

How to write an essay? | B2 First (FCE)

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The **essay** is a **compulsory** task to be completed in Part 1 of the writing section in the Cambridge B2 First (FCE) that is **written** to convince someone of something or to simply **inform the reader about a particular topic**.

There is no single, method of successful writing essay. However, this **article will outline how to write an excellent essay** in the B2 First (FCE) exam by putting into practice some simple, but invaluable, tips.

You will learn how to write an essay, an example of **essay structure, guidance, sample topics, model answers, useful tips**, frequently asked questions and **useful phrases** and expressions.

Structure example

An essay can be organised in different ways, but it is useful to **write one idea in one paragraph** and add a short **introduction** and **conclusion**.

<p style="text-align: center;">Introduction Present the essay topic in your own words.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">1st body paragraph Comment on the first point</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2nd body paragraph Comment on the second point</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3rd body paragraph Comment on the third point (your idea)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Conclusion Give final opinion</p>

How to write an essay? (guide)

It is always an essay written for your teacher, and the start of the question wording is always the same:

*In your English class you have been talking about [topic]. Now, your English teacher has asked you to write an essay.
Write your essay using all the notes and giving reasons for your point of view.*



There will be two points given for you to include in your response, and a third point for you to include something based on your ideas or experience.

We will use the example **question below** in our **writing essay** advice:

In your English class, you have been talking about society. Write an essay using all the notes and giving reasons for your point of view.

University should be free for everyone. Do you agree or disagree?

Write about:

- 1. Taxes*
- 2. Opportunity*
- 3. (your own idea)*

Step 1: Briefly analyse your task...



It may seem boring, however, analyzing the task will improve your essay and you will be calmer during the exam if you know exactly what to do.

Before you start writing your essay at B2 First exam **you need to ask three questions:**

What is the **topic of the essay?**

If you look at our example task you will notice that we are going to write about **society**.

*In your English class, you have been talking about **society**. Write an essay using all the notes and giving reasons for your point of view.*

Knowing this, you can quickly prepare in your head all the words that you associate with this topic or even write them down.

What exactly do I have **to include in my essay?**

As you can see there are **three points** included in the task there are two that are already given in our example

Write about:

1. **Taxes**
2. **Opportunity**
3. (your own idea) *<= you have to come up with this one yourself*

The first point is **taxes**, the second is **opportunity**, and the third one is something you must come up with yourself!

We decided that the third point we would comment on would be **economics**

Who is going to **read my essay?**

In the FCE essay, it's always your **English teacher**. It means that you need to **write with respect** because she is a person with authority, therefore essay has to be written in a **formal style**.

Step 2: **Write an introduction**

The **purpose** of the introduction is simply to tell the reader what **the essay is about**.

You can start your essay by referring to the question that was asked "*University should be free for everyone. Do you agree or disagree?*" and writing it **in your own words**. It is also worth mentioning the **three points** you are going to describe.

Introduction: There are many factors to consider when deciding if the university should be free or not. Among these are taxes, equality of opportunity, and the economy.

You can use phrases such as:

This essay will discuss ...

This essay will focus on ...

In order to discuss ..., I will analyse ...

Step 3: Main body paragraphs...

Main body paragraphs are the most important part of your essay so they should be the **longest** and **one paragraph should comment on one point**. See below:

Write about:

1. **Taxes** – the **first paragraph** should comment on **“taxes”**
2. **Opportunity** – the **second paragraph** should comment on **“opportunity”**
3. (your own idea) – the **third paragraph** should comment on **“economy”**

In addition, every paragraph should start with a **topic sentence**, which is like an introduction to the paragraph and it tells the reader what exactly the paragraph is going to discuss.

Also, a good idea is to include different **linking words/expressions** to make sure that your ideas are well connected and in a logical order.

You can see a model answer below:

First paragraph comment on **“Taxes”**

Paragraph 1: **Firstly**, a majority of people believe that a significant part of taxes should go to education. **Opponents** might say if someone can afford university, then he/she should pay for it. **However**, people with higher education have better wages **and therefore** pay higher income tax after graduation.

Second paragraph comment on **“Opportunity”**

Paragraph 2: **Secondly**, making university free for all, creates more opportunities for those from low-income backgrounds. **Although** they may still have difficulty meeting other costs such as accommodation, it makes the playing field more level.

Third paragraph comment on **“..... (your own idea)” : economy**

Paragraph 3: **In addition**, having an educated workforce is proven to help the economy grow. **Namely**, the more highly educated people there are, the higher the standard of living for everyone. **Consequently**, more people will be able to pay taxes to fund the education of future generations.

– topic sentence

– linking words/expressions

– interesting/topical vocabulary

Remember, you **don't have to tell the truth!** The examiners won't know, so if you don't have experience or an opinion you can make something up!

Step 4: Conclusion

The conclusion comes at the end of your essay, it **summarizes the main idea** of the essay. You need to write a clear, justified conclusion. You can't just say, '*I agree*', or '*I disagree*.' Think of it like this: you need to convince the examiner that your conclusion is correct.

In conclusion, a university should be free for everyone. **It makes economic sense** and ultimately **benefits all members of society**.

– linking words/expressions

– interesting/topical vocabulary

Make sure your paragraphs are **connected** to your conclusion!

See Full Essay

There are many factors to consider when deciding if the university should be free or not. Among these are taxes, equality of opportunity, and the economy.

Firstly, a majority of people believe that a significant part of taxes should go to education. Opponents might say if someone can afford university, then he/she should pay for it. However, people with higher education have better wages and therefore pay higher income tax after graduation.

Secondly, making university free for all, creates more opportunities for those from low-income backgrounds. Although they may still have difficulty meeting other costs such as accommodation, it makes the playing field more level.

In addition, having an educated workforce is proven to help the economy grow. Namely, the more highly educated people there are, the higher the standard of living for everyone. Consequently, more people will be able to pay taxes to fund the education of future generations.

In conclusion, a university should be free for everyone. It makes economic sense and ultimately benefits all members of society.

Example essays

FCE Essay Sample 1

Subject:

In your English class you have been talking about the environment. Write an essay using all the notes and give reasons for your point of view.

Every country in the world has problems with pollution and damage to the environment.

Do you think these problems can be solved?

Notes:

Write about:

1. transport
2. rivers and seas
3. (your own idea)

Student's FCE Essay Answer:

DEVELOPMENT VS ENVIRONMENT

If we surf the web looking for pollution and environmental catastrophes, we will find out that every country in the world suffers them. This is a natural consequence of the struggle between development and environment.

If a country decided to live isolated from the rest of the world, living on what it can naturally grow and produce, it surely wouldn't be highly polluted. But we all want exotic food and technological items from all over the world, so we have to pay the price.

Investing on electrical transport would benefit the environment a lot. Even more if this electricity came from a natural source of energy like wind, rivers and solar boards. It's difficult to achieve this because petrol companies will fight against these actions.

We also have to take care of our rivers and seas. We all have heard about factories throwing highly toxic substances to rivers, without minimizing their poisoning effects. A really strict law should be applied to fine these factories and make them change their policy.

But what about ourselves? We also can do a lot! If, when possible, we bought larger packs of food, we would be producing less rubbish. And this is only an example!

FCE Essay Sample 2

Subject:

In your English class you have been talking about the fashion industry. Write an essay using all the notes and giving reasons for your point of view.

Some people say the fashion industry has a bad effect on people's lives. Do you agree?

Notes

Write about:

1. whether people's appearance is important
2. the price of clothes
3. (your own idea)

Student's FCE Essay Answer:

The society we live today is characterised by technology in constant development, fast speed processes, information travelling and getting to people at a blink of an eye and a complex web of social networking. In this context, the fashion industry is becoming increasingly important and having a more and more paramount role in our lives.

On one hand, the fashion industry is undeniably a source of profit and income. It hires millions of people all over the world and generates millions of dollars every year. Furthermore, such profitable business is also believed to be able to spread and make known the culture of a people, encouraging and enhancing a better understanding of each other.

Nevertheless, for those who are neither impressed nor motivated by numbers and figures, the fashion industry is seen as one which segregates people, isolating those who not fit their laws and commands. It is stated that people place too much importance on appearance and the material, world, sadly true, and the fashion industry just spurs on such situation. Moreover, not only are the costs of fashion item unrealistically high, it is thought to be a money better spent on more pressing issues, such as poverty and hunger.

I do believe that the fashion industry, as it is today, has a harmful effect, because it values a minority of people in detriment to the majority. However, it has such a wide reach that, if put into a good use, it can save lives.

Example topics

FCE Example topic 1

Your teacher has asked you to write your response to the following statement taken from a recent newspaper article:

Is it true that we help the environment when we plant a tree?

Write about:

1. clear the air
2. shade
3.(your own idea)

FCE Example topic 2

Your teacher has asked you to write your response to the following statement taken from a recent newspaper article:

Nowadays children are suffering from obesity, that was once considered to be meant for adults only. What are its causes and what solutions can be offered?

Write about:

1. diet
2. busy lifestyle
3.(your own idea)

FCE Example topic 3

Your teacher has asked you to write your response to the following statement taken from a recent newspaper article:

Is it better to be the oldest or the youngest in a family?

Write about:

1. parents
2. role of older sibling
3.(your own idea)

B2 First (FCE) Essay: Tips



- **Plan your essay** before you write.
- Make sure you know how to comment on **all the points** that are asked
- **Invent information** if you don't have any ideas
- Divide the essay **into paragraphs** – put one answer in one paragraph
- Use **advanced vocabulary** when you can and **formal language**
- The **final paragraph** is the best place to express your opinion clearly.
- **Revise** your essay to correct mistakes.

B2 First (FCE) Essay: **Useful Phrases & Expressions**

Introduction

The trend nowadays is towards

Over the past ten years or so the media have frequently carried reports of

Recent research indicates that

Hardly a week goes by without another report of appearing in the media.

This raises the issue of whether

Although most people would generally agree that few would deny that

Stating your opinion

As I see it,

It seems to me that I would also say that

I am convinced that

I am inclined to believe that

There is no doubt in my mind that

One of the drawbacks of is

However, one of the benefits is that

Changing topic

As regards the causes for this,

Concerning the causes for this,

As for the causes,

Presenting arguments

One justification is often given for is that.....
Advocates/Proponents would claim that
Those who object to often argue that
Another objection is that
However, it should not be forgotten that
..... are opposed to on the grounds that
From the point of view of
According to

Describing causes

One factor which has led to is
One of the factors which has brought this about is
The problem often stems from
The situation has been exacerbated by
..... has only made the situation worse.
One consequence of is

Proposing steps and measures

As regards the most appropriate response to this situation, one suggestion would be to
The first step to be taken would be to
To alleviate the situation people should
In addition they ought to
To begin to tackle this situation society/individuals/the government need/s to
This can only be dealt with if
To overcome this problem,
Were the government to, the situation would doubtless improve.
Individuals can do a great deal to
The burden of responsibility lies in the hands of
It is vitally important that
Legislation should be introduced to control
It would be a grave error if we

Concluding

All in all it seems to me that
The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that
All things considered,
On balance, I tend to believe that
The world would surely be a better place to live in if
If people stoppeding, we would have/ we could look forward to a
The prospects for the future will be bleak/grim unless

