Your notes

GCSE English Language: revision notes

Writing to present a viewpoint

Contents

1. The task
2. Audience, purpose and form
3. Persuasive techniques
4. Structure
5. How to get top marks
6. Common mistakes
7. Key terms
8. Quick questions
9. What to do next

The task

- (AQA) Paper 2 Question 5 (40 marks) asks you to present your viewpoint on a statement, in a given **form**: an article, a letter, a speech, an essay or a leaflet. 24 marks are for content and organisation, and 16 for technical accuracy. Spend about 45 minutes.
- (Edexcel, OCR and Eduqas) Edexcel Paper 2 Section B and OCR Component 1 Section B are 40-mark non-fiction writing tasks with a choice of two. Eduqas Component 2 has two shorter tasks that you must both answer, worth 20 marks each.

Audience, purpose and form

- Match your tone and **register** to the **audience**: formal for a headteacher or council, lively but still controlled for teenagers.
- Use the conventions of the **form**. Letter: 'Dear...' and a sign-off ('Yours sincerely' if you know the name, 'Yours faithfully' after 'Dear Sir or Madam'). Article: a headline, and perhaps subheadings. Speech: address the **audience** directly and end memorably. Leaflet: headings, but still write in full, well-developed paragraphs. Essay: no special layout, just a clear line of argument.

Persuasive techniques

- Anecdotes, facts, opinions, **rhetorical questions**, emotive language, statistics and the **rule of three**.
- Also **direct address**, imperatives, hyperbole, and a **counter-argument** followed by a **rebuttal**.
- Use them because they help you argue, not to tick them off. You may make up examples and statistics, as long as they're believable.

Structure

- Open with a hook, such as an anecdote, a bold statement or a surprising image. Skip 'Today I will be talking about'.
- Make one main point per paragraph, linked by **discourse markers** (furthermore, however, ultimately). Include a **counter-argument** and rebut it. End with a powerful conclusion that links back to your opening.

How to get top marks

- Sound like a real person with a real point. A short story at the start, returned to at the end, makes a speech feel crafted.
- Take the best argument against you seriously, then answer it. That's what makes a view convincing.
- Offer a solution as well as a complaint: it's a more sophisticated argument.

Common mistakes

- A list of techniques in a row: **rhetorical question**, statistic, **rule of three**.
- A tone that doesn't fit: slang in a letter to a headteacher.
- 'Firstly', 'Secondly' and 'Thirdly' with three identical paragraphs.

Key terms

Audience	The people a piece of writing is aimed at.
Purpose	What a piece of writing is trying to do, such as persuade.
Form	The type of text, such as a letter or speech.
Register	How formal or informal language is.
Rhetorical question	A question asked for effect, not for an answer.
Counter-argument	An opposing view that you raise in order to challenge it.
Rebuttal	Showing why an opposing view is wrong.
Discourse marker	A word or phrase that links ideas, such as 'furthermore'.
Rule of three	Grouping three words or ideas for impact.
Direct address	Speaking directly to the reader, using 'you'.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. How many marks is Paper 2 Question 5 worth? (AQA)
2. Which sign-off goes with 'Dear Sir or Madam'?
3. Which sign-off goes with 'Dear Mr Patel'?

Your notes

4. What is a rhetorical question?
5. What is a counter-argument?
6. What is a rebuttal?
7. What is the rule of three?
8. What is register?

Answers

1. 40
2. Yours faithfully
3. Yours sincerely
4. A question asked for effect, not for an answer
5. An opposing view that you then challenge
6. Showing why the opposing view is wrong
7. Grouping three words or ideas for impact
8. How formal or informal the language is

What to do next

Practise 12 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

Your notes