

Exercise walk-through

Purpose and engaging the reader ■ 6.1

eXercise

You must be able to

- open an article in a way that makes a reader continue
- address the reader directly and keep a consistent voice
- use rhetorical questions, contrast and anecdote without overusing them

Method — An article is chosen, not delivered

Nobody has to read an article. That single fact explains every technique below: the writing has to earn the next sentence.

Method — Openings that work

- **An anecdote:** *Last Saturday I served coffee for six hours and earned enough for one pair of headphones.*
- **A surprising fact:** *Our school throws away four hundred plastic bottles a week.*
- **A question the reader has an answer to:** *When did you last read a book you were not told to read?*

Weak opening: *In this article I am going to write about part-time jobs.* It announces rather than begins.

Method — Techniques, used sparingly

- **Direct address:** *you, we, any of us*
- **Rhetorical question:** one or two in a whole article, not one per paragraph
- **Contrast:** *We are told to read more. We are given less time than ever to do it.*
- **The rule of three:** *cheaper, faster and far less trouble*
- **A closing that returns to the opening** — the headphones sentence coming back at the end

Method — Voice

An article has a personality. Vary sentence length: a very short sentence after two long ones lands hard. Keep it informal but controlled — no slang, no exclamation marks in every paragraph.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

Improve this opening: “In this article I will discuss whether students should wear uniform.”

Solution 2.1

Worked steps

Any opening that begins rather than announces **B2**, e.g. “On Monday I was sent home to change my shoes. I was wearing black trainers; the rule requires black shoes. Nobody could tell me what difference it made.”

Practice 2.2 ■ 1 mark

Write a rhetorical question that could open an article about screen time.

Solution 2.2

Method: Openings that work

Worked steps

Any genuine question **B1**, e.g. “How many hours did your phone tell you that you spent on it last week — and did you believe it?”

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

Rewrite this flat sentence with contrast and a short final sentence for effect: "Reading is good for you but people do not do it much."

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

Any version using contrast and a short closing sentence **B2**, e.g. “We are told every year that reading makes us sharper, calmer and better at almost everything. We are also given more homework every year. Something has to give.”

Practice 2.4 ■ 1 mark

Give a title for an article arguing that homework should be reduced.

Solution 2.4

Worked steps

Any title with some appeal **B1**, e.g. “Four hours a night: is homework working?”

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 8 marks

Write an article for your school magazine on whether students should be allowed to use phones during break. Give a title, engage the reader, and reach a clear view. Write about 180 words.

Solution 3.1

Method: Openings that work

Worked steps

Content (4): a title, an engaging opening, at least two developed points, and a clear view. Language (4): informal but controlled register, varied sentence lengths, at least two identifiable techniques used purposefully, accurate writing, roughly within the limit.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 2 marks

A student's article contains seven rhetorical questions in five paragraphs. Explain why this weakens the writing.

Solution 3.2

Worked steps

A rhetorical question is effective because it is unusual; using seven makes them ordinary and the reader stops noticing **B1**. It also avoids the work of making a claim — a question implies an argument without stating one, so the article can end up with no developed points at all **B1**.