

Exam Practice and Techniques

Unit 3: Speaking, Listening and Writing

Student's File EPT 3.1.

Guidelines for writing an exam essay

1. Fully understand the assignment (title, instruction).
2. Brainstorm ideas - notes, vocabulary, pictures - all of these can help.
3. Organise ideas - decide where each idea should go within the essay.
4. Write your essay.
5. Proofread for spelling mistakes.

Now read this essay title.

You have seen a letter in the newspaper arguing that Hong Kong families who wish to employ maids should employ workers from China rather than from the Philippines. Write to the newspaper giving your own views on this question. Sign the letter Chris Wong.

What kind of essay will you write? How will you begin/address the reader? How will you finish?

Now write down all your ideas about the topic. You can write your ideas as notes or as a 'word web'.



Look at your ideas and organise them into groups. Some may be about pros and cons for workers from China, some may be about pros and cons for workers from the Philippines. Some may not be relevant. Put a '?' next to those.

Now write your essay.

Student's File EPT 3.2.

Clichés

These are phrases that are worn out. They are old and tired because they are over used. Read through the statements/phrases with clichés underlined and match them to make neutral phrases which do not make the reader groan!

Match the Clichés

- | | | |
|--|-------|---|
| 1. <u>Burn the midnight oil</u> | _____ | a. TV has a bad influence on young people |
| 2. <u>Every coin has two sides</u> | _____ | b. future important citizens |
| 3. <u>TV contaminates the minds of youth</u> | _____ | c. seems very positive |
| 4. The solution is <u>crystal clear</u> | _____ | d. very clear indeed |
| 5. <u>a hard nut to crack</u> | _____ | e. has been in the news a lot / has been widely discussed |
| 6. <u>a hot topic</u> | _____ | f. a difficult problem |
| 7. Students are <u>the future pillars of society</u> | _____ | g. There are two sides to this argument (but only two!) |
| 8. It <u>seems a rosy prospect</u> | _____ | h. Stay up very late |
| 9. <u>in a nutshell</u> | _____ | i. have financial difficulties |
| 10. People <u>cannot make both ends meet</u> | _____ | j. in brief / to summarize |

Student's File EPT 3.3.

Essay Topics

1. *In September, many students find that they have forgotten a lot of their schoolwork, and their English has deteriorated through lack of use during the long summer holiday. Write an article for the school newspaper discussing whether long holidays should be replaced by a number of short ones.*
2. *Your school has a Parent-Teacher Association, but so far not many parents have joined. As President of the Student Association, you have to give a talk to an audience of parents encouraging them to take an active part. Write your speech.*
3. *Some people feel that in the interests of fairness the entry grades required of repeaters should be considerably higher than those expected of first-time JUPAS applicants. Write a discussion essay on this idea, giving your own views and reasons for them.*

You can try working with a group or partner on one of these essays. You should write the others under exam conditions (1¼ hours) but remember to brainstorm / plan / organise and proofread - make sure you BPOP!

Use this space to BPOP with a partner for one topic.