



WRITING 2

OPINION ESSAY

An opinion essay tells what the writer thinks or feels about a topic. People have different opinions about things. In an opinion essay, you write your opinion about a topic. When you write an opinion essay, you choose a topic about which you have strong feelings. You support your opinion with reasons.

When you are writing an essay that asks you to discuss a topic or give your opinion on a question, it is important to organize your thoughts and present your arguments clearly and to work out the structure of your essay before you start to write.

1. Plan four or five paragraphs: - an introduction (saying why it is important, what the situation is...) - two or three paragraphs in support of the argument/ giving a contrasting or different view (with reasons) - a conclusion (a summary of your opinion or interpretation of the facts)
2. List your reasons “for” or “against” before you start writing
3. Back up your reasons with clear examples.
4. Use connectors to introduce different ideas and arguments in your essay.
5. Use a formal style: do not use contractions or very colloquial expressions.

An opinion essay exists to prove your main point – your **thesis**. This should be clearly stated in your **opening paragraph**. Don’t leave the reader to guess what your position is on the issue – make a clear stand!

Next, develop your argument in the body of your essay. Each paragraph should contain a single, clear idea that supports your point of view. You can use examples and illustration, cause-and-effect reasoning, comparison/contrast or other methods of development to support your argument.

Remember that a paragraph is three to five sentences that develop a single, clear idea. A good paragraph often begins with a **topic sentence** that sums up your main idea.

- **Paragraph One** -- The **introduction**. Here you state the main idea of your entire essay -- the point you are trying to make or prove. This paragraph should include your **thesis statement** plus **three reasons** why you believe this statement to be true.
- **Paragraphs Two, Three and Four**. These are the **body** of your essay. Remember back in Paragraph One, you gave three reasons for your opinion? Three reasons, three body paragraphs. Each of the body paragraphs should take **one** of your reasons and explain it in more detail, citing sources where necessary.
- **Paragraph Five** -- The **conclusion**. Sum up your argument by restating your thesis statement and reminding the reader what your three reasons were.

Organization

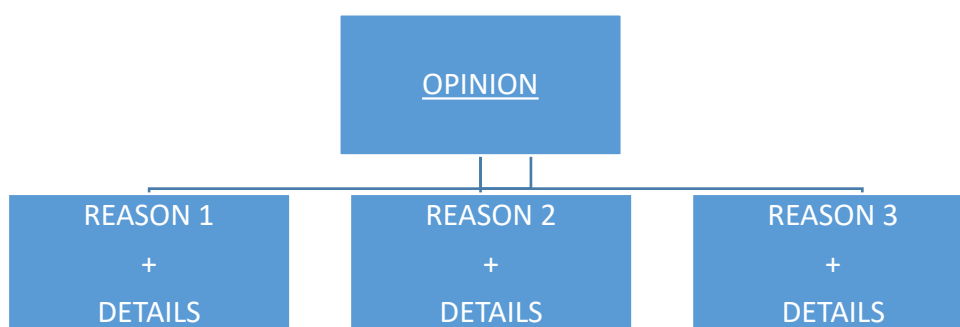
Use a chart like the one below to organize your opinion essay. Write your opinion in the top box. In the second row of boxes, write the reasons why you feel or think the way you do. Under the reasons write details, such as examples, that support your reasons.

Here are examples of an opinion, a reason, and details:

Opinion: People should spend more time playing sports.

Reason: Playing sports is healthy.

Details: It helps you sleep better. It helps protect you against some illnesses.



Expressing opinions

Your opinions	Other views
From my point of view, In my opinion, Personally, I believe/think..... My own feeling is I believe that... I feel very strongly that... I (completely) agree... It seems to me that...	Some/Many people say I know some people think.... I am not convinced that.... As for the argument that

Expressing contrast	Giving examples
Nevertheless,.. However,.. Even though,.. In spite of... Despite... But... Although....	For example... For instance.. Like Such as

Reason and Result	Concluding
This is because... As a result,.. Therefore,.. My main reason is... Another reason is... Thus,.. Consequently,... For this reason,...	To sum up,.. To conclude,.. In conclusion,... In brief,..

Giving facts	Addition
It is a fact that... It is widely known that... It is true that...	What's more,.. In addition,.. Furthermore,.. Moreover,... Also...

Points to consider

- Decide whether you agree or disagree with the subject of the topic, then make a list of your viewpoints and reasons.
- Write well-developed paragraphs, joining the sentences with appropriate linking words and phrases. Do not forget to start each paragraph with a topic sentence which summarizes what the paragraph is about.
- Linking words and phrases should also be used to join one paragraph with the other.

EXERCISE: Decide whether you are pro or con for each topic. Then write your opinion and find anecdotes or examples to support your opinions.

1. Electronic Devices



Pro or Con ?

Opinion : I believe that smart phones and other devices give people more freedom. They are happier because they can do whatever they want wherever they are. (pro)

Detail: The other day I caught the sky train and everyone had an electronic device. No one looked bored. One guy was listening to music. Some friends were looking at photos. One woman seemed to be reading something. It was a very peaceful atmosphere.

2. Cosmetic Surgery



Pro or Con?

Opinion:

.....

.....

Detail:

.....

.....

.....

3. Social Media



Pro or Con?

Opinion:

.....

Detail:

.....

OPINION ESSAY OUTLINE

- Question: “.....” Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Introduction:

- ✓ Paraphrasing the question / general statements/ a hook / attention grabber..
- ✓ Thesis statement (agree/disagree?)

Body paragraphs:

1st : Reason 1, supporting ideas

2nd : Reason 2, supporting ideas

3rd : Reason 3, supporting ideas

Conclusion:

- ✓ Restatement of your thesis statement
- ✓ Suggestions/predictions/final thoughts

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is a way of gathering ideas about a topic. When you brainstorm write down every idea that comes to you. Don't worry now about whether the ideas are good or silly, useful or not. You can decide that later. Right now you are gathering as many ideas as you can.

Listing

- Use a separate, whole sheet of paper
- Write your topic at the top.
- Write down as many ideas as you can about your topic.
- Write single words or short phrases, but don't write long sentences.
- Write down every idea that comes to you, and don't worry about whether the ideas are "good" or "bad".

Editing your list

After you brainstorm, you need to go back and see which ideas you can use. This is called editing.

- Underline or highlight the good ideas
- Cross out ideas that are not related to your topic.

Example: What should I study at university?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • History- learning about the past | • Journalism |
| • Maths (too difficult, not interesting?) | • I like reading- literature? |
| • What job do I want later? | • Art- drawing, painting, sculpture |
| • English for work? Travel ? | • Photography |
| • Writing? | • Studying/ homework |
| • Science- biology chemistry | • Friends / social life |

THE STRUCTURE OF AN OPINION ESSAY

Introduction



Enormous effort is put into researching
and.....
.....
..... Therefore, from my
personal perspective,.....

Body



Firstly, For example,
.....
.....

The second reason is
..... Furthermore,.....
.....

Next, I'm convinced that
.....
.....

Conclusion



To summarise, The reasons for
this are

Why you should vaccinate your kids

Since Edward Jenner introduced the first successful smallpox vaccine by injecting an eight-year-old boy with cowpox pus in 1796, vaccines have been an important part of public health care around the world ("Edward Jenner"). Yet today, many parents choose not to vaccinate their children. Because vaccines are widely supported by research, have few side effects, and have proven successful in halting the spread of disease, I believe it is important that all parents continue to vaccinate their children.

Firstly, all major health organizations, including the Centres for Disease Control and the World Health Organization, recommend vaccination. The value of vaccination is supported by research from around the world, and researchers are constantly working to improve the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. Epidemiologists, the scientists whose job is to study the outbreak of disease, all recommend vaccination.

Additionally, parents do not worry about the safety of vaccines. While side effects do occur, they are usually minor, like redness or swelling around the site of an injection. In Canada, only about one in a million doses of vaccine leads to serious side effects ("Fact and Fiction"). The most famous study linking vaccines to autism, one which got many parents worried about vaccination, has been proven false and the doctor who conducted the study has had his medical license taken away (Triggle).

Finally, around the world, increased vaccination leads to better public health. Diseases like smallpox and polio which once killed and disabled millions of people are virtually unknown today thanks to immunization programs. Yet in countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan where the Taliban discourage immunization, rates of polio are on the rise again (Nordland).

In conclusion, if and when you have children, please get them vaccinated. The risks are minimal and you'll not only be following the best advice of medical science and protecting your own child from disease; you'll be helping in the fight to eradicate infectious diseases in your community.

Why you should vaccinate your kids

OUTLINE

- **Introduction:** Vaccines have few side effects, and have proven successful in halting the spread of disease.
Thesis Statement: I believe it is important that all parents continue to vaccinate their children.
- **1st Body**
- **Topic Sentence:** Firstly, all major health organizations, including the Centres for Disease Control and the World Health Organization, recommend vaccination.
- **Supporting Ideas**
Vaccination is supported by research
Epidemiologists recommend vaccination
- **2nd Body**
- **Topic Sentence:** Additionally, parents don't worry about the safety of vaccines.
- **Supporting Ideas**
Side effects are minor
The study linking vaccines to autism has been proven false
- **3rd Body**
- **Topic Sentence:** Finally, around the world, increased vaccination leads to better public health.
- **Supporting Ideas**
Smallpox and polio are virtually unknown today
Immunization programs
- **Concluding Sentence:** In conclusion, if and when you have children, please get them vaccinated

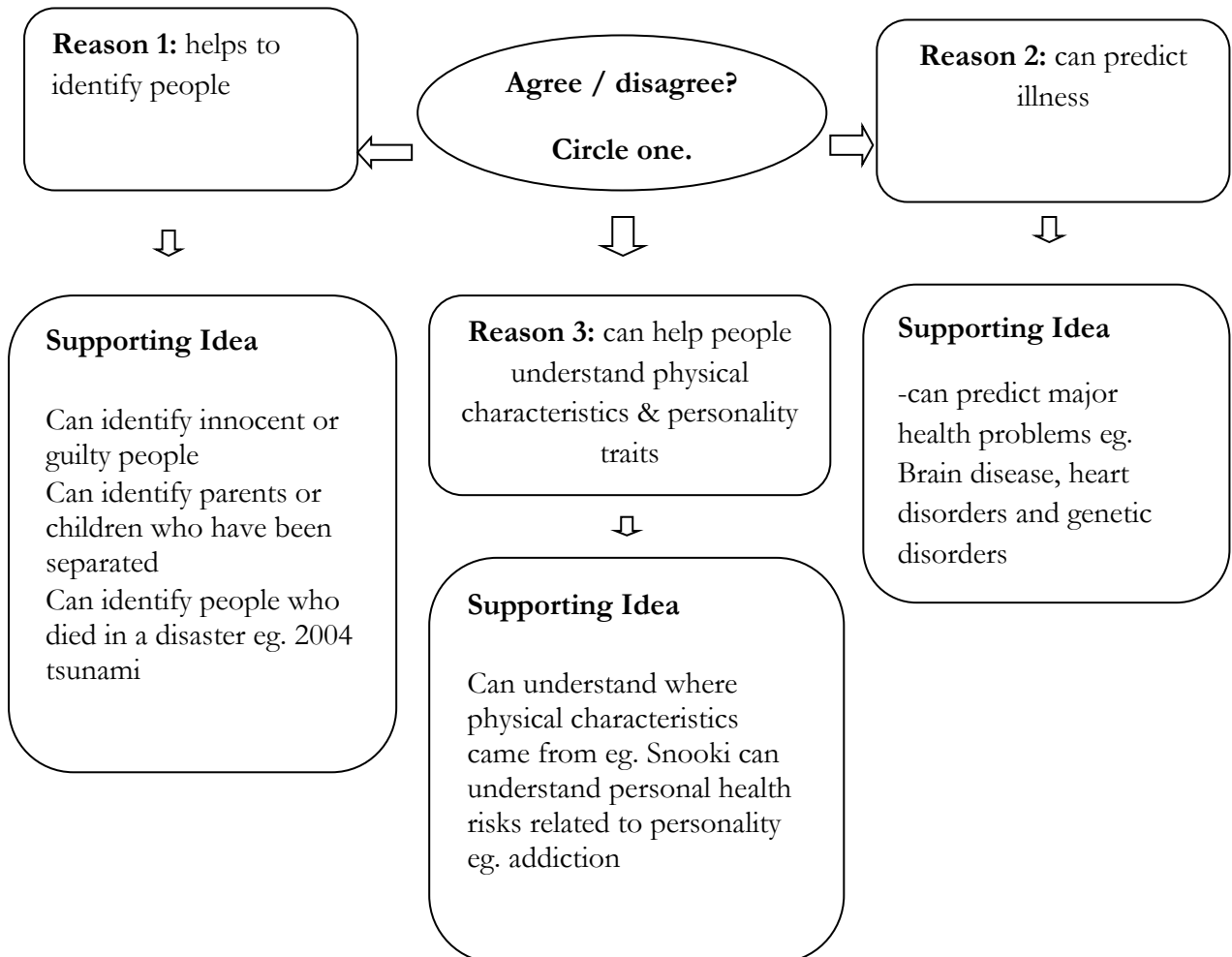
WRITING 1: OPINION ESSAY GUIDED EXERCISES

OPINION ESSAY OUTLINE

DNA testing has many benefits for society
Do you agree or disagree? Why? Why not?

Attention Getter: The American reality TV star Snooki thought she was Italian-American. But her skin color was too dark. A DNA test showed she had been adopted and her parents came from Chile.

Thesis: DNA testing can solve many mysteries and I believe there are three main reasons why DNA testing is beneficial for society.



Conclusion: To sum up, DNA testing has benefits for many different areas of society. Apart from crime, health and genealogy, it has also been used by Walmart for food testing and by historians to discover how people lived and died in the past. There seems to be no limits to how it can help solve many of life's mysteries.

PRACTICE 1:

Read the essay given below and complete the outline.

In some countries, teenagers have jobs while they are still students. Do you think this is a good idea? Support your opinion by using specific reasons and details.

Do you need some extra money to go out with your friends on the weekends? In some countries, many teenagers earn extra cash by working part-time jobs while still in high school. Although some people oppose this practice, saying that teenagers should dedicate all of their attention to their studies, I believe that it is a good idea for teenagers to work while still in school.

To begin, teenagers need extra money to help pay for outings with their friends and to buy clothing and personal items. Most parents have a limited budget and cannot afford to give their children as much as they would like for entertainment and fashion.

Teens also learn time management skills by working. Once a teenager has a job at a local business, his or her time must be divided between study, play, and work. To do this, young adults must learn to budget their time accordingly, being sure, not to spend too much time on any one activity while neglecting the others.

Finally, teenagers learn responsibility by working. Teens learn to work with others in a business environment- a very different setting from their accustomed academic setting. For example, teens must learn to work under a formal boss or manager, learn to help customers if they work in a retail environment, and learn that things like being on time for class, also pertain to being on time for work.

As explained in the points above, teenagers certainly receive many benefits from working while still in school. While there may be some negative consequences from a teen's part time job, such as lower grades, I believe the benefits gained from working far outweigh the negatives and will help students adjust better to their adult lives.

OPINION ESSAY OUTLINE

Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Attention Getter:

Thesis:

Reason 1:

Agree / disagree?
Circle one.

Reason 2:



Supporting Idea



Reason 3:



Supporting Idea



Supporting Idea

Conclusion:

PRACTICE 2:

Read the model opinion essay. Then answer the questions.

Most people love watching some kind of television, but hate the commercials that interrupt the TV programs. I guess you could say that I'm different from most people because I love commercials. In fact, I think the commercials are almost as good as the shows I'm watching. You won't find me leaving the room to get a snack or something to drink when a commercial comes on. I'm the one paying attention because I think television commercials are great.

First of all, I think most commercials are funny. Some advertisers like to make fun of mistakes that people make. For example, a car insurance company has an ad showing a man trimming a tree in his yard. The next thing you know, a huge tree limb falls on his neighbour's car. It's what they used to call slapstick humour, and I think it's very funny. In another example, some guys are moving into a new apartment and they are installing an air conditioner into a window, and it falls out and onto someone's car. I enjoy these kinds of commercials because they provide a glimpse of human behaviour that I find entertaining.

Additionally, I like to see commercials that my senses respond to, in particular my sense of taste. When I see a close-up of some mouth-watering food, I get so hungry that I have to eat it. I frequently call for takeout right then and there, or I run to the kitchen and try to create what I've just seen on the screen. When I see a new car ad where the car is driving through mountain roads, it makes me want to book a trip out west to enjoy the same scenery. And when I hear music I like as the background to one of my programs, I make sure to pay attention to the credits at the end to find out the name of the musician so I can listen to that person again.

Finally, TV advertising provides me with information about coming attractions: future TV programs, events, or movies. When I see a commercial for a movie that will soon be released, I can decide if it's something I want to see or not. If there's a TV program coming up, I can set my DVR for it well in advance.

To summarise, you could say I'm very unusual because I don't mind commercials while I'm watching my favourite TV programs. I don't find commercials to be interruptions. I love them because I think they're funny, entertaining, and informative. I think TV would be pretty dull without them.

1. What is the thesis statement?

2. What are the three reasons and examples that the writer uses to support his or her opinion?

Reason 1: I think a lot of commercials are funny.

Examples: A huge tree limb falls on a neighbour's car; an air conditioner falls out of a window and onto someone's car.

Reason 2: _____.

Examples: _____.

Reason 3: _____.

Examples: _____.

_____.

PRACTICE 3:

Read these introductory paragraphs to different opinion essays. Which is the best thesis statement for each essay?

1. Advertising has been around for many years, and most people just accept it as part of our lives. But I was watching TV with my young son the other night when he pointed out to me the name of a particular computer that he noticed on the show we were watching. That's when I realised that advertising has invaded our lives too much. If my son recognizes a company logo that easily, I wonder how much more advertising he is being exposed to without even realising it? Enough is enough.

- a. There should not be any advertising on the internet.
- b. Advertising products within television shows should be banned.
- c. We need to find a way to reduce the amount of advertising in our lives.

2. While watching my son's baseball game the other night, I noticed something new on the fence surrounding the field. There was a huge advertisement for a popular brand of soda. I was absolutely shocked! How could an advertisement for junk food be placed in view of all of the children and parents? I realize now that this huge corporation is giving money to my son's school, but at what cost?

- a. Advertisements for unhealthy food or drinks should not be on school property.
- b. I think soda advertisements are very funny.
- c. I think it's wonderful that companies are paying for sports programs.

3. With new technology, advertising can be very deceptive. For example, many beauty ads show women with perfect skin and hair. In reality, their photos have been "touched up" by computer software programs. Men, too, are shown as very muscular and strong, when the reality may be quite different. Men and women both age naturally, but advertisements show a different kind of person—one who never gets old.

- a. I think changing the way someone looks in a photo is an outdated advertising trick.
- b. I think advertisements should show people of different ages, shapes, and sizes, not just young people.
- c. I think computer software programs are very innovative.

4. I was watching TV last night and I realized something about my life: I'm missing a lot of things. When I saw a commercial for a new sports car, I realized I don't have the most modern car. An ad for flat-screen TVs reminded me that my television is eight years old. And finally, the travel commercials reminded me that I don't have the money to travel to exotic places and stay in world-famous resorts. So, in the end, all of these ads make me feel like a failure. This is the reason why I don't want to watch TV at times.

- a. Advertising on TV should provide us with details about all the latest products.
- b. Advertising on TV should entertain us.
- c. Advertising on TV should not make us feel like we are unsuccessful.

PRACTICE 4

Smoking should be banned in all public places. What is your opinion? Please give reasons.

As society grows more and more health-conscious, stronger voices to ban smoking in all public areas begin to emerge. Banning smoking in public has been used as a means for governments to discourage smoking and also to improve the images of cities. It is almost impossible to achieve consensus on this issue as it creates great inconvenience for the smokers. ⁽¹⁾ _____

⁽²⁾ _____. Cigarettes are known to contain carcinogens that have been associated with increased rates of lung cancer and heart disease. However, the hazard does not end there; second-hand smoke has been proven to create more detrimental effects on health on both smokers and people around them. This is especially harmful for those with weaker immune systems such as children and the elderly.

⁽³⁾ _____. One's personal enjoyment should not be at the expense of others' health. When a person smokes in indoor public areas such as restaurants and shopping centres, pollutants continue to circulate the premises and affect the health of everyone within the building. It is unfair for non-smokers to be forced to share the health risks of smokers.

⁽⁴⁾ _____. Negative effects of smoking go beyond the smoker himself, creating health problems for everyone else. While some choose to accept the side effects of smoking, the risks of smoking should not be forced upon others. Therefore, in my humble opinion, smoking should be banned in public places.

1. Match the following statements so that they fit in the paragraphs.

- a. To sum up, public places are shared by all, smokers and non-smokers, old and young, and should be made safe for all.
- b. Looking at it from a health aspect, smoking should be banned in public places because it is not only a health hazard for smokers, but it also creates harm to others.
- c. However, I believe smoking should be banned in public places and my reasons are as follows.
- d. Looking at it from a sociological aspect, smoking should be banned in public places because smoking is a personal choice.

PRACTICE 5

Read the following essay and write the missing sentences.

IN OR OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?

Some people strongly believe that they learn more outside of school. However, I disagree with this belief as most of the knowledge that I have learned in my life has been through school _____

_____.

Firstly, there are many experts in various fields that can guide a student. Outside of school, it is difficult to find people as knowledgeable as the teachers you can find within schools. This lack of experts makes learning about anything outside of school difficult. The advantages of having teachers really become obvious when students begin to study subjects at advanced levels. To learn anything extensively, teachers are absolutely necessary.

Secondly, going to school allows students to come into contact with others that have interests similar to their own. Having a group of peers that are studying the same topics can be an incredible resource for knowledge. For instance, these peers can provide the necessary help and support when a student has trouble learning about a difficult subject. I have had many experiences in school where my peers have helped me to understand a difficult concept.

Finally, going to school provides a structured environment where a person is exposed to a number of different viewpoints and subjects. Since students need to take many different courses, they get a much broader understanding of a field. Those who choose to learn outside of a school are less likely to encounter views that differ from their own or to be exposed to new schools of thought.

In brief, _____

PRACTICE 6

Read the following essay and write the missing sentences.

Are video games a good way to keep fit?

Nowadays, many teenagers have got video consoles at home and they often like playing video games. _____

First of all, I think that _____

There are lots of different types of exercise you can do such as basketball, water-skiing and dance and, what's more, you can play them in the comfort of your home. In my opinion, these games are fun and interactive because you can play them with friends and, if you play online, you don't need to be in the same place as your friend to play.

In addition, _____

Some people think that it's better to do exercise outside in the fresh air. Although this is true, it's actually difficult to play outside when it's raining or very hot so video games are a good alternative.

To sum up, I believe that video games are a fun and social way to keep fit.
