

At Least Three Good Ideas

It is good for us to be able to see **both sides** of an issue, but that does not mean that we need to present both sides in an essay. There is no one rule for this because it depends on the topic; sometimes **balance** and **compromise** is the sensible way to go. However, the **one-sided** essay is easier to write and has more **impact** just because all of the ideas support a single viewpoint. One factor in your choice is the need to have **at least three good ideas** in your essay.

Task 10 Ideas For and Against

1 Look at the discussion below, then sort the students' ideas into Ideas For and Ideas Against school uniforms. Record them as general ideas (e.g. write *Students say* instead of *I say*).



Ideas For

- a)
-
- b)
-
- c)
-

Ideas Against

- a)
-
- b)
-
- c)
-

2 Tick the true statements.

- a) There are enough ideas for a for-and-against type of essay.
- b) There are enough ideas for a one-sided essay in favour of school uniforms.
- c) There are enough ideas for a one-sided essay against school uniforms.

Special Issues

Here are a couple of special issues involved in the writing of a **seeing-both-sides** essay.

- Your readers will be confused when you switch from **Ideas For** to **Ideas Against** in the middle of the essay unless you **explain** what you are doing. Say in your introduction that *you are going to write about both ideas for and ideas against*, and remind your reader of this when you make the changeover.
- You need to **modify the topic statement** in your concluding paragraph. Say you were writing on 'School assemblies are a waste of time'. You will have given ideas both for and against this statement, so you can't completely agree or completely disagree with it. You need to modify it to reflect your ideas, e.g. Assemblies are a waste of time when the information being given out applies only to some of the students, but when a student's achievement is being recognised it is good for the student and for the positive attitudes of the whole school.

15 Be Convincing

Errors in Thinking

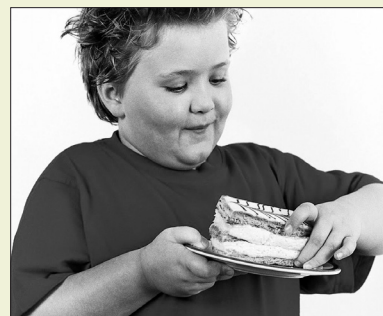
To get an **Excellence** level pass, the ideas in your essay have to be developed convincingly. Part of being convincing is avoiding common errors in thinking.

Cause and Effect

Sometimes people look at the facts and see Event A happened and then Event B happened. This can quickly become in their minds: Event A caused Event B to happen. Often this is right, but not always. Consider this: Wally ate a lot. Wally got fat. This might tempt us to write *Wally ate a lot, so he got fat*.

Now consider this logic: *A black cat crossed Wally's path. The next day he was hit by lightning.* Not so convincing is it? We are only truly convincing if we can **explain how** Event A led to Event B. We should also think about other things that may have led to Event B.

Let's go back to poor old Wally. *Wally ate a lot. Wally didn't exercise. So Wally got fat.* This is less snappy than the eight-word version, but it shows more thinking - it is more convincing.

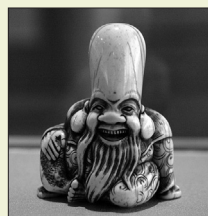


Generalisations

These are statements where you say that something is true about ALL the members of a group, e.g. *all New Zealanders have civil rights, all birds have two legs, all Māori can sing.*

The word **all** makes these examples easy to spot and these kinds of generalisation are usually obviously right or wrong. The problem comes when we write things like *Teenagers are so rude nowadays* or *Girls are better at English*. Unless we write a word like **some** or **many** or **most** in front of teenagers or girls, the sentence is understood as if the word **all** was there. The sentence is seen as a generalisation whether we meant it to be or not.

Writers are tempted to make generalisations because they are simple statements with strong impact. Unfortunately, if the reader knows that there are exceptions to your statement, even only one, you will come across as not knowing enough or not being careful enough. It is better to sacrifice a little impact and keep your image as a clear thinker.



Exaggeration

This is a common language technique (deliberate exaggeration for effect is called *hyperbole*). It is common because it adds impact, and it is best used when it is more important to create a strong effect than to get an idea across using reason and facts. Exaggeration is best avoided in formal writing for that reason.

Fukurokuju
Japanese God of Wisdom
(carved with an exaggerated head)

Task 13 Convince Me

1 Rank the statements in each set 1-3 with 1 being the least convincing and 3 being the most. Write the rank number in the box.

- a) Micro-chipping protects other animals and children from dangerous dogs because the owners can be found and prosecuted.
- Micro-chipping dogs makes owners more responsible. It reduces problems like savaging sheep and illegal dog-fights.
- Micro-chipping dogs helps eliminate animal cruelty because the owners of problem dogs are able to be identified.
- b) Developments on our coasts favour the rich because they displace traditional cheap motor camps.
- Housing developments on the coasts ruin them and drive millions of tourists away from New Zealand.
- Seaside housing developments are exclusive and unnatural, the opposite of what we want for our coasts.

For Paragraphs, Think T.E.X.A.S.

As you move on from your brainstorm to **structuring** your essay you will also begin to think about structuring individual paragraphs. In each paragraph think : T. E. X. A. S. [Topic sentence, Explanation, eXample And Summary] In every paragraph identify your **topic sentence**, **explain** your topic, provide at least one **example** to back up your explanation, and, provide some **analysis** of your choice of example(s) to back up your argument. The points you numbered in Task 19 will each provide a paragraph for the **Body** of your essay - the middle three or four paragraphs. Before the body of the essay you need an **Introduction** paragraph and at the end you'll need a **Conclusion** paragraph.

The Essay's Introduction

The **Introduction** has a specific purpose to achieve, so it needs its own paragraph, separate from the first point in your brainstorm. Actually, there are **four things** an Introduction should do and the best way to do them is in **four separate sentences**.

- i) In the first sentence **state your topic**, saying what your essay is going to be about. Avoid writing, "I'm going to explain . . .". Instead, challenge the reader by making an interesting statement e.g. "New Zealand's status as a good place to bring up children is increasingly under threat."
- ii) **Explain your topic sentence**. e.g. "A rise in child poverty among some sections of our society means that we are no longer seen as the land of milk and honey."
- iii) Provide an **example** to back up your **explanation** e.g. "According to one researcher, in 2014 more than a quarter of a million New Zealand children were living in poverty."
- iv) Finally, write a **summary** sentence which provides some analysis and leads into the following paragraph. You will restate the **topic sentence** of your paragraph using a slightly different structure. e.g. "New Zealand has always considered itself to be a country which 'plays fair' where children are concerned, but the child poverty statistics tell a different story."

Task 20 Four Purposeful Introductory Sentences

- 1 Now you are ready to write an Introductory paragraph containing **four clear purposeful sentences**. Choose your own brainstorm for the mobile phones essay or any of the examples in this chapter (*role models, violence, uniforms, micro-chipping dogs, coastal development, learning a language*) and write a formal Introduction for an essay on that topic.

<p>Topic Sentence What the essay is going to be about.</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Explanation Why the issue is important.</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Example Facts to justify the importance of the issue.</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Summary How these points link up.</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

27 Spelling and Punctuation

Accuracy Matters

For Achievement Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 **accuracy** can make the difference between passing and failing and the difference between **Merit** and **Excellence**. So what do you need to do?

- ❑ If you struggle with spelling, learn the handful of spelling rules that work for most words (see **Spelling - A Survival Guide** on page 55). Ask your teacher for a good set of spelling lists and work on them at home. The sooner you start this the better.
- ❑ Don't rely on a spell check to work out which word you need to use in a sentence. To be sure of your ground you need to use a hard copy dictionary which will develop your word power and spelling accuracy at the same time. Increase your knowledge of words by using a **Roget's Thesaurus**.
- ❑ If you make punctuation errors, you need to learn the rules (see **Punctuation - A Survival Guide** on page 56).
- ❑ When you get work back with errors marked, make sure you understand what the error was - ask your teacher if you need to. Unlike spelling, punctuation is logical and a little work produces quick progress. For spelling, make a list of words you need or want to use, e.g. *argument* - that you have spelt wrongly. This is your priority list to learn.

Task 29 Spot the Spelling Error

- 1 Read **Spelling - A Survival Guide** (page 55) and check the following sets of words. Cross out words spelt wrongly and write the correct spelling in the space provided.

Rule 1

belief weight feild achieve reciept heifer

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Rule 2

turkeys loneliness earlyer valleys hillbillys relies

--	--

Rule 3

truely argument bluish sincerely awful choosy

--	--

Rule 4

totaly dissatisfied misspell keenness immoral skiing

--	--

Rule 5

*cuter (thing that will cut) caned (hit with a stick)
filed (put away to be read later) ripper (thing that will tear)
latter (second of two) striped (removed covering from)*

--	--

Rule 6

cargoes radios sopranos potatoes volcanos tomatos

--	--

Rule 7

readable legible dependable audable acceptable sensible

--	--

Task 30 Spot the Punctuation Error

- 1 Read **Punctuation - A Survival Guide** (page 56) and check the following sentences. Circle any error or place where punctuation needs to be added. Write the corrections on the line provided.

a) **The Apostrophe**

Im plump, youre chubby and hes fat.

One players mistake could ruin all the players chances.

Is have dots, as don't. (Clue: This is about letters)

This year were learning to write our CVs.