



Cambridge IGCSE™ English as a Second Language

(for examination from 2019)

Writing an article

The purpose of an article is often to inform and persuade the reader. Articles give information about a certain topic and can also be used to persuade the reader that a certain viewpoint is correct. However, they often provide a balanced argument which lets the reader make up their own mind about the topic. Articles can be used in newspapers or magazines and will express a certain viewpoint or perspective – this can be positive or negative depending on the topic. The language and vocabulary you use will depend on the audience you are writing for.

Marking criteria

Marks are awarded for content and language.

Content covers:

- the relevance (i.e. whether the piece fulfills the task and the awareness of purpose/audience/register)
- development of ideas (i.e. the detail/explanation provided).

Language covers:

- range (i.e. complexity of vocabulary and sentence structure)
- accuracy (i.e. grammar, spelling, punctuation and text organisation).

Tips for writing an article

Language

Think about the audience that the article is for. The tone of the article should be formal but should be engaging. Each paragraph should have a different idea.

Use linking words which suit a formal type of writing, such as 'Firstly', 'Furthermore' or 'In conclusion.'

Use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar

Organisation

An article should have well-developed ideas and should be clear.

One way to structure your article is:

- Introduction – outline the main point of the article. Engage the reader to make them interested in the topic.
- Opinion – agree/disagree with the viewpoint expressed in the statement. Back up your ideas with evidence and with persuasive language features.
- Opinion – now disagree/agree with the viewpoint expressed in the statement. Back up your ideas with evidence and with persuasive language feature.
- Conclusion- this should summarise what you have said and can often ask readers to now make up their own minds for the future.

Alternatively, if you do not want to discuss the other side of the argument then your third paragraph should offer another reason to support your viewpoint. Make sure that you talk about different ideas so that you don't repeat yourself.

Example task

This is an example of a **Paper 1 Exercise 6** task. We have annotated the question below with some **guidance** for candidates to help them prepare their answer and encourage them to focus on what the question is asking for. This guidance is not given to candidates in the examination.

Once you have read through the question instructions, you will need to **re-read** the comments provided as these may give you some ideas.

The **purpose** of the response is to write about the statement provided.

Some people think we rely too much on eating convenience food nowadays.

Here are some comments from your friends

I think it lets me have time to do other things.

I wish I knew how to cook for myself.

It's always easy to find.

It's really expensive and comes with too much plastic.

The **audience** of the article is the learners at your school.

Write an article for your school newspaper, giving your views.

The comments above may give you some ideas, and you can also use some ideas of your own.

Your article should be between 150 and 200 words long.

You will receive up to 8 marks for the content of your article, and up to 8 marks for the language used.

The response to this question needs to be in the form of an **article** for a school newspaper so the register required can be **informal** but should avoid slang. You should still write in **Standard English**, using correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.

For Extended candidates, the number of words is for guidance: write **about** 150–200 words. Paying attention to the guidance for word limits will help learners to plan their time in the examination and target the requirements of each question more effectively.

Example candidate response and comments

Example Candidate Response – high	Comments
<p>Convenience Food: Fast fix or fat fad? ①</p> <p>Convenience food is everywhere. It's easy to find and can be a quick fix when hunger strikes. But, is convenience food the best thing for our waistlines, our wallets and our world? ②</p> <p>There's no denying that convenience food can save you time. We're all busy with school, homework and after-school ③ activities and sometimes you need a snack to satisfy those cravings and give you a well-needed energy boost.</p> <p>④ However, one unwelcome consequence ⑤ of this convenience cuisine is that lots of us simply don't know how to cook!</p> <p>Cooking is an important life-skill for the future and relying on packaged products can mean that you don't develop confidence and skills in the kitchen.</p> <p>In addition, convenience food can be expensive; costing you cash and damaging the environment with its plastic packaging. There are other ways to make sure you don't go hungry without hurting the planet and wasting your money.</p> <p>So, whilst eating convenience food can mean that you spend more time doing the things you love, it can have a negative impact on other areas of your life and the environment ⑥. Think about this before you reach for your next snack!</p>	<p>① The candidate uses an attention grabbing headline relevant to the topic of the article.</p> <p>② Here the candidate uses a range of structures, such as questions, to engage the reader.</p> <p>③ This is a clear sense of purpose and audience in this paragraph.</p> <p>④ The candidate uses a range of linking words to link the paragraphs.</p> <p>⑤ Some less common vocabulary is used and this could be developed throughout the response.</p> <p>⑥ This is a clear conclusion that relates nicely back to the introduction. This shows that the article is effectively sequenced and organised.</p> <p>Mark for Content = 7 out of 8 Mark for Language = 6 out of 8</p> <p>Total mark awarded = 13 out of 16</p>

How the candidate could have improved their answer

The example answer above showed clear understanding of how to write an article. The task was clearly fulfilled and the candidate used an appropriate style and register for the text type. There was an excellent sense of audience. For example, the candidate referenced appropriate concerns for teenagers such as 'school, homework and after-school activities'. The candidate clearly engaged with the topic and provided an engaging introduction which outlined some of the points mentioned in the stimulus material. The candidate offered a balanced argument for and against the statement which meant that they used the stimulus material well. Overall, the vocabulary was relevant to the task but this could have been more developed and sophisticated to show more complexity. There were some varied sentence types in the use of questions and exclamations but the candidate could have used some more complex structures. The candidate used some linking words throughout to show the direction of their argument and clearly referenced back to their introduction in their conclusion which showed a good sense of structure and organisation.

Common mistakes

Candidates can lose focus when writing an article. Sometimes, candidates write about wider, more general issues associated with the topic. Although candidates should interpret the stimulus material in their own way, they should make sure that they focus on the topic. For example, if this candidate had written about how important home cooked food is or just about the health implications of eating convenience food then this wouldn't have met the criteria for relevance. Candidates must remember that they are presenting their ideas in a balanced way and that they are trying to persuade the audience that what is being said is correct. They should do this by using a range of persuasive devices throughout their writing. Learners should try not to just describe the problem but should be convincing in getting their audience to choose a side.

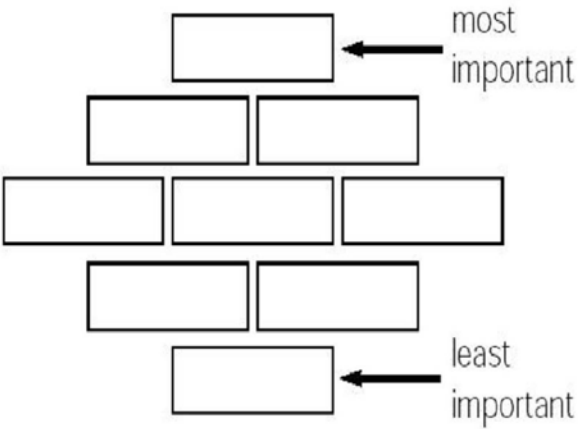
Examination preparation

In class learners should practise writing an article. You could allow learners to research a topic that interests them and write about this, making sure they present arguments that show the positive and negative aspects of the topic.

After brainstorming for ideas, planning and drafting is completed, learners compose their own work. Final drafts can be shared with each other for help with proof-reading and peer evaluation. Learners can read some good examples aloud to the class for discussion and peer feedback.

Sample lesson

Assessment objectives	Learning objectives	Suggested teaching activities
<p>W1 communicate information/ideas/opinions clearly, accurately and effectively</p> <p>W2 organise ideas into coherent paragraphs using a range of appropriate linking devices</p> <p>W3 use a range of grammatical structures accurately and effectively</p> <p>W4 show control of punctuation and spelling</p> <p>W5 use appropriate register and style/format for the given purpose and audience</p>	<p>Writing strategies: Writing an article</p> <p>Learners are able to plan and draft writing.</p> <p>Learners are able to understand the purpose, audience and form of texts and use this in their own writing.</p> <p>Learners are able to use specific vocabulary which is relevant to the focus of the article.</p> <p>Learners are able to organise their writing into a coherent structure that matches the appropriate</p>	<p>Pre-learning (optional) To get learners engaged in article writing, ask them to research a topic that interests them. Encourage them to think of a topic or an issue that they can argue about. For example, if a learner would like to write about football, it may be more useful for them to explore footballer's wages or racism in football.</p> <p>If you have a large class, assign topics or issues to learners based on their interests or ask learners to research a particular topic as a group. Alternatively, split the learners into groups and give them a statement from the lesson below.</p> <p>Starter: Divide the class into two groups and assign one with 'agreeing' with the statement, and the other group with 'disagreeing' with the statement.</p> <p>Display one of the following statements on the board:</p> <p>1. <i>'Some people think that young people spend too much time on their phones and not enough time outside in nature.'</i></p>

Assessment objectives	Learning objectives	Suggested teaching activities
	<p>style and format of writing an article.</p>	<p>2. <i>'Some people think that we must do more to protect the planet and the environment for future generations.'</i></p> <p>3. <i>'Some people think that young people should be able to vote from the age of 16.'</i></p> <p>4. <i>'Some people think that there should be an 8pm to 7am curfew for all people under the age of 17.'</i></p> <p>In their groups, learners should discuss reasons to either agree or disagree with the statement. They must explain why they think this and justify their ideas. You could model some on the board. For example, for statement 4, you could agree by saying:</p> <p><i>'I think it would stop crime and make people feel safer.'</i></p> <p>And then disagree by saying:</p> <p><i>'I think it takes away your freedom.'</i></p> <p>Extension: Groups feedback to each other and decide which reasons are the most persuasive and effective. Encourage learners to use a 'Diamond 9' structure to represent this:</p>  <p>Development: Learners choose four statements: two that agree with the topic and two that disagree. Using the structure outlined in the tips for writing an article, above, learners then consider how they will write their article.</p> <p>They should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how they will engage the reader at the start • what kind of persuasive features they could use • who they are writing for <p>As part of this planning stage, suitable vocabulary for the topic and for making suggestions could be explored. Ensure</p>

Assessment objectives	Learning objectives	Suggested teaching activities
		<p>that learners understand the target audience and the formality that this requires.</p> <p>Main task: Learners draft their article on the chosen topic. They should write in formal English and use appropriate vocabulary throughout. Encourage learners to stay within the word count of 100–150 words for Core candidates or 150–200 words for Extended candidates.</p> <p>Plenary: Learners peer assess this work by reading each other's to help with proof-reading and suggestions for improvement.</p>

Resources

www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-upper-secondary/cambridge-igcse/subjects/

This is our public website where you can find the syllabus and the most recent past papers. You can also find a list of our endorsed textbooks.

www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

The **School Support Hub** provides teachers with a wide range of practical resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your learners the best possible preparation for Cambridge IGCSE.

Teaching resources

- Scheme of work
- Learner Guide
- Specimen Paper Answers
- Speaking Test Handbook and audios
- Example Candidate Responses (Paper 1, Paper 2 and Component 5)
- Writing a report / Writing a review
- Speaking test video

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