

Writing: propose a change and weigh objections

English B2

What this topic teaches

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

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

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.

situation	The situation at present is... half the class half asleep.
proposal	Our proposal is simple: start at 9.00 instead of 8.00.
arguments	Two arguments support this: sleep research; our survey of 240 students.
objections	The strongest objection is the buses... a rota would halve the cost.
closing ask	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.

- The five parts in order: name them. – **Situation, proposal, arguments, objections weighed, closing ask.**
- The three beats of holding an objection: name them. – **Raise it fairly, weigh it honestly, answer or accept it.**
- 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.***
- 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*.