

8.2 Essay structure – introduction, body and conclusion

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Total: 18 marks

KEY WORDS body • essay • conclusion • introduction

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **essay structure: introduction, body and conclusion**, – building an essay whose parts each do a distinct job.

You must be able to:

- write an introduction that frames the issue and states a position
- develop a body paragraph with a claim, support and a link
- write a conclusion that adds something rather than repeating

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ The introduction

Three moves, three sentences:

1. **Context** – why this is being asked now: *Almost every school now teaches a second language, and in many countries it is compulsory for years.*
2. **The issue** – what is disputed: *Some argue that a student with no interest in languages is wasting hours.*
3. **Your position** – where you stand: *I believe it should remain compulsory, although it should be taught differently.*

Do not begin *In this essay I will discuss...* The introduction should do the framing, not describe itself.

■ The body paragraph: claim, support, link

- **Claim** – the point of the paragraph, in the first sentence
- **Support** – a reason, an example, or evidence
- **Link** – a sentence connecting it back to your position

The strongest argument for compulsory language learning is that students cannot yet know what they will need. (claim) *A fourteen-year-old who*

dislikes French may work for a French company at thirty, and it is far harder to learn then. (support) *Compulsory subjects exist precisely because young people cannot predict their futures.* (link)

■ The conclusion

A conclusion should **add**: a condition, a consequence, or a recommendation. What it must not do is repeat paragraph two in different words.

Schools should respond to the objection not by dropping the requirement but by changing the lessons, so that the students who resist are the ones the teaching reaches.

2 Practice

2.1 Write a three-sentence introduction (context, issue, position) for: *Should students be allowed to use calculators in every maths lesson?* [3]

2.2 Identify the claim, support and link in this paragraph. [3]

Reading for pleasure improves writing more than any exercise. Students who read widely absorb sentence patterns without being taught them, which is why their written work varies in rhythm while a non-reader’s does not. If we want better writing, the cheapest intervention available is time to read.

2.3 Rewrite this conclusion so that it adds something: “In conclusion, I think school uniform is a good idea because it is cheaper and fairer.” [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 “It is better to travel widely than to know one place well.” Write an essay giving your views. Write about 200 words. [8]

3.2 Read this introduction and explain **two** weaknesses. [2]

In this essay I am going to write about whether phones should be allowed in school. There are many arguments on both sides. I will discuss them.

Solutions

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

- one mark each for **context**, **issue** and **position**
- e.g. “Calculators have been standard equipment in maths lessons for a generation. Some teachers argue that using one from the first lesson prevents students from ever developing number sense. I believe calculators should be allowed, but only after the method has been mastered without one.”

2.2

- **claim**: reading for pleasure improves writing most
- **support**: wide readers absorb sentence patterns and their writing varies in rhythm
- **link**: connecting it to what schools should do

2.3

- add a condition, consequence or recommendation
- e.g. “School uniform is worth keeping, but the argument only holds while the uniform is genuinely cheap: the moment a school specifies a supplier and a badge, the saving it was defended for disappears.”

3.1

- **content (4)**: position, two developed arguments, a fairly stated counter-argument answered, a conclusion that adds
- **language (4)**: appropriate register, varied linking, accurate and varied sentences

3.2

- any **two**: it announces the essay rather than beginning it; it takes **no position**; “there are many arguments on both sides” is true of every topic; it wastes three sentences on no content