Writing an Opinion Piece (Text)

1 - Prewriting

1. Understanding rubric / instructions

- To plan your text, you need to understand the instructions.
- Read the rubric and instructions carefully and underline the key words/phrases which help you decide what you will write about.

2 - Brainstorming – writing a PLAN

- Step 1: Think about your topic and write down any ideas, words and phrases related to the topic. Don’t evaluate your ideas. Just write.
- Step 2: Decide whether you agree or disagree with the statement.
- Step 3: Group your ideas, crossing out any irrelevant ones, and put them in a logical order.

2 – Writing

- An opinion essay is a formal piece of writing, therefore you can’t use informal language. It requires your opinion on a topic, which must be stated clearly and supported by reasons or examples.
- An opinion essay should consist of:

  - An INTRODUCTION has three elements:
    1. opening statement - a hook (it grabs reader’s attention)
    2. background information about the topic
    3. a clear opinion statement (Position)

  - A MAIN BODY (DEVELOPMENT) with 2 or 3 supporting paragraphs:
Each paragraph presents a **different argument** supported by details/examples/reasons/justifications.

- A **CONCLUSION** has three elements:
  1. a reformulated opinion/Reinforced opinion
  2. summary of the main arguments presented in your text
  3. a closing statement that makes your reader reflect on the issue (a recommendation, suggestion, an intelligent question)

**REMEMBER:**
- You should write well-developed paragraphs.
- Keep in mind that the reader of your text doesn`t know anything about the topic
- Write clear ideas, be specific, explain things well - Don`t assume that the reader knows what`s in your head or what you wanted to write.
- You should use **connectors and linking words/ phrases (transition words)** to make your writing more interesting to the reader, and easier to understand.
- We normally use **present tenses** in this type of writing.

**Techniques for writing INTRODUCTIONS, SUPPORTING PARAGRAPHS and CONCLUSIONS:**

- **INTRODUCTION:**
  The **hook** may:
  - address the reader directly. *(Are you aware of how information technology has revolutionised the way we work?)*
  - ask a rhetorical question *(Isn`t it amazing how many children are now capable of logging on to their PCs and surfing the net?)*
  - start with an interesting quote. *("A.I. holds the key to the future.")*
  - make reference to a strange scene or situation. *(The complete disappearance of the workplace may be a reality sooner than we would expect.)*
  The **background information** can be:
  - a definition
  - facts about the topic
  - **Clear opinion statement:**
    - your opinion about the issue has to be clear (YES or NO)
    - I think/ I believe/ In my opinion that cell phones should not be allowed in the classroom.
DEVELOPMENT/MAIN BODY:
- contains the **supporting paragraphs**
- each paragraph should start with a **topic sentence/argument**, which should state clearly what the paragraph’s **main idea** is.
- After the topic sentence/argument, you need to include examples, reasons, facts, details that support your argument
- Each supporting paragraph ends with a closing statement

CONCLUSION
In the **last paragraph** you should:
- **Reformulate** your opinion
- Provide a **summary of the main arguments** presented in your text
- Write a closing statement

The **closing statement** of your conclusion may:
- **end with an interesting quote.** (“Without the past the pursued future has no meaning.”)
- **end with a rhetorical question.** (What will they think of next?)
- **give the reader something to consider.** (Perhaps the world would be a better place if everyone knew how to use a computer.)
- **end with a recommendation.** (As regarding deforestation, we shouldn’t play with fire.)

3 - Editing

- You should always revise your piece of writing before handing it in.
  
  In order to do this, you should make sure that:
- you wrote a well-structured text
- you have a clear opinion about the issue
- you wrote well-developed paragraphs and took out irrelevant information.
- you provided enough examples, details, reasons and evidence.
- you did not repeat the same words, phrases, expressions, etc.
- you used transition words.
- you used complete sentences and words are in the correct order (i.e. subject, verb, object, etc).
- you used correct grammar and punctuation
- there are no spelling errors, etc.
Opinion Essay

1. Here is an opinion essay based on the writing tips and techniques previously presented. Read it and identify all the elements of the opinion text.

2. Scan the text and do the following tasks:
   a) Identify the verb tenses used in this opinion essay.
   b) Identify the techniques used to begin and end the essay.
   c) Circle the connectors/linking words that have been used.
   d) Underline the topic sentences in the supporting paragraphs.

Should the School Day Start Later?

A lot of teens stay up late and have a hard time getting up in the morning. It is not because they are too lazy, but teenagers often go to bed too late. As a consequence, they don’t sleep enough because they have to be ready for school early in the morning. The time students need to be ready for learning has an impact on teens’ performance during the day. So, I believe that the school day should start later.

First of all, if school starts later, students have more time to sleep. As a consequence, teens become less tired, more focused in school and they don’t fall asleep during class time. In addition, if teens have more energy, they perform better in school and their grades improve. As a consequence, learners will experience more success in class and they will be more motivated to learn.

Moreover, having a good night’s sleep has a positive impact on teens’ mood and on their school and personal lives. Teenagers become less anxious, less irritated and they are in better mood during the day if they are not sleep deprived. Otherwise stated, they
still have energy to do some sports after school, complete their homework or go out with their friends instead of trying to stay awake. If teens are well-rested, they can balance better their school and personal life or even part time job.

In conclusion, starting the school day later has a lot of benefits. Getting up later in the morning has a positive impact on teenagers’ performance in school, their mood and both school and personal lives. Well-rested and alert teenagers are not only more successful in class, but they are healthier, more sociable and happier in life.