

Sean Haughton

Ahead with

FCE

for schools



SKILLS BUILDER
for Writing & Speaking



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Sevron 3, Athens Greece
www.aheadbooks.com
info@aheadbooks.com
Tel: +30 210.57.40.892
Fax: +30 210.57.40.701

Written by: *Sean Haughton*
Edited by: *Julia H.*
Layout: *Irene L.*
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The Writing Exam

The basics ...

Here is what the Writing Paper looks like:

Time:	1 hour and 20 minutes
Number of Parts	2: Part 1 and Part 2 (both carry equal marks)

Part	Task	Write
1	<p><i>Question 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - always <u>essay</u>. - <u>compulsory</u> question. - up to 120 words of input material. 	140-190 words
2	<p><i>Questions 2-5</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choose ONE question to answer. - up to 70 words of input material. <p><i>Questions 2-4</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 of the following 4 question types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • article • story • letter/email • review <p><i>Question 5</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - based on the set text, 1 of the following 4 question types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • article • review • letter/email • essay 	140-190 words

1 Look at the table and answer these questions about the Writing Paper.

1. How many parts are there?
2. How long do you have to finish the paper in total?
3. Which part is worth the most marks?
4. How many answers do you have to write in total?
5. What is the maximum number of words you can write for each answer?
6. What is the minimum number of words you can write for each answer?
7. What writing type always appears in Part 1?
8. How many questions must you do in Part 2?
9. What writing types can appear in questions 2-4?
10. What writing types can appear in question 5?
11. If you haven't studied the set text, how many different questions can you choose from in Part 2?
12. And if you have studied the set text, how many then?



The Essay

Step 1: Analysing the question and input material.

Save time. Before you enter the exam room, you should already be familiar with the format of the paper. Therefore, you don't need to read these lines because they tell you what you already know: (1) the question is compulsory and (2) you should write 140-190 words.

1 You **MUST** answer this question. Write your answer in **140-190** words in an appropriate style.

In your English class you have been talking about **food**. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay for homework.

Write your essay using **all** the notes and giving reasons for your point of view.

These lines always provide some background information. They are not very important, so just read them quickly and highlight the general topic, ie food.

This is your question topic. Highlight it. Remember: you don't have to agree with the statement. You can take the other point of view if you want.

All teens should learn how to cook.

Do you agree?

Notes

Write about:

1. **whether or not teens should be able to cook**
2. **whether or not cooking is enjoyable**
3. (your own idea)

You are already familiar with the format of the paper, so you are aware Question 1 is always an essay. Therefore, you know that you should write in a FORMAL essay style.

This is important. You must include (write about) all the notes. If you don't, you will lose marks. (Refer to the Notes section later.)

Although there is a lot of input material, really, all you need to focus on is the few key pieces of highlighted information. Make sure you answer the question asked: (1) stay on topic; (2) cover both the given points; and (3) include your own idea.

There are always 2 things you must write about in the Notes section. Highlight them and make sure you cover both items in your answer or you will lose marks.

Similarly, you must include another idea of your own. If you don't remember to do this, you will lose marks.

1 After you have read the task and tips above, answer these questions.

- Ex. What style of writing should you use? *Formal*
1. What is the question topic?
 2. What are you told to write about?
 3. What else must you include?
 4. Do you have to agree with the statement?



Step 2: Planning your answer ...

Always spend a few minutes planning your answer. Marks are awarded for organisation, so make sure you structure your paragraphs in a logical way.

1 Write the information (A-E) in the correct sections (1-5).

There are different ways to structure your answer, but for this example we have chosen an easy, logical one: use five paragraphs and cover the input material in the order it appears.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| A Introduce the topic in my own words. | 1 Paragraph 1 |
| B Summarise what I've said and make my opinion clear. | 2 Paragraph 2 |
| C Talk about whether or not teens should be able to cook. | 3 Paragraph 3 |
| D Talk about my idea. | 4 Paragraph 4 |
| E Talk about whether or not cooking is enjoyable. | 5 Paragraph 5 |

Brainstorm ideas ...

Don't spend very long on this, but take a minute or two to write down some ideas for the main-body paragraphs – your opinions and reasons to support them.

2a You try: Write as many ideas of your own as you can, for each section below. For this exercise, you are in favour of teens learning to cook.

Paragraph 2: *Should teens be able to cook?*

Yes – homemade usually healthier so important skill; ~~also more delicious~~; also, very busy parents so need help in kitchen

.....

.....

Paragraph 3: *Is cooking enjoyable?*

Yes – ~~you get to have the leftovers~~; if people like your food, feel great; experiment with foreign foods, interesting

.....

.....

Paragraph 4: *My idea*

Culture – learn more about foreign cultures when cooking their food; more respect for them; ~~more motivation to travel~~

.....

.....



Writing | Part 1

2b Now compare your notes with the example notes. If your ideas are different, that's fine. The example is just there to help you.

2c Did you notice some of the ideas in the example were crossed out? That's because you only need one or two good points for each paragraph. Look at your ideas and cross out ones you don't need.

Once you have completed Exercise 2c, that should leave you with an essay plan. Then, it's time to use the plan to write your essay. However, before you do that, let's read the example answer and tips below.

In the first paragraph, introduce the topic. Try to use your own words and not repeat the words from the question. One technique is (1) make a general statement and then (2) ask a question.

General statements are things most people believe. Start with a phrase like one of these:

- *Most people believe ...*
- *The majority of people believe ...*
- *Nowadays, it is commonly believed that ...*

Notice all the linking words and phrases (highlighted) used in the essay. These help to link your ideas together in a logical flow so that your essay reads well. Make sure you are familiar with and know when to use a good selection of them.

Many people say the art of cooking is being lost. **However**, even if true, does that really matter – should young people learn to cook? **Personally**, I think it is very important for teenagers to learn to cook. **For a start**, home-made food is generally healthier than bought food, so this skill will help them remain healthy throughout life. **Moreover**, parents are busier than ever today; **therefore**, they need their children's support in the kitchen.

Besides, the fact remains that cooking is a very enjoyable and rewarding pastime. **For instance**, when you cook a nice meal and others enjoy it, this is incredibly satisfying. **Additionally**, learning to cook foods from different parts of the world is fascinating.

And that brings me to my final point; that cooking helps us appreciate other cultures. Food is a huge part of culture **and** the more we learn about foreign foods, the more we appreciate the richness of cultures other than our own.

In short, **I firmly believe** that all teens should be able to cook because **not only** is cooking a practical skill, **but** it is also very satisfying and a cultural experience.

Asking a question is a good way to introduce the topic and get the discussion started.

Follow your plan. In the second paragraph, say why you think teens should be able to cook. Remember to support your opinion with one or two good points.

Remember: this is a FORMAL style of writing. Don't use contractions. For example: *cooking is* not *cooking's*.

Conclude by giving your opinion and a brief summary of the reasons why you believe that (these are the points you have already made in the main body – paragraphs 2-4).



Paraphrasing

Remember, try to paraphrase the question in your own words.

3a Rewrite these statements using the words in brackets as in the example.

- Ex. It is important for everyone to learn to cook. (there is, need, able to)
There is still a need for everyone to be able to cook.
1. Art should be a compulsory school subject. (students, have to, learn, at school)

 2. We need more practical subjects for students. (students, should be, offered, chance, do, at school)

 3. The school day should be shorter. (we, shorten)

 4. Schools should ban mobile phones from the classroom. (students, not allowed, in the)

 5. Students should not have to wear uniforms in school. (uniforms, not be, compulsory, at)

Making topic questions

Remember, you can use questions to introduce your topic.

3b Rewrite your statements from Exercise 3a as questions below.

- Ex. *Is there still a need for everyone to be able to cook?*
1.
 2.
 3.
 4.
 5.



Linking phrases

You should become familiar with a range of different linking phrases for different functions.

4 Match the functions (A-H) to the groups of phrases (1-8) in the table.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A <input type="checkbox"/> | Giving opinions | E <input type="checkbox"/> | Giving supporting information |
| B <input type="checkbox"/> | Giving reasons | F <input type="checkbox"/> | Contrasting |
| C <input type="checkbox"/> | Sequencing | G <input type="checkbox"/> | Giving results |
| D <input type="checkbox"/> | Giving examples | H <input type="checkbox"/> | Summing up |

1	2	3	4
Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, ... Lastly, ... First of all, ... Second of all, ... Last of all, ... Last but not least, ...	Additionally, ... Furthermore, ... What is more, ... In addition, ... Not only ... , but also ...	On one hand, ... On the other hand, ... However, ... Nonetheless, ... Nevertheless, ... Despite this, ... In spite of this, , whereas , while , but ...	For instance, ... For example, ; namely, , such as , like ...
5	6	7	8
Therefore, ... As a result, ... As a consequence, ... Consequently, due to (the fact that) since/as/because on account of because of ...	In my view, ... As far as I am concerned, ... From my perspective, ...	In short, ... In conclusion, ... In summary, ... To summarise, ... To conclude, ...

Step 3: Putting it all together ...

Now it's time to write your answer, using your notes. Remember:

- Stick to your simple paragraph plan and follow your notes.
- Introduce the topic in your own words.
- Use linking words and phrases to improve the flow of your ideas.
- Only use formal language.
- Give your opinion and a brief summary of the reasons at the end.

TIP BOX!

Don't waste time counting your words in the exam. You should, instead, try to get an idea of what around 190 words looks like in your writing when you write practice answers. You won't be heavily penalised for writing a few words over the limit.

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