



Improving the quality of argument in GCSE Business Studies

What does it mean to write good business studies answers? How should this be shared with students? The aim of this article is to remove some of the mystery and guesswork about how to do well in business studies by presenting a straightforward, accessible template for gauging the quality of written work.

Identifying an underlying pattern to work will have the benefit of bringing together the relatively disparate aspects contained within business studies and thus give the subject more coherence. In addition, establishing a shared language about the nature of the subject (rather than just the subject *content*), presents tremendous opportunities for meaningful dialogue about improvement, both between teachers and between students and teachers.

The framework

The framework grid in *Figure 1* establishes key criteria for assessing written answers in business studies – structure, business language, relevance, logic chains and evaluation. There are three different levels for each criterion.

Structure

This row in the framework is concerned with making students feel secure about the overall shape of their written work. This should help them focus on the depth of answers and not skate over too many lines of argument or simply concentrate on one side of an issue. It encourages students to consider both sides of an issue (level 2) and provide a conclusion (where appropriate).

Figure 1: The framework

		Level 1	✓?	Level 2	✓?	Level 3	✓?
Overall: What does my work look like?	Structure	State one point (one side)		State two or four points (usually both sides)		And sums up/writes conclusion (<i>not always needed!</i>)	
Describing: What's in my work?	Business language	One term per paragraph		Two terms per paragraph		Three terms per paragraph	
	Relevance	Arguments are true of any business		One argument is definitely about this business		More than one argument is definitely about this business	
Explaining: Why is it like that? What might happen next?	Logic chains	One step		Two steps		More than two steps	
Summing up: What is more important or more likely? And why?	Evaluation	Make a judgement and relate it to the business		Make a judgement and relate it to the broader business context		Make a judgement and relate it to the business and/or the broader context in more than one way	