

GRADE 8 & 9 - ESSAY WRITING TIPS

An example of a question that would be asked as an essay in an exam:

QUESTION 3: THE IMPACT OF THE MINERAL REVOLUTION

Discuss the impact of the Mineral Revolution on the lives of migrant workers and how African workers resisted the policies of the Chamber of Mines. (20)

Your essay must refer to the following points.

- (a) Chamber of Mines policies (pass system, contracts)
- (b) The burden of women in the reserves
- (c) Impact on families
- (d) African labour resistance

Start with your introduction - summarise essay and all points you are going to discuss in the essay, tell your reader what the essay is about.

How NOT to do an introduction:

There was a big impact of the Mineral Revolution on the lives of migrant workers and how African workers resisted the policies of the Chamber of Mines. This included the Chamber of Mines policies such as the pass system and contracts, the burden of women in the reserves, the impact on families and African labour resistance. I will discuss this in this essay.

While this is *technically* correct, it does not show that you fully understand the topic.

RATHER:

The Mineral Revolution had a **significant impact / mostly negative** on the lives of migrant workers / The lives of migrant workers were significantly impacted by the Mineral Revolution. The Chamber of Mines introduced a pass system and a system of contract labour for the workers. It had a **negative impact** on the lives of women and families who lived at home in the reserves because families were separated. Black workers / African workers endured bad working and living conditions in the mines and compounds and would therefore resist in many ways.

This shows the reader that you understand the topic by briefly summarizing each point that will be discussed in the paragraph.

PEEL METHOD

You need to develop your essay writing technique by using a series of approaches which helps you write relevant answers to the required depth of application, analysis and evaluation.

A core part of that approach is the PEEL technique for writing powerful paragraph points.

PEEL is a particularly powerful approach because it allows YOU to reach the highest levels of application (good application) and analysis (good analysis) in just one well-developed and argued paragraph point.

Here's a key-point summary of the PEEL method.

Point

Your first sentence must state your point. It introduces the topic you're about to discuss and tells the reader what the paragraph is going to be about. This is sometimes called a topic sentence.

Evidence/Examples

Support your point with evidence and examples. In the next one or two sentences, give evidence to expand upon and support the point you made. Evidence can include facts, statistics, research findings, quotes from a credible authority or a primary text.

Explain

This is where you show your understanding by explaining in more detail how and why your evidence supports your point. Your explanation should interpret the evidence for the reader.

Link

The last sentence should reinforce your original point or link your writing to the next paragraph. The link sentence can provide a transition to the next topic or paragraph

Let's take a point from above to discuss in terms of the PEEL method:

The burden on the women in the reserves

Women were **negatively affected** by the system of migrant labour as they had to take on extra roles due to the men working in the mines. Women were required to take care of the children and the elderly at home. They also had to look after the crops and cattle. They could only find work in the cities as domestic workers. As women had to take on multiple roles, agricultural production dropped. This resulted in there being not enough food for the people who lived in rural areas. This also had a negative impact on many black families.

Black families were disadvantaged by the system of migrant labour. Men had to work in the mines and farms far away from their families. As a result, children did not see their fathers for months at a time, which caused relations in families to suffer. The men were not able to make a constant income because they were employed on contracts. This meant that the men did not earn much money and could not support their families financially.