

# PAPER 1

## SECTION B

Writing to review,  
analyse and comment

### THE ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

These are the skills and abilities that this **writing** section tests.

The percentage of  
the marks given to  
the different  
assessment  
objectives

66.66%

Students are expected to show the ability to:

- a put across what has to be said in a clear and original way
- b take note of the purpose and the target audience, and use a writing form that suits both
- c organise ideas into sentences and paragraphs
- d make use of language and structure techniques to create the desired effect
- e present work clearly and neatly

33.33%

- f use a range of sentence structures effectively
- g punctuate accurately
- h spell accurately.



# 1 What's required?

You will be given a question or statement (for example, 'Why should we give to charities?') and along with it you will be given up to six related points. These will offer a range of views and stances on the subject.

## How will I go about answering?

- a You will be expected to **review** the points given, plus present some more of your own. These you will **analyse** as well as including your own ideas and anecdotes. You will be expected to **comment** on all of them.
- b You can approach the question in one of three ways: you can present a case in favour of the statement given, take the opposing view or adopt a neutral stance. No matter which of these approaches you choose, it is important that you **consider all sides of the issue**. A good answer to this question will have presented a rounded view of the topic.
- c Remember that the examiner is the audience for this piece of writing so adopt a style and range of words and phrases that is suitable for this audience.
- d Organise the material so that your essay develops in an ordered and structured manner. Remember to express yourself fluently and accurately.

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## 2 Planning

There are a number of steps you should work through when writing your essay; the first of these is planning.

It is absolutely essential that you plan your essay before beginning to write. Your plan is the foundation of your essay. If you plan before you write it means that your answer will be relevant, your ideas will be clearly organised and you will not run out of things to write.

Before you begin the process of planning, you should look carefully at the points given in the exam paper. These will direct you towards some of the major issues related to the topic as well as highlighting different views about it.

Planning is normally quite a messy business because at this early stage the first thing to do is to have a brainstorming session. The aim of this is to get all of the ideas in your head down on paper quickly. Do not worry about organising them – this will come later.



# ACTIVITY 1

Below is a range of points given to help students respond to the statement, '**Watching television is bad for you**'. Sort them into points that could be used to support this statement and points that could be used to argue against it.

- ▶ Watching television kills conversation.
- ▶ A range of educational programmes is shown.
- ▶ Television provides instant access to news and other information.
- ▶ Television discourages play amongst young people.
- ▶ Television advertising puts unfair pressure on consumers.
- ▶ Television programmes are entertaining.

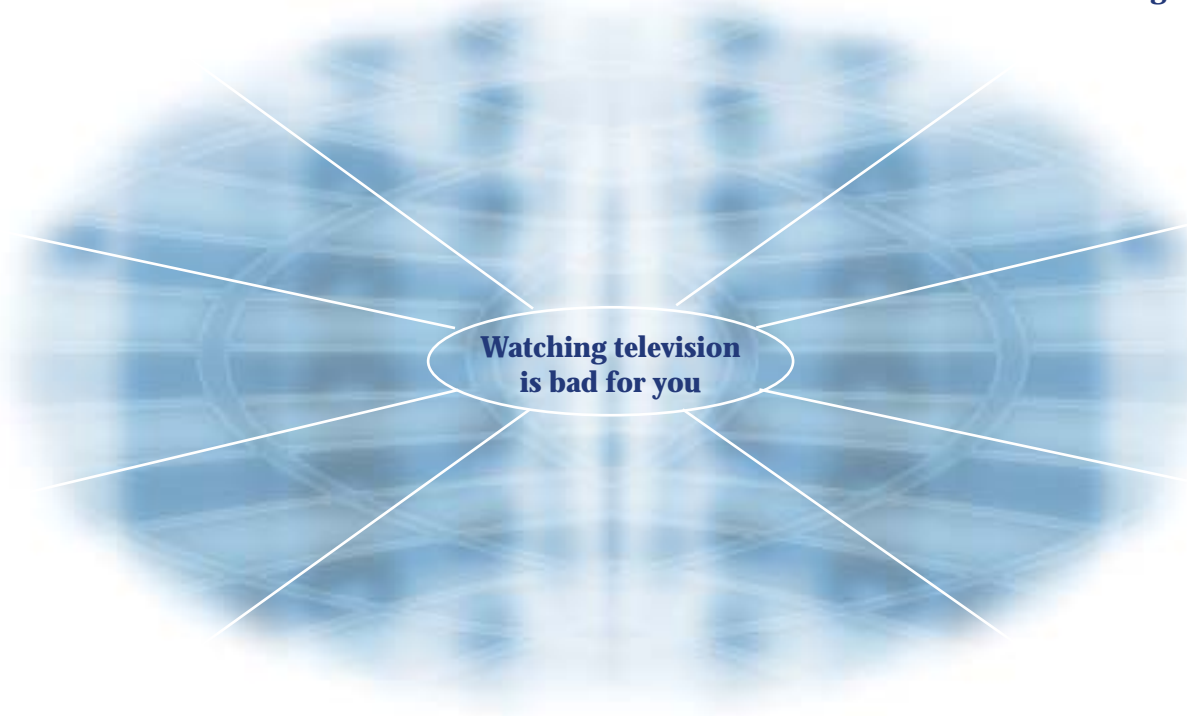
You will then need to come up with some points of your own, so brainstorm your ideas on the topic. You are looking for any other relevant points either for or against this statement. When you are brainstorming your ideas you might find it helpful to divide your page into points for and against.

POINTS FOR	POINTS AGAINST

Alternatively you might decide to plan your essay using a spider diagram.

Points for

Points against



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## 3 Analysis

At this stage you should have a list of points for and against the given statement.

Now it is time to examine these points in depth. This is known as **analysis**. The best way to analyse the points given, as well as your own, is to question or challenge them. This process might enable you to make up your mind about your opinion on the issue. Or, if you have already made up your mind, it will enable you to present an effective counter-argument (more on this later).

## ACTIVITY 2

In the table below are opinions on ‘**Watching television is bad for you**’; beside them are some ideas you might consider to challenge these points.

Working in groups, consider what points you could raise to challenge or question the last three points.



POINTS YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN	ANALYSIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watching television kills conversation.</li> </ul>	Watching television could give rise to conversations between family and friends about programmes watched.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of educational programmes is shown.</li> </ul>	Are there enough of these types of programmes? Many of the programmes contain bad language, violence and sexually explicit material. Is this educational?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Television provides instant access to news and other information.</li> </ul>	There are other ways of accessing the news, such as radio, the Internet and newspapers. Could images shown desensitise us to violence and bloodshed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Television discourages play amongst young people.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Television advertising puts unfair pressure on consumers</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Television programmes are entertaining.</li> </ul>	

Now repeat this process on the points you came up with yourself.

## 4 Organising your ideas

After you have analysed the points given as well as your own, it is time to organise your ideas. You should sort out what you consider to be the most important point in your discussion. Then you could move on to the next most significant one, and so on. You might find at this stage you decide to leave out some of the points you came up with during your brainstorming session.

It is possible to number these so that they provide you with the paragraph running order for your essay.

### ACTIVITY 3

Using the points given and those you came up with yourself for the statement, **'Watching television is bad for you'**, organise the order in which you could address these points. Consider which should come first and how your points are going to flow into each other. Do this individually before explaining your choices to another student.

## 5 Structuring your response

There is a range of possible ways to structure your essay. You might choose to start by stating your point of view on the subject, and the rest of your essay could then be composed of your analysis of the topic. Or you may choose to consider your range of discussion points about the given statement and then come to your own conclusion.

If you decide to argue a particular way, either for or against the statement, it is vital that you show your reader that you are aware of the other side of the argument. This shows the examiner you are aware of alternative viewpoints to your own and that you have analysed the topic thoroughly.

This technique is known as using a **counter-argument**. To exploit it effectively it is important to have challenged the points you have assembled before beginning to write your essay.

## 6 Supporting evidence

Once you have organised your points it is important to think of evidence to support them. This will make your case more convincing and your writing appear more assured. You can use evidence from a range of sources:

- ▶ **Personal experience (anecdote)** – Sometimes including a brief account of something that has happened in your life, or the life of someone you know, can make your argument more interesting and convincing. For example:

*You may think mobile phones are a nuisance, but my mobile phone saved my life! It was a Friday evening in December; it was raining heavily and already quite dark. I was walking home from school, and was just about to cross the road when all of a sudden...*

- ▶ **Books, television and film** – You may well have watched a film, television programme, or have read a book that is relevant to the topic you are discussing. Do not be afraid to draw on your experience of these to support your argument. For example:

*The novel Junk by Melvin Burgess is a depressing and pessimistic account of the dangers teenagers face when they become involved in drug abuse.*

or

*A recent Channel 4 documentary called 'Sorted' interviewed a range of young people about their experiences with drugs. Over fifty per cent of those interviewed claimed they had either taken or been offered illegal drugs.*



- ▶ **Facts and figures** – Relevant facts and figures can make your argument sound convincing. They show you are well informed about the topic you are discussing. (Clearly you will be fortunate to be able to draw upon this source in the exam.) For example:

*98% of all UK households have a television set.*

or

*The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons believes that hunting with hounds is the most natural and humane way of controlling the fox population in the countryside.*

However, you should **avoid making generalisations** in your writing. A generalisation is a form of sweeping statement that is not always true. For example:

*All footballers are really wealthy.*

Using this sort of supporting evidence will only weaken the case you are trying to make.

## ACTIVITY 4

Make a **plan** for an essay based on the question below.

Present your views on the following statement:

**Exams should be abolished.**

Below is a range of issues related to the issue of exams. The examiner wants you to review the points that you consider to be important, along with any ideas of your own. Analyse these in an extended piece of writing. You will be expected to include your own comments and conclusions on the topic.

- ▶ *They only test bits of the course – you can hit it lucky.*
- ▶ Use of assignments and coursework is a fairer way of assessing.
- ▶ *I work hard during the year, but I just can't do exams!*
- ▶ At least with an exam everybody gets the same chance!

Your plan should include:

- ▶ points in favour of the statement
- ▶ points against the statement
- ▶ ideas for evidence to support your points.

## Organising your plan

- Consider how you will structure your essay. Are you going to argue for or against the statement, or are you going to adopt a balanced approach?
- Which point will come first?

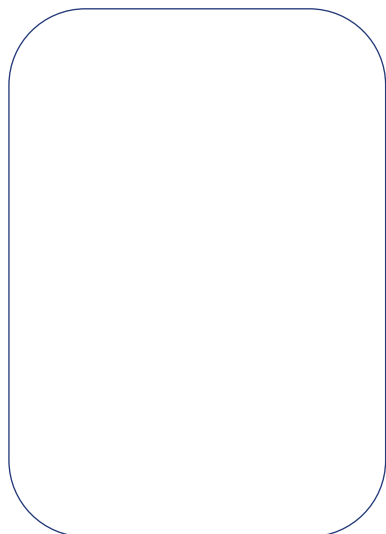
**c** How will the next point lead on from the one before?

After you have finished your plan, read over the running order of your points. Check that they are:

- ▶ relevant and related to the question
- ▶ organised so that you can follow them.

Remember you will need to plan your essay **before** beginning to write. However, do not be afraid to add to your plan or change it as you are writing.

## 7 Writing the essay



At this stage you should know what points will be included in your essay and where every part of it is going to go. Now it is time to get down to the business of writing it.

### The introduction

A powerful introduction is important for any essay. Remember first impressions are very important. An introduction should not be too long. Instead, you should get to the point right away. Your introduction is the place where you first alert your reader to the issue you are discussing and possibly state your position on it.

There are a number of ways you could make your introduction interesting and effective. Here are a few of the techniques that you could choose from:

- ▶ Find some common ground. This is a powerful way to bring your reader over to your side. There is usually some area upon which all reasonable people agree, often a common goal:

*All of us know how seriously some people treat the game of football.*

- ▶ Open strongly with an original statement:

*Football killed my fish!*

- ▶ Give some background information on the statement:

*The modern game of football dates back to the twelfth century.*



- ▶ You could be provocative:

*Watching football makes you boring!*

- ▶ Be balanced, showing awareness of both sides of the argument:

*Many people are passionate about football but others find the game and its supporters incredibly boring.*

- ▶ You could begin with a quotation on the subject:

*It was Pele who first called soccer 'the beautiful game'.*

- ▶ Use an anecdote:

*I was six when I first saw Arsenal play...*

- ▶ Offer a direct statement:

*Football is a game that involves two teams of eleven players...*

- ▶ Ask a rhetorical question:

*Have you ever thought about what life would be like without football?*

## ACTIVITY 5

Identify what types of techniques are used in the following introductions.

- I was only six when I first visited the zoo, but even then at that young age I knew it was wrong to keep animals locked up in cages.*
- Some people love the excitement and buzz of living in the city, however, for others city life is too fast, too noisy and too dangerous.*
- We all care about the future of our planet.*
- Animal experimentation is evil.*
- Do you hate your school uniform?*

Remember these are only the beginnings to your introduction; you will have to add to them. By the end of the introduction you should have aroused the interest of your reader and introduced them to the subject, and you may have indicated your view on it.

# ACTIVITY 6

Now write three different types of introduction for an essay on the title ‘Watching television is bad for you’.

## Paragraphing

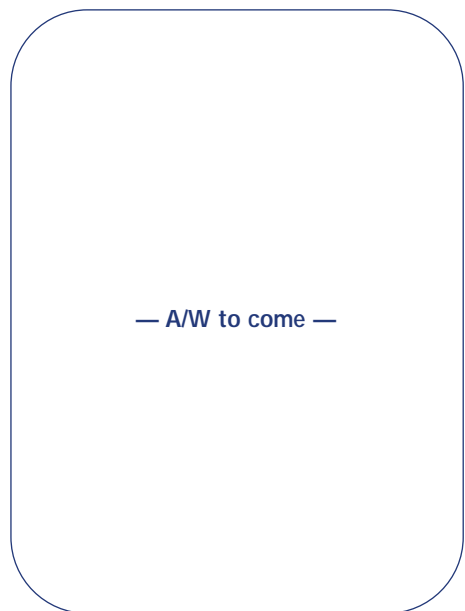
When planning your essay you came up with a range of different points. Each one of these points should be placed in a **separate** paragraph.

At this stage it might be useful to remind yourself of what a paragraph is. A paragraph is a series of sentences that are organised and are all related to a single topic.

Paragraphs can contain many different kinds of information. Regardless of the kind of information they contain, all paragraphs share certain characteristics. One of the most important of these is the **topic sentence**.

A topic sentence is usually placed at the beginning of your paragraph. The topic sentence will introduce the main idea of the paragraph; it will summarise and give an overview of what the paragraph is about. The rest of the paragraph will then explain, develop or support with evidence the topic sentence’s main idea or claim. The topic sentence is usually the first sentence of a paragraph, but not necessarily: it may come at the end of a paragraph.

Here is an example of a topic sentence and how it functions as a signpost for the rest of the paragraph.



*Skateboarding is not recognised as a proper sport.*

*Most towns will have sports facilities such as football grounds, gymnasiums, and ice rinks that cater for a wide range of sporting interests. Yet very few towns possess skate parks. This means that skateboarders often end up skating in urban areas; however, their presence seems to incense others in the community.*

*Police or local shop owners see them as a threat to their property and will try to move them on. Members of the public regard them as noisy and antisocial; there is little attempt to understand that what they are doing is highly skilled and takes lots of practice.*

*There is just as much talent involved in ‘popping an ollie’ as there is in making a hole in one or scoring a winning goal.*



# ACTIVITY 7

In each case select the relevant topic sentence for the paragraph that follows.

a

- ▶ Zoos have an educational role.
- ▶ Animals in zoos suffer.
- ▶ Visiting the zoo can be an enjoyable experience.

*Zoos are places where people can go to learn about different types of animals. As well as learning about animals you also get the opportunity to see them up close. This experience is better than anything you could ever read about or see on television.*

b

- ▶ Looking after a pet can be expensive.
- ▶ You need to be responsible to look after a pet.
- ▶ Pets can make good companions.

*There are many issues to consider. Can you spare enough time? You need to make sure you are able to play with them and clean up after them. Then, of course, there is the financial side of things to consider, as owning a pet can be an expensive business. You need to supply them with a bed and food, and make sure they have regular check-ups with the vet.*

c

- ▶ Some sporting celebrities are more interested in advertising designer gear than playing their sport.
- ▶ Professional sportsmen and sportswomen have only a brief career.
- ▶ Top stars are constantly pestered by the media.

*They have to make the most of their time in the spotlight. They cannot afford to turn down the financial deals offered to them by the major sportswear companies. If they do so, they may not get another chance, as in a few years' time their sporting career may be over.*

d

- ▶ A big win on the National Lottery could ruin your life.
- ▶ Winning the Lottery could change your life.
- ▶ The Lottery generates a lot of money for good causes.

*Family members can all too easily end up feuding over who gets what and this makes other people's lives miserable. Sometimes people cannot manage their money and within a matter of years families have lost the money they won. In the cases of these Lottery winners, money certainly does not buy happiness.*

## ACTIVITY 8

Now go back to your plan for the essay on exams. Write a topic sentence for each of the paragraphs you intend to use in your essay.

### Using linguistic devices

For most of us, these rather complicated-sounding terms are not important in themselves but the functions that they perform are worth understanding and using.

#### Discursive markers

These are words and phrases which, if used correctly, can add fluency to your writing and help you to link ideas and paragraphs together. They will help your response develop in a logical and structured way. Try using the following discursive markers to:

- ▶ show the results of a point you have made:

*Consequently      Therefore      Furthermore      As a result      Thus*

- ▶ show a shift in your argument:

*However      Despite this      In opposition to this      Nevertheless      On the other hand*  
*Another way      Another view is      Even though      In spite of this      In the meantime*  
*Unlike this      Alternatively      In contrast to this      At the same time      Yet*  
*Although      Even so*

- ▶ show order:

*Initially      In the first place      In the second place      Lastly      Finally*

- ▶ show you are coming to a conclusion:

*Eventually      Finally      To conclude      To summarise*  
*At last      To sum up      In conclusion*

- ▶ introduce examples:

*An example of this      For instance      To illustrate this*

- ▶ introduce a comparison or similarity:

*Accordingly      In keeping with this      Similarly      Just as*  
*Similar to this      In comparison to this      Likewise*



## Rhetorical devices

You can use rhetorical devices in your writing to engage, influence and persuade your reader to agree with your position. Below is a range of common rhetorical devices.

- ▶ **Lists of three** – Listing things in groups of three adds weight and impact to your comment, making it an effective way of getting your point across.

*I combine the three least useful qualities for a sports person – I'm big, slow & weak*

*Boxing is a noble, skilful and entertaining sport.*

- ▶ **Rhetorical questions** – These are questions that are designed to involve and challenge the reader. They are asked for effect rather than to call for an answer. The answer is usually quite obvious.

*Who wouldn't want to earn as much money as a film star?*

*Can any civilisation justify being so cruel?*

- ▶ **Contrasts** – This is a good way of emphasising the significance of the point you are making.

*What are regarded as some of the best video games can sometimes bring out the very worst in the people who play them.*

*That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.*

- ▶ **Emotive language** – This can help you to put your point across in a powerful and convincing manner.

*Can you imagine the sheer torture these animals have to endure?*

*Boxing is a cruel and barbaric sport.*

- ▶ **Repetition** – This is a good way of emphasising your point.

*A great people has been moved to defend a great nation.*

*What is important is education, education, education!*

*Note:* Avoid using 'you' and try to use 'we' and 'us'. This will make your readers feel that they are on your side. It will also make the readers feel you are addressing them personally and so involve them more in your response.

## The conclusion

Conclusions are just as important as introductions. You should not introduce a new point in your conclusion. Instead your conclusion should summarise your stance and main points. If possible your last sentence should be one that encourages your reader to think about the topic that you have just been discussing. You could do this by asking a question, calling for some kind of action or warning of what could happen. For example:

*Finally, I believe we need to continue funding space exploration. It is possible that one day our world will be overcrowded and we will need to expand to find alternative living spaces. Without the information we receive from space exploration the possibility of relocating to other planets will be closed to us. If we do not support space exploration today, we could live to regret it, as what we could be jeopardising is the very future of the entire human race.*

However, if you can see the reasons for and against do not be afraid to end on a balanced note:

*To conclude, I believe that there are many good reasons why we should support space exploration. It enables us to learn more about our world and our universe and this information could be used to ensure the survival of the human race. Despite this, I am also aware of the reasons why some people have expressed concern over the vast amounts of money being spent every year on space exploration. It is my belief that we should continue to finance space exploration, but only if we begin to pay more attention to the problems faced by many people in our own and other countries.*

### Points to remember about conclusions

- ▶ Refer to the question again.
- ▶ Include a brief summary of the main points.
- ▶ Don't introduce a new idea in your conclusion.
- ▶ You can end by:
  - ▶ asking a provocative question
  - ▶ calling for some sort of action
  - ▶ presenting a warning
  - ▶ suggesting potential results or consequences.

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## 8 Style

Knowing that your audience is the examiner helps you to select an appropriate style. Aim to write in standard formal English. Be reasonable and logical; however, you can use emotive language to show that you feel strongly about the issue. Your writing should be lively and show evidence of engagement with the task, but avoid being over-familiar or using inappropriate language such as slang.

Getting the style of your writing right is quite hard. It is important to think about the type of topic you are discussing. If it is a very serious topic then humour will not be appropriate. If, however, you can appropriately use moments of humour then you will certainly be credited for them. Avoid writing in an angry or overly aggressive style. Instead, carefully choose words that reveal the strength of your feelings.



At all times you should aim to be polite. When criticising opinions other than your own, avoid becoming personal. For example:

*I think anyone who supports boxing is no better than an animal.*

Remember this essay can reflect your personal opinion, therefore, do not be afraid to use words and phrases such as:

*I think it's only fair...*

*I strongly support...*

*I certainly feel...*

*My view on this point is...*

*I hope I have convinced you...*

## 9 Technical accuracy

### Check your writing

You should also give yourself some time at the end of your writing to check over your work for technical accuracy. Remember that in this section of the exam one-third of the available marks will be awarded for your sentence structure, spelling and punctuation.

#### Sentences

Make sure all sentences are correctly punctuated. Check for full stops. Are your sentences too long or too short? Remember the occasional short sentence can be dramatic and effective. For instance:

*We all know that exercise is good for us and we frequently watch advertisements on the television which urge us to take sensible exercise. I do. I change channels immediately!*

## ACTIVITY 9

What is the effect of the longer sentence at the start? What is the effect of the two shorter sentences at the end?

#### Paragraphs

Check that each paragraph covers only one point. Do your paragraphs have a topic sentence? Do the paragraphs flow from one into the other? Have you used discursive markers to improve the flow from one paragraph to another?

## Commas and apostrophes

When you are revising, remind yourself of the rules for using apostrophes and commas. Now check that there are not too many commas or perhaps worse, none at all! Check that all your apostrophes are in the right place.

## Vocabulary

Try to use as varied, appropriate and wide a range of words as possible.

Words should be spelt correctly. Pay particular attention to those words that you use quite often and that cause you difficulty. It would be a good idea to create your own spelling log, where you list (and check up on and learn) your problem spellings.

## Handwriting

Your handwriting should allow you to write reasonably quickly yet at the same time it should be legible.

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# 10 Time to get practical

In the second section of this book, you have learnt the skills required in answering the type of essay question that appears in CCEA's GCSE English, Paper 1 Section B. It is important that you practise these skills on a realistic task and preferably under examination conditions. In the actual examination, you will only have **one hour** for this section of the paper.

Below is a series of key points to use as a revision checklist.

- ▶ Always think and plan, and only then write!
- ▶ Remember the examiner is your audience; therefore write in standard English using quite a formal style. This does not mean that the examiner wants to be treated to a very dry, formal piece of writing. There is room for personal engagement, humour or irony in your writing!
- ▶ Organise your points **before** beginning to write – spend at least ten minutes planning and organising.
- ▶ Make sure you add to the points offered and develop them appropriately.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to disagree with the given statement.
- ▶ Include an introduction and conclusion.
- ▶ Make sure each point has a separate paragraph.
- ▶ Use evidence to support your points.
- ▶ Use counter-arguments to show you have considered alternative points of view.
- ▶ Use a variety of sentences to keep your writing interesting.
- ▶ Stick to the point.
- ▶ Never insult your reader by being impolite or threatening. Avoid suggesting that other viewpoints are 'silly' or 'foolish' (or worse!).
- ▶ Do not generalise.



- ▶ Spend about five minutes at the end re-reading what you have written. Alter any sentences that do not make sense. Check your paragraphing. Correct any spelling mistakes you come across.

The two test pieces that follow are typical of Paper 1 Section B.

# FOUNDATION TIER SAMPLE PAPER

## Paper 1

## Section B

This section tests **writing**: to review, analyse and comment.

- Write in a way that suits this type of task.
- To answer the question effectively you should aim to write **at least two sides**.
- Leave enough time to **reread your work** so that you can make any changes you feel necessary.

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Present your views on the following statement:

### **Computer games are harmful to children.**

The opinions listed below raise a series of issues about the effects of computer games on children. The examiner wants you to review the issues that you consider to be important along with any ideas of your own. Analyse these in an extended piece of writing. You will be expected to include your own comments and conclusions on the topic.

- Computer games are educational – they develop your ability to think and plan strategically.
- *They can make young people become more violent.*
- They encourage you to be more imaginative.
- *They are bad for your health – nintendo thumb, repetitive strain injury and bad posture are all examples of the injuries caused by computer games.*
- They are harmless fun.
- *Some people can become addicted to computer games.*

[30 marks]



# HIGHER-TIER SAMPLE PAPER

## Paper 1

## Section B

This section tests **writing**: to review, analyse and comment.

- Write in a way that suits this type of task.
- To answer the question effectively you should aim to write **at least two sides**.
- Leave enough time to **reread your work** so that you can make any changes you feel necessary.

---

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- *They can make young people become more violent.*
- They are harmless fun.
- *They are bad for your health – nintendo thumb, repetitive strain injury and bad posture are all examples of the injuries caused by computer games.*

[30 marks]

