

6.1 Article — purpose and engaging the reader

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 16 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **the purpose of an article and engaging the reader** 目的与吸引读者 — writing something a reader chooses to finish.

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

1 Worked examples

■ 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.

■ 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.

■ 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

■ 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.

2 Practice

2.1 Improve this opening: “In this article I will discuss whether students should wear uniform.” [2]

2.2 Write a rhetorical question that could open an article about screen time. [1]

2.3 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.” [2]

2.4 Give a title for an article arguing that homework should be reduced. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 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. [8]

3.2 A student's article contains seven rhetorical questions in five paragraphs. Explain why this weakens the writing. [2]

Solutions

2.1 Any opening that begins rather than announces, 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.”

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

2.3 Any version using contrast and a short closing sentence, 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.”

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

3.1 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.

3.2 A rhetorical question is effective because it is unusual; using seven makes them ordinary and the reader stops noticing. 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.