



lingoda

Preparing for a writing exam

READING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_4057R_EN

LANGUAGE
English





Goals

- Can recognise and explain some strategies to prepare for a written exam as well as a range of more advanced structures to include in it.
- Can produce a more advanced response to a task in a written exam using these strategies and structures.



Exams can be scary, and no part more
so than the **writing** part.
This lesson is going to cure you of your
fear!





Exams

**Have you ever
taken an English
exam? Which
one and when?**





Exams

**Which part of an exam do you find the most nerve-wracking?
Explain your answer.**

reading

writing

listening

speaking



Exams

Would you like to **pass an exam**
in English or another language
in the future?

How useful are language exams
to your profession or studies?





Preparing for a writing exam



All major English exams contain a writing part and this is often the part that students dread the most. However, the **written component** of a **CEFR** exam is the part for which students can **prepare** the most thoroughly and which should, in fact, **strike** the least **fear into the hearts** of exam-takers.



Preparing for a writing exam

Most writing exams are split into **two parts**, with one part being an **essay** and the other being a more **academic** part or a choice of different tasks, such as writing a **letter** or a **report**.

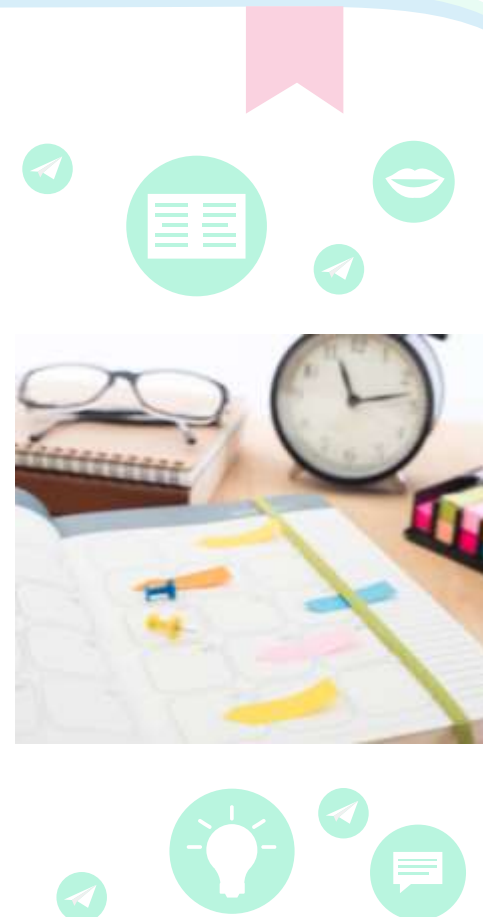
The following advice can be applied when approaching any question on the writing paper.

Firstly, **read the question** very carefully. Underline the key words in the question and take your time to understand what you have to do. Do you have to make a decision on something, agree or disagree with a statement, or persuade the reader of something? You should also decide what your answer to the question is. It is important to **keep** this **in mind** while you are writing.



Preparing for a writing exam

The next thing which is important is to **make a plan**. This does not mean writing out a draft version of the piece of writing and then rewriting it in the exam booklet. Planning means **making notes** on each section of the piece you are going to write. Key vocabulary, grammatical structures you want to use, and of course your ideas for the topics of paragraphs are all things that should go in your plan.





Types of writing

What type of writing do you feel the most comfortable with in exams?
Why?

essay

letter

report

proposal



Essay questions

Look at the essay question on the next page. Underline the key words.





Example essay question

*The use of private cars in city centres
should be banned.*

To what extent do you agree or
disagree with this statement?

Write your essay in 250 words.



Structuring an essay: overview

Now we will look at how to **structure an essay**, as this is the writing style that you are always required to produce. When writing an essay, you should follow the structure shown here:

- Introduction
- Body Paragraph 1
- Body Paragraph 2
- (Body Paragraph 3 if necessary)
- Conclusion





Structuring an essay: what to include

Introduction:

- Write a context statement giving background information on the issue in the essay.
- Include a thesis statement that clearly identifies what you are going to discuss in the essay.
 - Don't express your opinion here!

Body Paragraphs:

- Include a topic sentence, telling the reader what the paragraph will be about (one topic per paragraph).
- Give a reason for your argument.
- Provide an example of why the reason is true - not drawn from your own life, but rather objective!
- Write a concluding sentence that links back to the thesis statement.

Conclusion:

- Summarise your main arguments using different words.
- Give your opinion or argument - answer the question!



Structuring an essay: linking paragraphs



Use **adverbials** to link sentences together and to link paragraphs together. Good body paragraphs **mirror one another**, so starting the first paragraph with *on the one hand* and then the second with *on the other hand*, for example, gets you big points with examiners.

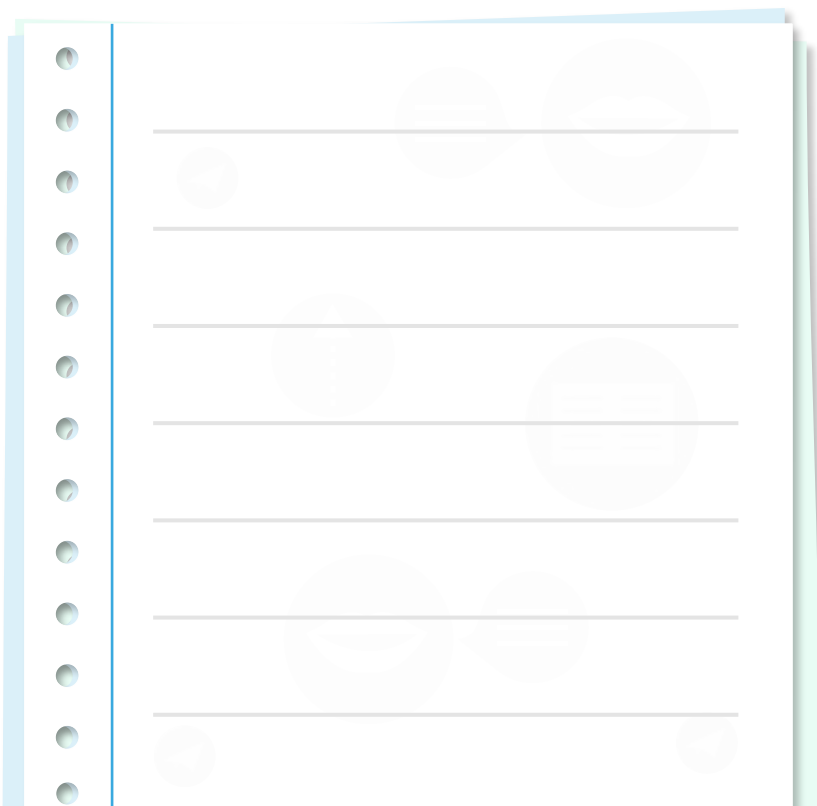
Here are some more adverbials you might want to use:

firstly, secondly, thirdly, however, moreover, furthermore, in addition, in conclusion, in summary



Make an essay plan

Make a plan for the essay question on the next page. Then check it against the model plan on the page after.





Essay question

*The use of private cars in city centres
should be banned.*

To what extent do you agree or
disagree with this statement?

Write your essay in 250 words.



A model plan

Here is an example plan for the essay question on the previous page.

Introduction:

pollution rising particularly in cities – solution: ban private cars?

Body 1 (for):

banning cars good solution – private cars give high emissions - has worked in other cities (Paris) – congestion charges London

Body 2 (against):

some people need cars – travelling quickly or to many places in city – should improve public transport/ban on certain days

Conclusion:

outright ban: NO but incremental bans YES, plus improve other transport





Writing style

Remember that essays and most other types of writing that you will do should have a **formal** or **semi-formal register**. This means not using **contractions** or **slang**, as well as making sure you are **objective** and **impersonal**.

Ensure that you write the correct **number of words**; for an essay at C1 level this is almost always around 250 words per piece. Don't go too far over the word count - you will begin to make mistakes, write things which are **irrelevant**, and show the examiner that you are unable to answer questions **succinctly**.





Final checks



When you have finished, make sure you take some time to **reread** your piece and correct any obvious mistakes. Check that you have actually answered the question and that your writing is **legible**.



Simple or complex?

Finally, some contrasting pieces of advice: when in doubt, **keep it simple**. Overly long sentences are difficult to read and often it is better to go for readability rather than complex structures. However, you should also not be too afraid of making **mistakes**. You are not **penalised** for making mistakes in complex sentences, so try to write one or two with advanced grammatical structures.





Read through the sample essay: Introduction

**The use of private cars in city centres should be banned.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?**

Pollution has been rising throughout the world in the past few decades and nowhere is it more noticeable than in large cities. One solution to this problem is to ban private cars from city centres completely.





Sample essay: Body 1

On the one hand, banning cars from the centre of cities is a very good idea. Private cars produce a large amount of emissions, contributing heavily to air pollution. A temporary ban on cars in Paris worked to reduce pollution, and London, with its congestion charge deterring private drivers, now has one of the cleanest air quality indexes in the world for a large city. Putting a ban or limits on private cars certainly has advantages.





Sample essay: Body 2

On the other hand, it is probably impractical to ban cars from city centres outright. Many people in cities argue that they need cars because of a lack of decent public transportation or because they need to also travel to more remote areas. Improving public transportation options would be helpful in encouraging drivers to leave their cars at home, but it would also need to be recognised that private cars would probably have to be allowed in city centres at certain times or on certain days.





Sample essay: Conclusion

In conclusion, an absolute ban on private cars would have a huge effect on reducing pollution, but it would not be a practical solution. Placing limits on driving private cars in the city centre would be a more realistic way to clean up the polluted atmosphere.



Was the essay easy to read? Did it answer the question? Do you agree with the conclusion?



Look at this essay question and underline the key words.



All students should be encouraged to take a gap year between school and university.

Do you agree with this statement?

Write your essay in 250 words.



Plan your answer

Plan your answer to the question here. Check your plan with your teacher before you start writing.

introduction

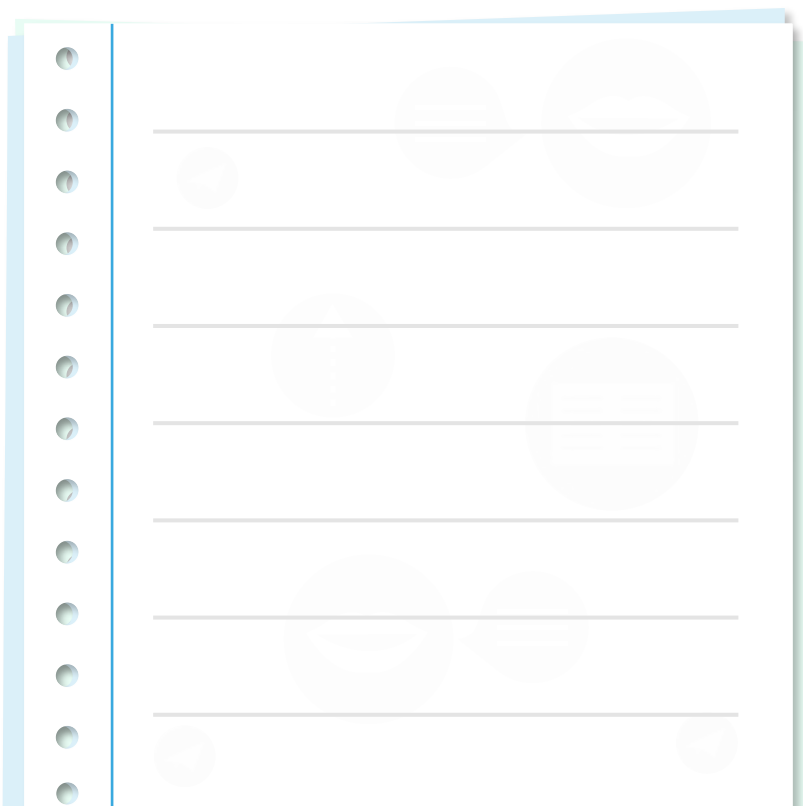
conclusion





Write your essay

Write your essay here. Remember to proofread it when you are done. If you are in a group lesson and have enough time, compare your essay with the essays of your classmates.

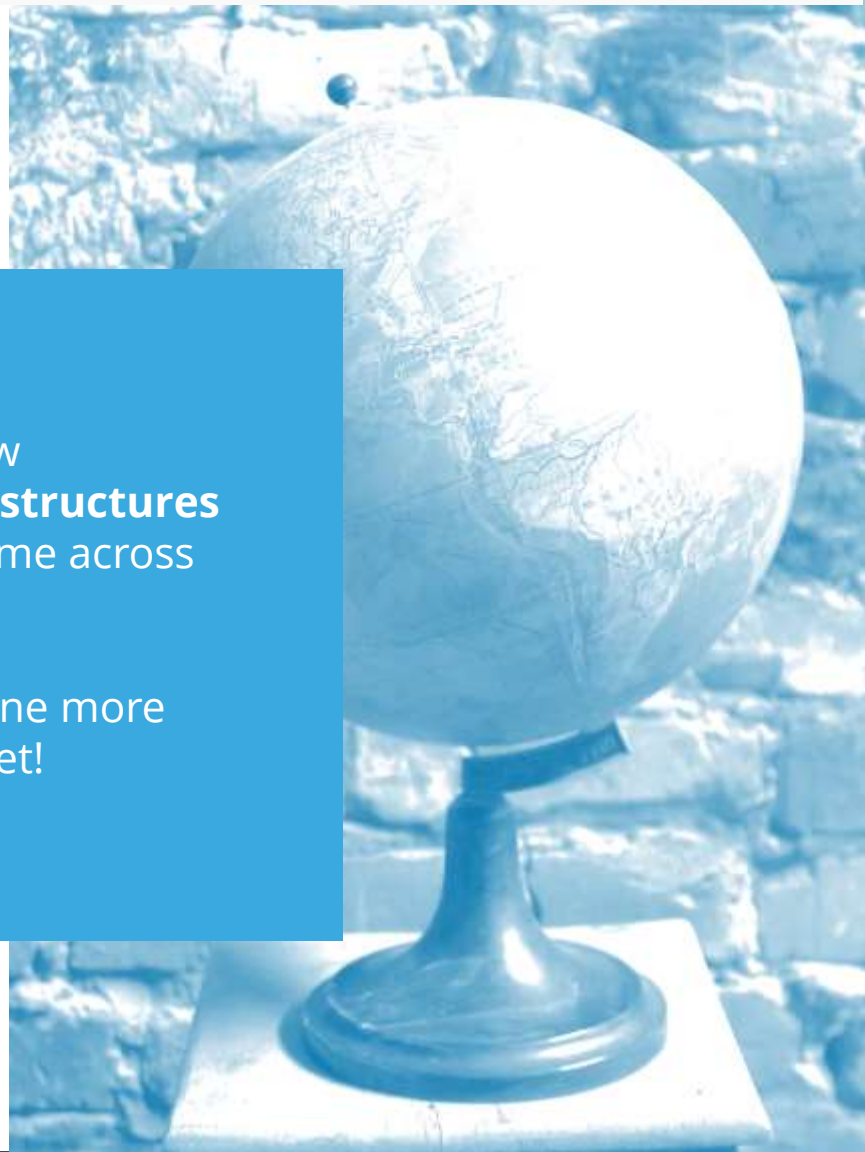


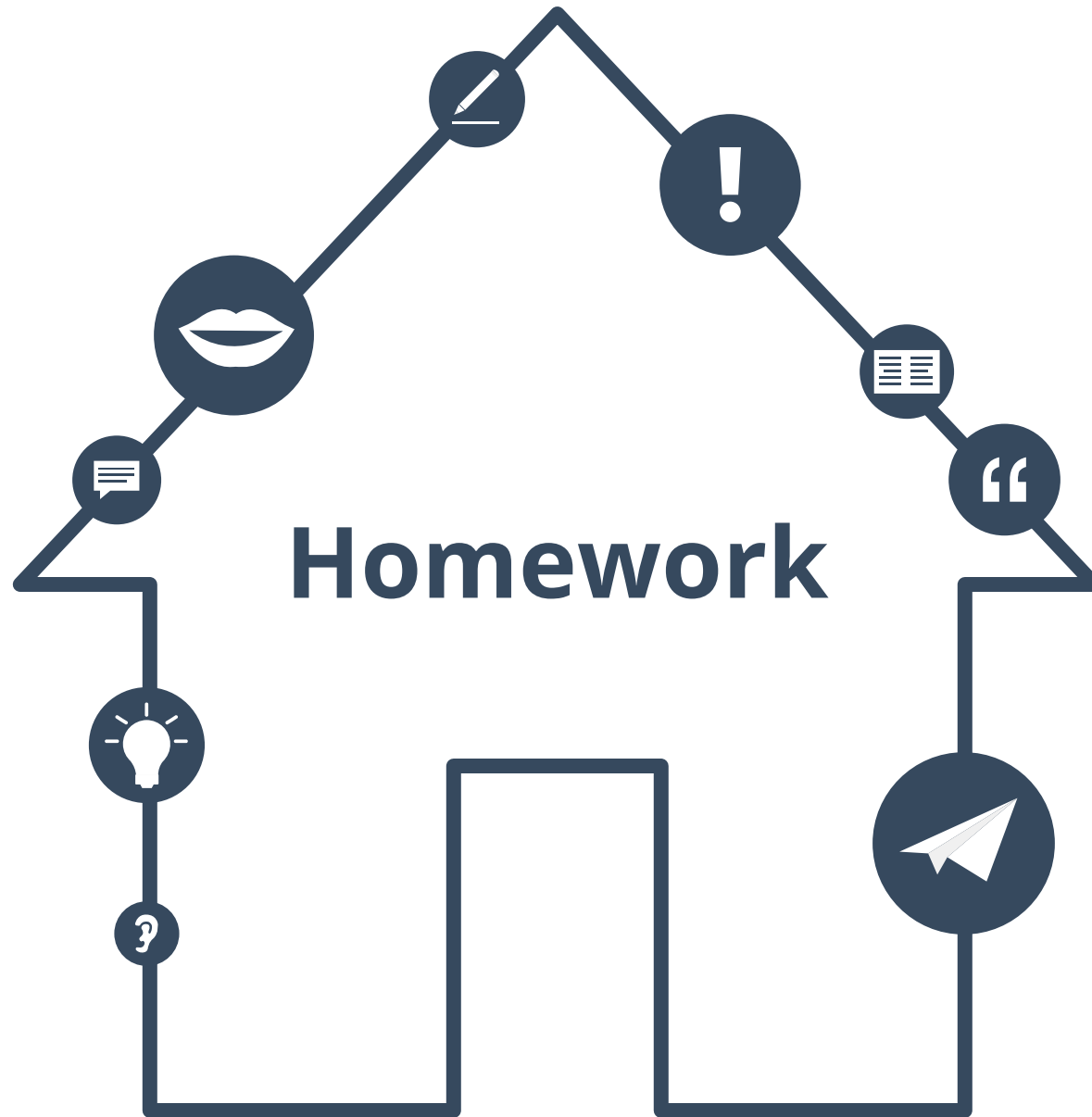


Reflect on this lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!







Make a plan for the essay title below.

***All children should learn a foreign language from the age of 3.
Do you agree or disagree?***

introduction

key words

conclusion

body paragraph

thesis
statement

topic sentence





This image shows a single sheet of white paper designed for writing. On the left side, there is a vertical blue margin line. To the left of this margin line are ten circular punch holes, evenly spaced vertically. The main body of the page contains ten horizontal blue lines, which are parallel to each other and provide a guide for handwriting. The entire sheet is otherwise blank, with no text or markings.



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