

Cambridge B2 First Writing Part One essays tips and useful phrases

Cross off bad tips below (with "X"), not marking tips that are good, OK, debateable, etc.

Planning Cambridge B2 First Writing Part One essays tips

- You have to do this task.
- If you don't like this task, you can choose another one.
- You should underline important words in the question (if you are doing the paper-based test).
- You have to cover all three sub-topics in your answer.
- If you can't think of your own sub-topic, you can just write about the two sub-topics which are already given.
- You can choose to write about one, two or three of the sub-topics.
- You always have to look at both sides of the argument.
- If you have a strong opinion (e.g. strongly disagree with the question), then it's probably best to only give arguments that support that side.
- If you don't have a strong opinion, then it's probably best to look at both sides.
- If you are looking at only one side of the argument, the easiest plan for the body is: body 1 = sub-topic 1, body 2 = sub-topic 2, body 3 = subtopic 3.
- If you are looking at both sides of the argument, the easiest plan for the body is probably: body 1 = arguments for, body 2 = arguments against.
- You should always brainstorm before planning your essay.
- You'll get extra marks for an original plan that most other candidates didn't think of.
- You should spend at least 10 minutes analysing the question and planning.

Cambridge B2 First Writing Part One essay introductions tips and useful phrases

- The first sentence of your introduction could be the background to the question/ topic, such as why the question is important/ topical/ worth writing about ("Nowadays more...", "Recently...", "In the last few years...", "In modern society...", "In many countries, including this one...", etc).
- The first or second sentence of the introduction should be rephrased from the question, using different words as much as possible to show your range of language and that you understand it.
- You should always give your opinion in the introduction.
- You shouldn't give your opinion in the introduction if you will look at both sides (because if you did give your opinion at the start, half of the body would be pointless to read because you have already said that you disagree with it).
- You should give your opinion in the introduction if you have a strong opinion and so will only look at one side ("I strongly believe that the answer to this question is 'Yes'", "I completely agree with this statement", "I have no doubt that this is the case", "Although there are possible arguments against, in my opinion this is clearly true for the vast majority of people living today", etc).
- The last sentence of the introduction should explain what the structure of your essay is, mainly meaning the topic of each body paragraph ("I will give three reasons for my opinion in the paragraphs below", "I will look at both sides of the argument and then give my own opinion", "I will describe arguments for and against this and then come to a conclusion on whether it is generally a good idea", etc).
- If what you then write doesn't match the plan that you described in the introduction, you should go back and change that description at the start.

Body of Cambridge B2 First Writing Part One essays tips and useful phrases

- You should support your arguments in as many different ways as possible.
- You can support your arguments with personal experience (“In my limited experience,...”, “I have often found that...”, etc).
- You can support your arguments with logical statements such as cause and effect (“This is likely to lead to...”, “The main reason for this is...”, “One probable consequence of this is...”, etc).
- You can support your arguments by comparing/ contrasting (“This is much more important than...”, “Unlike 30 years ago, nowadays...”, etc).
- You can support your arguments with made-up quotations (“In page 23 of his book..., Einstein stated that...”, etc).
- You can support your arguments with imaginary data (“In my country last year, there were exactly...”, “According the WHO, 12.32% of under 13s...”, etc).
- You can use statistics and quotations, but you should make it clear why you know them and be vague if you need to (“I heard on the radio last week that something like...”, “I learnt in my history class that... said... , or words to that effect”, etc.).
- You should start the body paragraphs with “First”, “Second”, “Third”, etc.
- You can start body 2 and/ or body 3 (but not body 1) with changing topic phrases (“Moving onto...”, “Turning to...”, “Turning our attention to...”, “As for...”, “On the other side of the coin,...”, “Turning from the arguments for to the arguments against,...”, etc).
- You can start body 1, 2 and/ or 3 with introducing topics phrases (“Looking at...”, “If we consider...”, etc).

Ending Cambridge B2 First Writing Part One essays tips and useful phrases

- If you have looked at both sides in the body, the last paragraph should be a conclusion.
- The best way to start a conclusion paragraph is with your final conclusion (“In conclusion,...”, “Therefore...”, “So,...”, etc)
- The best way to start a conclusion paragraph is with a link to the body (“Of all the arguments above, I think that the most persuasive is...”, “Although all the arguments above are true, the most important for most people nowadays is...”, “As can be seen above, there are slightly more pros than cons to...”, etc)
- After weighing up the arguments in the body, you can give your opinion based on that (“Therefore,...”, “For that reason,...”, “This leads me to the conclusion that...”, etc)
- Opinions in the conclusion are usually weak (“...if I am forced to come down on one side or the other, I’d say that...”, “...although many people will disagree with, I’d say that...”, etc).
- If you think the two sides are more or less as strong as each other, you can sit on the fence/ stay neutral on the question (“It is therefore impossible to answer the original question”, “It entirely depends on the situation”, etc).
- If you have given your opinion in the introduction and only looked at one side, the final paragraph has to start with a summary of what you have written (“To summarise the arguments given above,...”, “As I have shown above, there are at least three strong arguments for...”, “For the three reasons given above, as I said in the introduction, I am totally against...”, etc).
- After the summary sentence, you could put a short recommendation, prediction, etc to make the paragraph long enough and to make it worth reading (“Governments should therefore...”, “This will almost certainly become more important in future”, etc).

Editing/ Review

- You need an interest title (like in an article).
- Each paragraph needs a heading (like in a report).
- The paragraphs need to be about the same length as each other.
- Some of the paragraphs should be just one sentence.
- If you are over the word limit, you should spend time cutting the text down.
- If you are over the word limit, you should double-check that everything is on topic.
- If you are under the word limit, you should quickly add any text you can in order to reach it.
- If you are under the word limit, you should make sure that you have answered the question and given enough support to show the reasons for your opinion.
- You should count every word to make sure that you are within the word limit.
- There is no point counting how many words you have written in the actual exam (though you should count approximately when doing exam practice at home).
- You should make all corrections with an eraser to make sure the writing looks tidy.
- There are no marks for tidy work, so you should edit as quickly as possible by crossing out, adding words above the line (with a little pointy mountain symbol to show where the word or words go, etc).
- You should finish writing within 35 minutes so that you have about five minutes for a final edit.
- Writing Part One is more important than Writing Part Two, so you should spend more time on Writing Part One.

Hint 1: There should be 22 Xs above.

Hint 2: The number of Xs in each section should be 7/ 1/ 3/ 2/ 9

Suggested answers

X = bad advice

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- If you can't think of your own sub-topic, you can just write about the two sub-topics which are already given. X
- You can choose to write about one, two or three of the sub-topics. X
- You always have to look at both sides of the argument. X
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- You should spend at least 10 minutes analysing the question and planning. X

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- You should start the body paragraphs with “First”, “Second”, “Third”, etc. X
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- If you think the two sides are more or less as strong as each other, you can sit on the fence/ stay neutral on the question (“It is therefore impossible to answer the original question”, “It entirely depends on the situation”, etc). X
- If you have given your opinion in the introduction and only looked at one side, the final paragraph has to start with a summary of what you have written (“To summarise the arguments given above,...”, “As I have shown above, there are at least three strong arguments for...”, “For the three reasons given above, as I said in the introduction, I am totally against...”, etc).
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Brainstorming stage

Write as many suitable phrases as you can to achieve each good tip below.

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The last sentence of the introduction should explain what the structure of your essay is, mainly meaning the topic of each body paragraph.

Body of Cambridge B2 First Writing Part One essays tips and useful phrases

You can support your arguments with personal experience

You can support your arguments with logical statements such as cause and effect

You can support your arguments by comparing/ contrasting

You can use statistics and quotations, but you should make it clear why you know them and be vague if you need to

You can start body 2 and/ or body 3 (but not body 1) with changing topic phrases

You can start body 1, 2 and/ or 3 with introducing topics phrases

Ending Cambridge B2 First Writing Part One essays tips and useful phrases

The best way to start a conclusion paragraph is with a link to the body

After weighing up the arguments in the body, you can give your opinion based on that. Opinions in the conclusion are usually weak.

If you have given your opinion in the introduction and only looked at one side, the final paragraph has to start with a summary of what you have written

After the summary sentence, you could put a short recommendation, prediction, etc to make the paragraph long enough and to make it worth reading

Compare to the phrases on the first worksheet, brainstorm more, then check your extra phrases as a class.