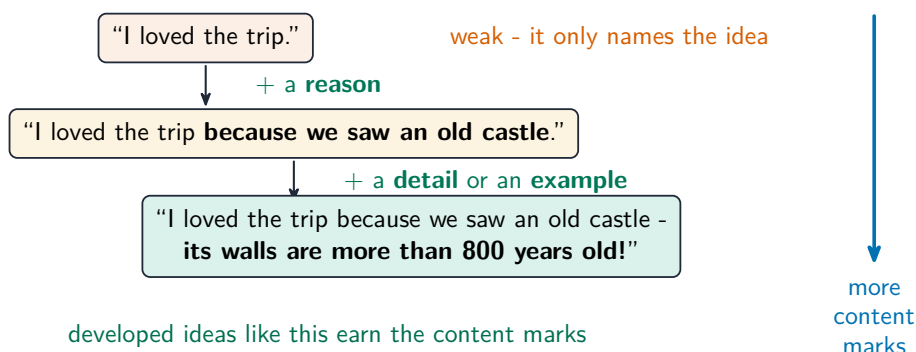
- Informal language uses **short forms** : I'm, don't, can't.
- Friendly phrases help: *Guess what!* / *How are you?* / *I can't wait to...*

Making your email better

Content marks reward **developed** ideas, not a list.

Develop your ideas

- Do not just name an idea. Add a **reason** , an **example** , or a **detail** .
- “I loved the trip” is weak. “I loved the trip because we saw an old castle” is much better.



Each extra reason or detail makes the idea stronger

Check before you finish

- Count your words: aim for 120 to 160 words.
- Check the tone is friendly, then fix small grammar and spelling mistakes.

A model email

See how the friendly tone and developed ideas work together.

Hi Sam,

Guess what — I finally visited the new science museum you told me about! I loved it, especially the space room, because you can sit in a real rocket seat and feel it shake. I went with my cousin, and we stayed until it closed.

How about you? Have you been yet? We really should go together in the summer.

Write back soon, Lin

Notice the warm greeting, one developed idea with a reason, a question back to Sam, and a friendly closing. It reads like a real message to a friend — and it covers every prompt.

Exam tips

- Open warmly: “Thanks for your email!” or “Great to hear from you!” sets the informal tone at once.
- Use short forms (I’m, don’t, can’t). They are correct here and make you sound like a friend.
- Give each prompt in the task its own short paragraph, and add one detail or reason to each.
- Close like a friend: “Write back soon,” plus your first name only, never a full name.
- Keep the style informal from the first line to the last; one “Dear Sir” in the middle breaks the whole email.

Writing a formal letter or email

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When to write formally

The second writing task sometimes asks for a **formal** letter or email, or **semi-formal** letter or email.

Spot a formal task

- A formal task is written to someone you do not know well — a head teacher, a manager, or an event organiser.
- The task tells you the **format**, the **purpose** and the reader. Use all three.

Keep a polite tone

- Be **polite** and respectful. Do not use slang or jokes.
- Do not use short forms. Write “I am”, not “I’m”.

informal - to a friend

formal - to someone you do not know

I'm writing ...

I am writing to ...

full forms, no
short forms

Guess what!

I would like to tell you ...

no chat, no slang,
no jokes

Thanks a lot!

I would be grateful if ...

polite, respectful
requests

Turning friendly phrases into formal ones



A formal letter: careful structure, polite register and a clear reason for writing

Building a formal letter or email

A formal letter follows a clear order.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to ask about ...

I would be grateful if you could ...

Yours faithfully,

B. Chen

first paragraph: say **why** you are writing

middle paragraphs: **one point** in each

end: what you would like to **happen next**

match the pair:
Dear Sir or Madam, → Yours **faithfully**,
Dear Mr Lee, → Yours **sincerely**,

The shape of a formal letter - and the greeting decides the sign-off

Opening and closing

- Open with *Dear Sir/Madam*, or *Dear Mr Lee*,
- If you start with a name, close with *Yours sincerely*,. If you start with *Sir/Madam*, close with *Yours faithfully*,.

Clear paragraphs

- First paragraph: say why you are writing.
- Middle paragraphs: give your points, one idea in each.
- Last paragraph: say what you would like to happen next.

Formal language

- Use formal phrases: *I would like to...*, *I am writing to...*, *I would be grateful if...*
- Keep sentences clear and complete. Check your grammar and spelling.

A model formal letter

See how a polite, complete opening sets the right tone.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to suggest an improvement to the town library. At present it closes at five o'clock, which is too early for students who finish school at four. I would be grateful if the council could consider opening it until seven in the evening on weekdays.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Yours faithfully, J. Chen

Notice the *Dear Sir or Madam* / *Yours faithfully* pair, the clear first line stating the purpose, the polite request, and the complete sentences with no short forms.

Exam tips

- Match the greeting to the ending: Dear Mr Lee → Yours sincerely; Dear Sir or Madam → Yours faithfully.
- Say why you are writing in the first line: “I am writing to apply for...” saves words and sounds formal.
- Do not use short forms: write “I am” and “do not”, never “I’m” or “don’t”.
- One paragraph per point, and end by naming the action you hope for: “I would be grateful if...”.
- Stay polite even in a complaint: “I was disappointed to find...” wins marks; “This is terrible!” loses the tone.

Writing a report

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What a report is for

A **report** gives information to a person in charge — a teacher, a manager, or a club leader. They will **act** on what you write, so be clear and honest.

Purpose and reader

- A report describes an **event**, an experience, or a **situation**.
- It gives **facts** clearly, then adds suggestions.
- The reader wants useful information, not a story. Keep the tone **factual** and clear.

the reader is in charge - they want **information**



"It was an amazing day and everyone loved it!"

a story full of opinions -
the reader learns nothing



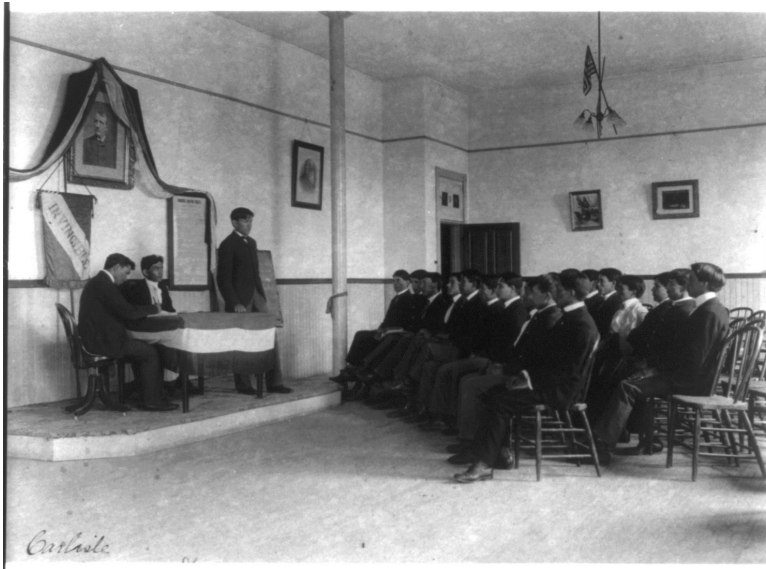
"150 students attended – 20 more than last year."

clear facts the reader
can act on

A report gives facts the reader can use, not a story

Format

- A report is usually semi-formal or formal.
- A title at the top tells the reader what the report is about.



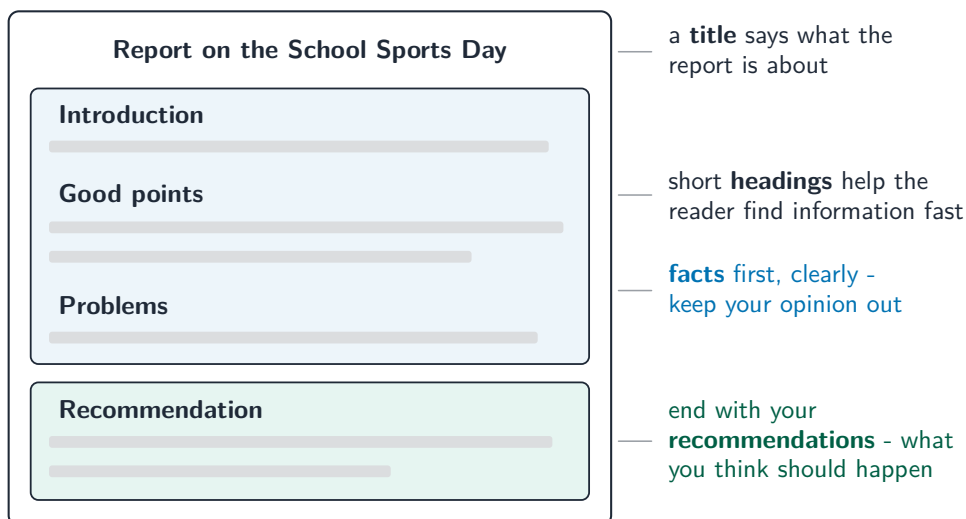
A formal discussion: reports give clear facts so decision-makers can act on them



A report organises facts for a clear purpose and a defined reader

How to organise a report

A clear shape helps the reader find information fast.



The shape of a report: facts under clear headings, recommendations at the end

Use headings

- Break the report into sections with short **headings**.
- For example: *Introduction, Good points, Problems, Recommendation*.

Facts, then recommendations

- First give the facts. Keep your **opinion** out of this part.
- Then give your **recommendations** — what you think should happen.

End clearly

- Finish with a clear recommendation or **conclusion**.
- Make your advice easy to follow.

Useful language

Keep a few report phrases ready. They make your writing sound organised and grown-up.

- **To introduce:** *The aim of this report is to... / This report looks at...*

- **To give facts:** *At present...* / *The main problem is...* / *Many students felt that...*
- **To recommend:** *I recommend that...* / *It would help if...* / *The best solution is to...*

Notice these are calm and impersonal. A report avoids strong words like “*amazing*” or “*terrible*”.

A model report extract

Read how facts and a recommendation sit under clear headings.

Introduction This report looks at the school library and suggests ways to improve it.

Good points The library is quiet, and it has a wide range of science books. It opens every day after school.

Problems There are only two computers, and every table is full by four o'clock.

Recommendation The school should add five computers and open a second study room in the evening.

Each section is short. The first three give only facts; the last gives the advice. That split is what makes it a report, not a story.

Exam tips

- Start with To / From / Subject or a clear title. A report never opens with “Dear...”.
- Use the introduction to say what the report covers and why, in one or two lines.
- Group the facts under short headings, and keep your opinion out of the findings.
- Save opinions for the end: one clear recommendation, “I recommend...” plus one action.
- Keep the style neutral and calm: no exclamation marks, no jokes, no chat.

Writing an article

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What an article is for

An **article** is written for a magazine, a newspaper, or a website. Many people read it.

Purpose

- An article **informs** or **entertains** a general reader.
- You usually give your own view on a topic, with reasons.

Engage the reader

- You must **engage** the reader — make them want to keep reading.
- A good **title** and a strong first line catch their **interest**.
- Ask the reader a question, or start with a surprising fact.

ask a question

“Should every teen
play a sport?”

the reader wants the answer

surprise with a fact

“Most teens sit for
nine hours a day.”

the reader thinks “really?”

speak to the reader

“You know that
Monday feeling ...”

the reader feels included

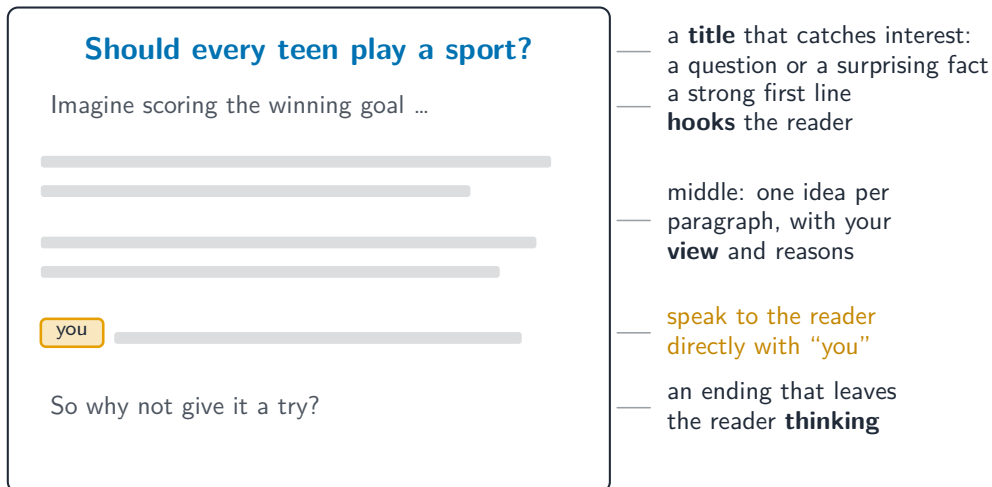
Three ways to catch the reader's interest in your first lines



A newspaper front page: articles hook the reader, then inform and entertain with a clear angle

Writing a lively article

An article should sound interesting, not flat.



The shape of a lively article: hook the reader, keep them, leave them thinking

Structure

- Begin with an **introduction** that names the topic.
- Develop your points in the middle, one idea in each paragraph.
- End with a short **conclusion** that leaves the reader thinking.

Lively language

- Use **varied** words and sentence lengths to keep the energy up.
- You can speak to the reader directly with "you".
- Keep the tone friendly, but not too casual.

Useful language

A few flexible phrases let you hook the reader and glide between ideas.

- **To open with energy:** *Have you ever...? / Imagine you... / Last week, something odd happened to me.*
- **To move between ideas:** *What's more... / On the other hand... / The truth is...*
- **To speak to the reader:** *You might think... / We all know that... / Be honest —...*
- **To end memorably:** *So next time you... / Perhaps the real question is...*

Vary how you open sentences. Ten sentences that all begin “*I think*” feel flat ; mixing your openings keeps the reader awake.

A model opening

See how one opening hooks the reader, then points forward.

Have you ever tried to sleep with a phone glowing beside your pillow? Most of us have — and most of us wake up tired. This article asks a simple question: could a good night’s sleep be the cheapest way to feel happier?

The question pulls the reader in, the honest detail keeps them, and the last line promises where the article is going. That is a lot of work for three sentences.

Exam tips

- Give the article a short, catchy title, then hook the reader with a question or surprise in the first lines.
- Talk to the reader: “Have you ever...?” An article is the one formal task where personality wins marks.
- One idea per paragraph, and make it real with a short example or a small story.
- Numbers and small facts make an article feel true: “three out of five students...”.
- End with a line the reader remembers: a punchline, a question, or a call to act.

Writing a review

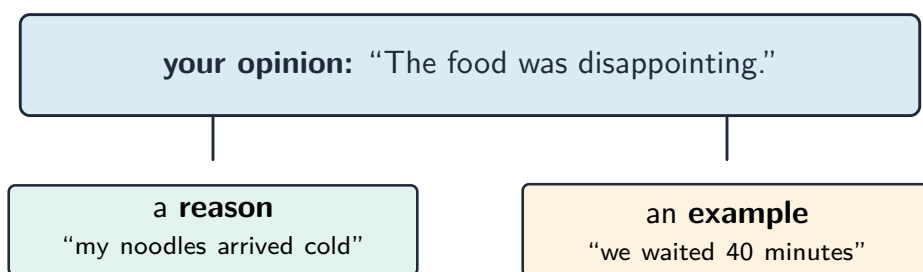
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What a review does

A **review** tells readers about something you have tried — a film, a book, a restaurant, or a place. A good review helps the reader **decide** whether to try it too.

Describe and judge

- A review does two things: it **describes** the thing, and it gives your **opinion** of it.
- Balance the two. Do not only describe, and do not only give opinions.
- Describing answers “*What is it like?*” Judging answers “*Is it any good?*” Move between the two, sentence by sentence.



an opinion with nothing under it falls over – support every opinion

An opinion stands on a reason and an example

Support your opinions

- Give reasons for what you think. Say **why** it was good or bad.
- Use **examples** from your experience to make your view **believable**.
- A weak review says “*The food was nice.*” A strong review says “*The soup was rich and warming, though the rice arrived cold.*” The detail is what convinces the reader.

Useful language

Learn a few phrases for each job. Then you never stare at a blank page.

- **To describe:** *It is set in... / The story follows... / The dish combines... / What stands out is...*
- **To praise:** *The best part is... / I was impressed by... / It really succeeds in...*
- **To criticise** (gently): *The one weakness is... / It could have been better if... / At times it feels slow.*
- **To recommend:** *I would recommend it to... / It is well worth... / Don't miss...*

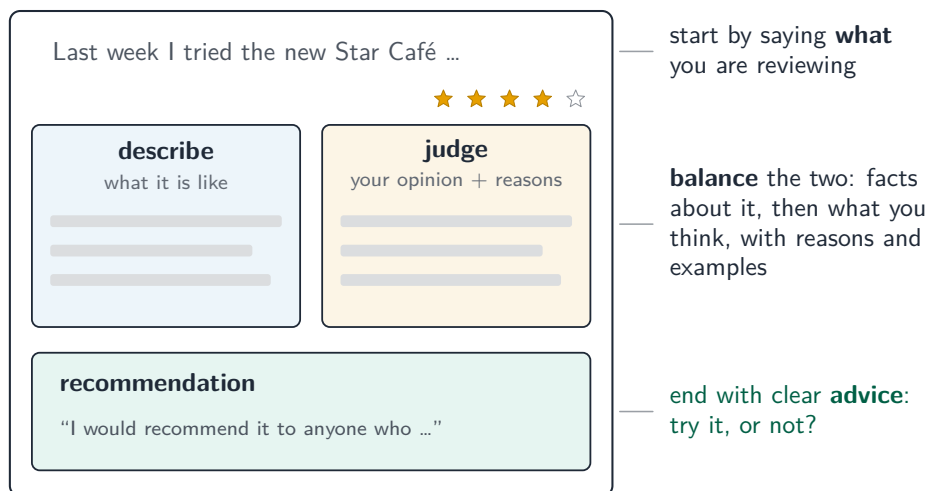
Mix praise and criticism so the review sounds **fair**. A review that is all praise, or all complaint, is hard to trust.



A theatre audience: reviews describe what you saw, give a clear opinion and support it with evidence

How to build a review

Readers want a clear, helpful review.



A review describes and judges, then ends with clear advice

Structure

- Start by saying what you are reviewing, and give the reader the basic facts.
- In the middle, describe it and **evaluate** it — the good points and the weak points.
- Write for a general reader, in a friendly but clear **tone**.

End with a recommendation

- Finish with a **recommendation**: do you advise the reader to try it or not?
- Make your advice clear, for example: *"I would recommend this film to anyone who likes adventure."*
- You can add a condition: *"...as long as you don't mind a slow start."* This sounds honest and grown-up.

A model review

Read this short review of a film. Notice how each sentence either describes or judges.

Skyward is an adventure film about a girl who builds her own aircraft. The story is simple, but the flying scenes are **breathtaking** and the young lead acts with real warmth. The middle drags a little, and a

few jokes fall flat. Even so, it left the whole cinema smiling. I would recommend *Skyward* to any family looking for a bright, hopeful evening — just be ready for a slow first ten minutes.

Count the moves: it names the film, describes it, praises it, admits two faults, and ends with a clear, honest recommendation. That is a complete review in five sentences.

Exam tips

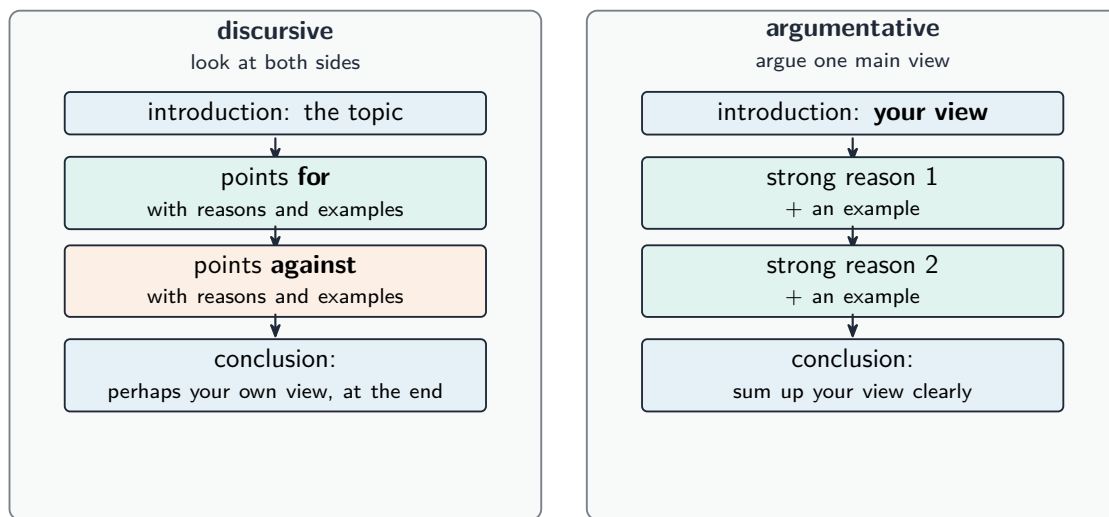
- Name what you are reviewing and your overall feeling in the first paragraph; do not keep it secret.
- Do both jobs: describe it (what it is) and judge it (what is strong, what is weak).
- Strong adjectives are the fuel of a review: gripping, delicious, disappointing, unforgettable.
- Mention one weakness even in a good review; pure praise sounds like an advert.
- Finish with a clear recommendation: who should try it, who should not, and why.

Writing an essay

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Two kinds of essay

An **essay** gives your ideas about a topic in an organised way.



plan first: decide your main points before you write

Two essay shapes: discursive weighs both sides; argumentative argues one view

Discursive essays

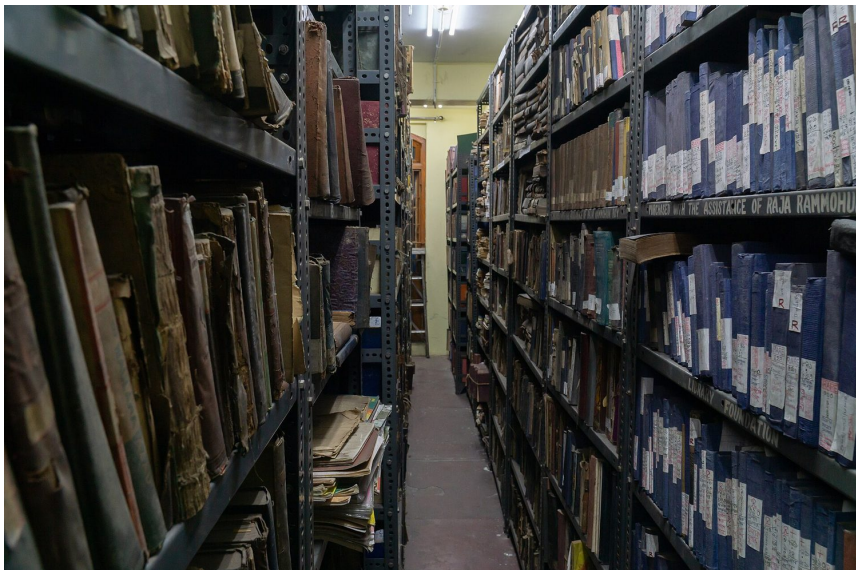
- A **discursive** essay looks at both sides of a topic.
- You give the points for and against, and perhaps your own view at the end.

Argumentative essays

- An **argumentative** essay argues for one main view.
- You give strong reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Plan first

- Decide your main points and the reasons for each, before you write.
- A short plan keeps your essay organised.



A reading room full of books: essays need careful reading, planning and structured argument

How to structure an essay

A clear shape makes your argument easy to follow.

Introduction

- The **introduction** names the topic and says how you will approach it.
- Keep it short — two or three sentences.

Body paragraphs

- Put one main idea in each **body** paragraph.
- Start the paragraph with the idea, then add reasons and examples.

one body paragraph

Firstly, school sport builds real friendships.

— **start with the idea**
(a topic sentence)

Playing in a team means you win and lose together, so you learn to trust each other.

— then the **reasons**
behind it

For example, my closest friends are the players I have trained with every week since Grade 8.

— then an **example**
that makes it real

A body paragraph: the idea first, then reasons, then an example

Conclusion

- The **conclusion** brings your ideas together.
- Do not add a new point here. Sum up your view clearly.

Useful language

Linking words signal your reader where the argument turns. They are the road signs of an essay.

- **To add a point:** *Firstly...* / *In addition...* / *Another reason is...*
- **To show the other side:** *However...* / *On the other hand...* / *Some people argue that...*
- **To give an example:** *For example...* / *For instance...* / *such as...*
- **To conclude:** *In conclusion...* / *Overall...* / *Weighing both sides...*

Use them at the *start* of a sentence, and do not overuse one. Two or three well-placed links are enough for a paragraph.

A model body paragraph

Watch the three moves: idea, then reason, then example.

Firstly, homework teaches students to work alone. In class, a teacher is always nearby to help. At home, a student must solve the problem by themselves — and that is where real learning happens. For example, a maths question that felt easy in the lesson can teach far more when you meet it again, alone, at your desk.

The first sentence is the idea. The next two explain *why*. The last one makes it real with an example. Every body paragraph can follow this simple shape.



Plan structure first: clear points, examples, and a firm conclusion

Exam tips

- Plan for three minutes before you write: your view, two reasons, one opposite view.
- First paragraph introduces the question; each middle paragraph carries exactly one argument.
- Signpost with linking words: First of all, However, On the other hand, In conclusion.
- Give the other side one fair paragraph, then answer it. Balance shows thinking and earns marks.
- The final paragraph states your opinion clearly. Do not sit on the fence.

Listening skills

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Listening for facts

In the listening exam you hear each **recording** twice. Use both chances well.

Predict before you listen

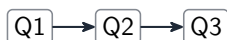
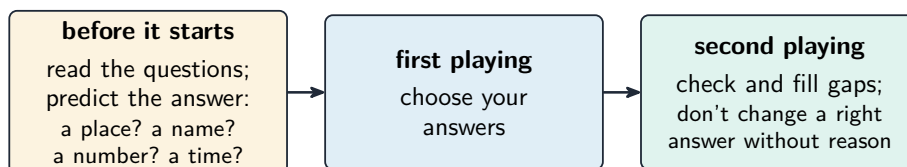
- Read the question before the recording starts.
- **Predict** what kind of answer you need: a place, a name, a number, a time?

Catch the detail

- Listen for **specific** facts: places, names, dates, times and **directions**.
- The answers usually come in the same order as the questions.

Use both playings

- On the first listening, choose your answer.
- On the second, check it. Do not change a right answer without a good reason.



the answers usually come in the same order as the questions

Use the two playings differently: answer first, then check



A radio studio: listening exams ask you to catch facts, attitudes and implied meaning across two playings



Listening carefully: catch facts, attitudes, and what is only implied

Hearing opinions and attitudes

Some questions ask how a speaker thinks or feels, not just what they say.

Opinions and feelings

- Listen for the speaker's **opinion** and **feelings**.
- Notice the words they choose. Strong words show strong feelings.

Follow the connections

- In a longer talk, ideas **connect**. Follow how one point leads to the next.
- Words like “but”, “because” and “so” show how ideas link.

Listening between the lines

Not every answer is said directly.

Implied meaning

- Sometimes a speaker **suggests** something without saying it openly.
- Think about what they really mean, not only the exact words.

Watch the distractors

- In **multiple-choice** questions, the wrong options are called **distractors**.
- A speaker may mention an option, then change their mind. Listen to the whole idea before you choose.

Q: When is the football match?

"Let's meet before the match on **Saturday** – oh wait, they moved it to **Sunday**."

mentioned first -
then corrected: a **distractor**

the correction is
the **answer**

A Friday

~~**B** Saturday~~

C Sunday ✓

listen to the **whole**
idea before
you choose

A distractor is mentioned first, then corrected - the correction is the answer

Words that signal the answer

Trained ears listen for small words that point to the answer.

- **A correction is coming:** *actually... / sorry, I mean... / on second thought...* — the words **after** these usually hold the real answer, not the ones before.
- **The key point:** *the main thing is... / what matters is... / above all...*
- **A feeling or attitude** : *to be honest... / the trouble is... / I'm delighted that...*
- **Order of steps:** *first... next... finally...* — these help you follow a sequence.

Catching one signal word can win you a mark. Note them down as you hear them.

Exam tips

- Read the questions before the audio starts and underline the key words in each one.
- You hear everything twice: answer what you can in round one, check and fill gaps in round two.
- Speakers often correct themselves with numbers, days and spellings. The last version is the answer.

- Missed one? Let it go and follow the next question; return to the gap in the second play.
- Write something for every question. There is no penalty for a wrong guess.

Speaking skills

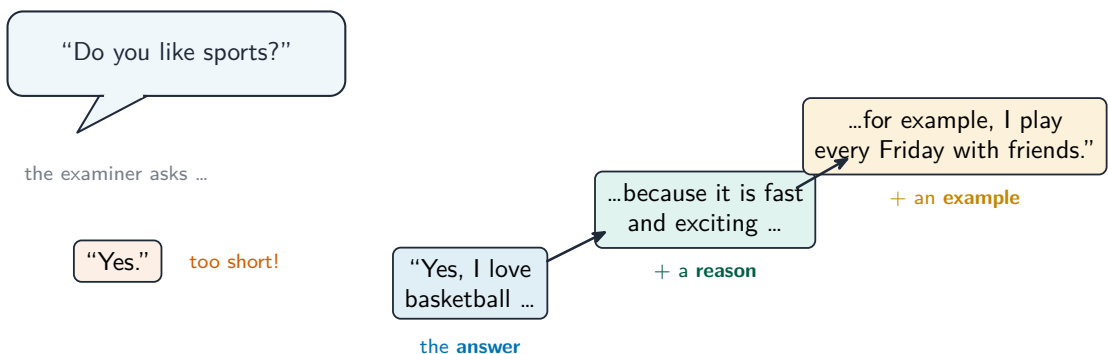
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Talking with the examiner

The speaking test is a friendly **conversation**, not a test you fail by being nervous.

Take part fully

- Answer the question, then add more. A one-word answer is too short.
- Give reasons and examples. Show what you can do with English.



Answer, then add more: a reason and an example make a full turn

Interact well

- Listen to the examiner and **respond** to what they say.
- If you do not understand, it is fine to ask: “Sorry, could you repeat that?”
- Take **turns** naturally, as in a real conversation.



Develop answers in conversation: add reasons, examples, and a short opinion

Giving a short talk

You may be asked to talk about a topic for a short time.

Develop your ideas

- Do not just list points. **Develop** each one with a reason or an example.
- Use phrases like “for example”, “that is why” and “I suppose” to extend your answers.

Speak clearly

- Speak with good **pronunciation** and natural **intonation**.
- Do not rush. It is better to speak clearly than quickly.
- If you forget a word, say it another way. This is called **paraphrasing**.

Useful language

Memorise a few phrases for each move. They keep you talking when your mind goes blank.

- **To give an opinion:** *In my opinion...* / *I'd say...* / *For me,...*
- **To add detail:** *for example...* / *that's why...* / *what I mean is...*
- **To buy thinking time:** *That's a good question...* / *Well, let me think...* / *I suppose...*
- **To agree or disagree politely** : *That's true, but...* / *I see what you mean, though...*

A short pause with “*Let me think...*” sounds far better than silence. It shows control, not panic.

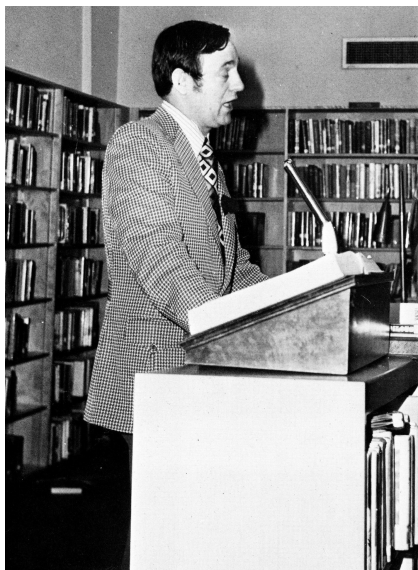
A model turn

See how one student turns a plain question into a full, natural answer.

Examiner: Do you enjoy studying at home?

Student: In my opinion, home is better for some subjects. For example, I **revise** maths well at home because it is quiet and nobody **interrupts** me. But I suppose group work is easier at school, where I can ask my friends straight away. So really, it depends on the task.

The student gives an opinion, backs it with an example, admits the other side, and finishes with a neat conclusion. That is a top-mark turn — and anyone can build it with these phrases.



A short talk to a room: plan clear points, speak naturally, and answer follow-up questions

Exam tips

- The warm-up chat is not marked. Use it to relax and start talking, not to recite prepared lines.
- Never say memorised speeches. The examiner stops them, and real conversation earns more.
- Grow every answer: point, reason, example. “I like... because... for example...” fills a minute well.
- If you miss a question, ask: “Could you say that again, please?” That is good English, not a fault.
- Take each prompt on the card in order; every prompt can become a small topic of its own.

Vocabulary and text types

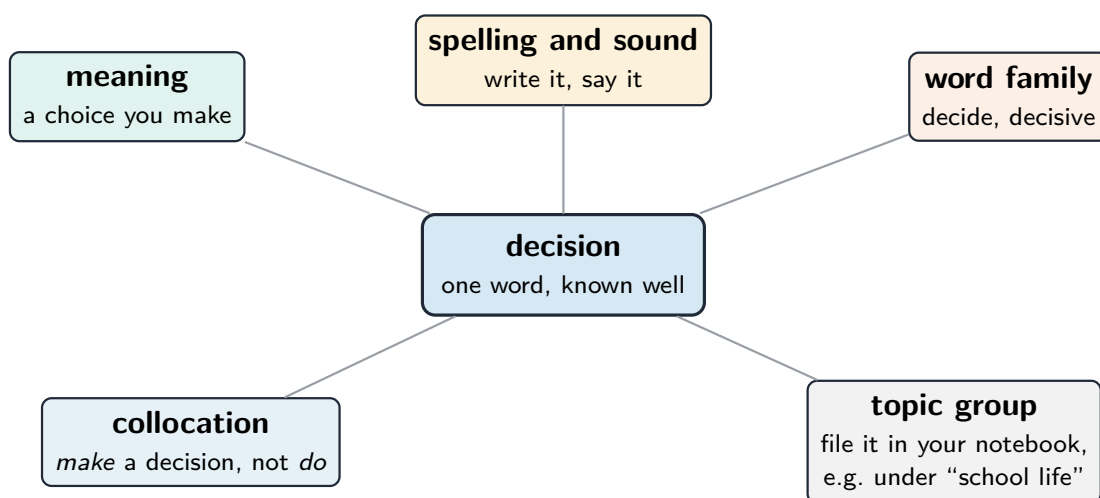
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Growing your vocabulary

A wide **vocabulary** helps you in every part of the exam.

Learn words well

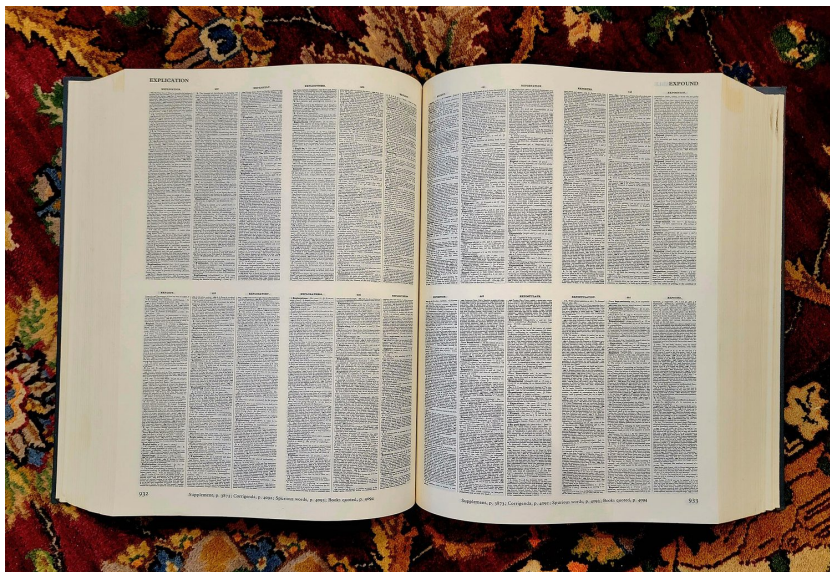
- Learn a new word with its meaning, its spelling, and how it sounds.
- Keep a vocabulary notebook. Group words by topic, such as travel or health.



Knowing a word well means knowing all of this

Use natural phrases

- Learn words that go together. These are called **collocations** , like “make a decision” or “heavy rain”.
- Learn **set phrases** and common **phrasal verbs** , like “give up” or “look after”.
- Using natural phrases makes your English sound **fluent** .



Growing vocabulary: notice useful words in every text type and practise them in your own writing

Knowing your text types

Each writing task is a **text type** with its own rules.

Common text types

- An email is a message to one person; an **article** is for many readers; a **report** gives facts to a person in charge.
- A **blog** is a personal, informal online post – like an article but more personal and casual, so it sits near the **informal** end of the formality scale.
- A **review** gives an opinion about something you tried; an **essay** argues a point of view.
- A **notice** and a **leaflet** give short, clear information.

Match style to type

- Each text type has its own purpose, reader and tone.
- Before you write, ask: what is this text type, and what style does it need?



Every text type sits somewhere on the line from informal to formal

A vocabulary routine

Turn new words into words you truly own with four steps:

1. **Meet it** — when you find a new word, write it down with one example sentence.
2. **File it** — put it in your notebook under a topic group (travel, health, school).
3. **Test it** — cover the meaning and try to recall it the next day, then again a week later. This **spaced review** fixes words in your memory far better than reading a list once.
4. **Use it** — put the word into your own writing or speaking within a few days, before you forget it.

Five words learned this way each day is over a thousand a year.

Exam tips

- Learn words in families, one family per text type: email openers, report verbs, review adjectives.
- In the writing exam, put the text type's fixed parts down first: greeting, title or headings. They are the easiest marks on the paper.
- Keep a personal word list. Five new words a day beats fifty words once a month.
- When a new word appears in the reading paper, guess it from the context and keep moving; never freeze on one word.