

Part 1: essay

Part 1 tests your ability to write an essay, developing and supporting an argument on a given topic, in 220–260 words.

You are given a set of notes on the topic, including three bullet points. You must select two of the bullet points, and base your essay on those two points only. You will be asked to explain which of the two points is more important in a particular way, and to give reasons for your opinion.

You are also given three short opinions related to the bullet points. You can use these to help develop your essay, if you want to, but you should do so in your own words, as far as possible.

You should spend a total of about 45 minutes on the task, including time to plan and improve it.

You need to organise your essay into paragraphs, with an appropriate beginning and ending.

You should develop your essay by giving reasons for the opinions you express.

Your essay should have a positive effect on the reader, be well organised with one part leading clearly to the next, and have a layout that makes it easy to read – particularly by being divided into paragraphs.

You must write in a neutral to formal style.

How to do Part 1

- Read all the instructions and notes carefully. Underline the key words. Think about all three bullet points, and decide which two of them you prefer to write about.
- Make brief notes for: an introduction, each of the bullet points, and your conclusion.
- Your introduction could explain why the topic is important, for example, and refer to how the two bullet points relate to the topic.
- For each of the two chosen bullet points, you might find it useful to divide your notes into 'for' and 'against'. Make notes on your opinion, and your reasons for holding that opinion. You might also make notes on why other people might disagree with you.
- Decide whether you want to refer to any of the opinions included in the task. If so, make a note under the appropriate heading.
- Your conclusion should answer the question about which bullet point is more important.

Practice task and model answer

1 Read the Part 1 task below and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the background situation?
- 2 What is the topic of the essay?
- 3 Who will read it?

You have attended a panel discussion on ways in which the needs of an ageing population can be met. You have made the notes below.

Ways in which the needs of an ageing population can be met

- more residential care homes
- more jobs available for elderly people
- more entertainment

Some opinions expressed in the discussion:

"I'd rather get help in my own home than move into a care home."

"Work gives people a way of organising their day."

"Too many forms of entertainment are intended for young people."

Write an essay for your tutor discussing two of the ways in your notes. You should explain which way you think is more important giving reasons to support your opinion.

You may, if you wish, make use of the opinions expressed in the discussion, but you should use your own words as far as possible.

2 Read this model essay and answer the questions.

- 1 What style is the essay written in? Give three examples that show this.
- 2 How has the writer organised the essay?
- 3 In the writer's opinion, which way is more important?

Introduction, giving the background – why the population is ageing – and introducing areas where the elderly might have specific needs

As medicine develops, life expectancy rises, increasing the proportion of the population over the age of 65. This presents numerous challenges for society as a whole, in areas ranging from healthcare to transport, and no country has fully come to grips with the issues involved.

Many more people survive strokes, heart attacks and other diseases than in the past, but they may suffer from impaired health and require assistance in some form. One solution is residential care homes, with trained support available round the clock. A major drawback, however, is the shortage of affordable places. Despite the high cost, governments should provide more homes, and, if necessary, subsidise the residents. Without this intervention, moving to a home would be out of reach of many people, who risk ending up without the support they need.

In connection with the question of work, for many elderly people retirement brings empty days to fill, without the income required to pass the time enjoyably. Having a job can provide a structure that might once have seemed very demanding, but is now missed. Some people would rather work, perhaps from home, and perhaps part-time. Such activity could be organised at a local or even national level, with employers offering tasks that are suitable for retired people.

Much could be done to meet the needs of an ageing population, and it is hard to prioritise just one area. Nevertheless, I believe that having an adequate number of places in residential care homes to meet demand is probably the most important, as health is a fundamental need.

Reason

Good linking expression (in connection) indicating new topic

Good words as an alternative way of expressing second opinion

Conclusion and writer's opinion, with reason

Linking word (nevertheless)

Look at the exam task instructions and the notes with it on page 15. Answer these questions.

- 1 What do you have to write about, and for whom?
- 2 Which aspects of the topic must you write about?
- 3 What can you include if you want to? What shouldn't you do with these?

Quick steps to writing a Part 1 essay

- Read all the instructions and the notes, underlining the key words.
- Think of as many relevant ideas as you can.
- Decide how many paragraphs you will need and put your ideas under headings, including those from the printed notes. Choose which of the three opinions to use.

Exam task

Write your answer in **220–260** words in an appropriate style.

You have listened to a discussion on how people in richer countries can be made more aware of poverty in other parts of the world. You have made the notes below:

Ways of raising awareness of poverty as a global issue.

- education
- campaigns by charities
- increased media coverage

Some opinions expressed in the discussion:

"Schools should teach every child the terrible effects of poverty."

"We should support charities that expose the awful reality of poverty."

"People would be shocked if they saw real poverty on TV every evening."

Write an essay for your tutor discussing **two** of the approaches in your notes. You should **explain which approach you think would be more effective, giving reasons** to support your opinion.

You may, if you wish, make use of the opinions expressed in the discussion, but you should use your own words as far as possible.

- 5 Read the model essay in the next column and answer these questions.

- 1 In which paragraph does the writer introduce the topic?
- 2 Which two of the notes does she use? In which paragraphs?
- 3 Which of the opinions expressed does she include, and where?
- 4 Which approach does she prefer? Where does she state this? What reasons does she give?
- 5 Is her essay the right length? Is it fairly formal or quite informal in style?
- 6 Which contrast links does she use?

Exam tip >

Use a variety of contrast links to connect points in your essay.

There exists today an ever-widening wealth gap between different parts of the world, with an increasing number of people living in extreme poverty. Urgent measures are needed, and the first step must surely be to raise awareness in richer countries of just how desperate the situation is. To achieve this, there would appear to be two possible approaches.

Firstly, the media could cover world poverty much more frequently and in far greater depth. Currently, television rarely focuses on this human tragedy, despite the awful conditions in which hundreds of millions of people spend their entire lives. Regular in-depth reports, however, would surely bring it home to viewers that this appalling situation never goes away, leading to greater pressure on governments to take steps such as increasing overseas aid.

Schools could also have an important role to play. Although it is essential that pupils are taught about the social problems of their own country, attention should also be paid to the difficulties of those, especially children, in poorer nations. Students need to learn why such terrible living conditions exist, both by studying the history of those countries and by looking at the political, economic and social factors that make poverty so difficult to eliminate.

Nevertheless, relying on the education system would take many years to bring results, whereas change is needed right now. It should also involve the whole population, not just young people. Only the media can have this immediate impact, and nowadays it is only the media that almost everyone pays attention to.

- 6 You are going to write your own essay. To help you get ideas, discuss these questions and make notes.

- 1 Which are the worst examples of poverty that you know about?
- 2 Which had most impact on you: reading or hearing about them, or seeing images?
- 3 Which do you think influence people's feelings about global issues most: schools and universities, charities, or the media? Why?

- 7 Look at the third Quick step and plan your essay. Here is one possible paragraph plan:

- 1 Introduction: the topic
- 2 Charities: direct experience, tell the truth, opinion 1
- 3 Education: scarce resources, contrast rich/poor, opinion 2
- 4 Conclusion: charities more effective + reasons

- 8 Write your essay in **220–260** words in an appropriate style. When you have finished, check it for the following:

- correct length
- coverage of all the necessary points
- good organisation into well-linked paragraphs
- a wide range of structures and vocabulary
- correct grammar, spelling and punctuation
- appropriate style of language
- positive effect on the reader.