

# Writing: propose a change and weigh objections

English B2

## What this topic teaches

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A B2 proposal does more than ask: it argues a change and stands ready for the objections. Five parts: situation, proposal, arguments, **objections weighed**, closing ask.

- The proposal names the change in one implementable sentence.
- Arguments give reasons with evidence, strongest last.
- Objections are raised BY YOU, weighed honestly, and answered or accepted.
- Memory hook: a proposal that hides objections invites them loaded: **steal the reply first**.

## The five-part machine

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| Part        | Job                       | Example (a later school start)                               |
|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| situation   | the problem now           | First lessons see half the class half asleep.                |
| proposal    | the change, one sentence  | Start the school day at 9.00 instead of 8.00.                |
| arguments   | reasons + evidence        | Sleep research on teenagers; our own survey of 240 students. |
| objections  | raised, weighed, answered | Buses: real cost, and a rota answer that halves it.          |
| closing ask | the decision you want     | We ask the committee to trial the 9.00 start for one term.   |

- The proposal sentence must survive being quoted alone: if it needs its paragraph, it is not yet a proposal.

## Weighing objections: the three-step hold

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An objection handled well has three beats: raise it fairly, weigh it honestly, answer or accept it.

| Beat             | Language                                                                  |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| raise            | The strongest objection is... / Some will point out that...               |
| weigh            | This is a serious point: the cost is real.                                |
| answer or accept | A rota would halve it. / We accept this cost, because the gain is larger. |

- Accepting a real cost is strength: a proposal that accepts nothing persuades nobody.
- Never answer an objection you raised unfairly: raise the objection as its best supporter would.

## Tone: confident, not armed

B2 proposal tone is firm and unhurried.

- *We propose beats we demand; the evidence suggests beats everyone knows.*
- The conditional softens the closing ask politely: *Would the committee consider a one-term trial?*
- One exclamation mark in a proposal is one too many.

### ■ A first try

Label the beats: *Some will point out that a 9.00 start squeezes the bus schedule (raise). This is a serious point: the fleet is already tight at 8.00 (weigh). A two-shift rota, which the school already runs on Saturdays, would absorb most of the pressure (answer).*

## Paragraphing: one part, one paragraph

Each machine part gets its own paragraph, and the paragraph opens with its job.

- Openings announce: *The situation at present is... / Our proposal is simple:... / Two arguments support this...*
- The objections paragraph is the longest: it is where trust is won.
- The closing ask is two sentences maximum, on its own.

|                    |                                                                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>situation</b>   | The situation at present is... half the class half asleep.              |
| <b>proposal</b>    | Our proposal is simple: start at 9.00 instead of 8.00.                  |
| <b>arguments</b>   | Two arguments support this: sleep research; our survey of 240 students. |
| <b>objections</b>  | The strongest objection is the buses... a rota would halve the cost.    |
| <b>closing ask</b> | We ask the committee to trial the 9.00 start for one term.              |

The objections paragraph is the longest: it is where trust is won.

*One part, one paragraph, drawn to length: objections take the most space*

## Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- Do not bury the proposal in the middle: it is sentence one or two of its paragraph, and the paragraph sits second.
- Do not list objections without answering them: an unanswered objection in your own text reads as a confession.
- Evidence with sources beats intensity: replace *very important* with *72 of 240 students said*.

## Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. The five parts in order: name them. – **Situation, proposal, arguments, objections weighed, closing ask.**
2. The three beats of holding an objection: name them. – **Raise it fairly, weigh it honestly, answer or accept it.**
3. Write the closing ask for the 9.00 proposal. – For example: ***We ask the committee to trial a 9.00 start for one term and review attendance and results at the end of it.***
4. Where does the proposal sentence live, and what must it survive? – **In the second paragraph, as its first or second sentence; it must make sense when quoted alone.**

### ■ Practice: write the objections paragraph

**Task.** Your proposal: *Replace the school's printed timetable booklet with a free phone app.* Write the objections paragraph (about 80 words): raise the strongest

objection, weigh it, and answer or accept it.

**Model:** *The strongest objection is that not every student has a smartphone, and a timetable that some students cannot see is worse than a booklet. This is a serious point: in our survey, 18 of 240 students said they had no phone of their own. We therefore propose keeping a printed timetable on every classroom wall and offering a one-page printout at reception. This keeps a paper copy for those who need it, while saving the cost of 1,200 booklets a year.*

Raise (*The strongest objection is...*), weigh (*This is a serious point*, with a number), answer (*We therefore propose...*), and an honest cost accepted (a small printout remains). No exclamation marks, no *everyone knows*.