



Flying Start Tasks

A level English Language

TASK 1 - Reading Assessment

As you have seen from some of the activities so far, like at GCSE, in A-level English Language, we often analyse how writers use language to express their point of view on a topic. In particular, we study opinion articles.

An opinion article is an article where writers present their perspective on topic, whilst trying to get their readers to agree with them.

1. Read this example of an online opinion article:

<https://childmind.org/article/why-kids-need-to-spend-time-in-nature/>

2. Opinion articles typically follow the same structure. Reread the article and see if you can spot the main structural features of the article:

- a. *Headline*: the name of the article
- b. *Strapline*: a one sentence summary of the article
- c. *Hook*: the opening of an article that engages readers
- d. *Main body paragraphs*: several paragraphs that explore the writer's main points
- e. *Final message*: A sentence or paragraph that communicates the writer's overall message.

(In this article, the writer also uses subheadings and bullet points. These are less common in opinion articles, but not unheard of.)

3. How does the writer use language to convey her perspective on why children need to spend more time in nature?

Create a table like the one on the next page to help you answer this question. Try to use quotes from different parts of the article. You can consider:

- The writer's use of powerful words (verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc)
- The writer's use of evidence such as facts and statistics

- Any other persuasive techniques that you can find, such as audience address and lists

How does the writer use language to convey her perspective on why children need to spend more time in nature?

Point	Evidence	Terminology	Explanation
Writer uses language to show how important spending time outdoors is.	“Why kids <u>need</u> to spend more time in nature.	Headline Verb (“need”)	The verb “need” emphasises that there is no choice in the matter – it is very important

- 4. On a separate piece of paper, please write your response to the question, using at least three quotations (choose your best three ideas from the table above). You can **handwrite or type your response. Your new teacher will mark it.****

Here is an example paragraph. Don't include this one!

The writer uses language to communicate how important it is to spend time outdoors. This is immediately clear from the headline: “Why kids need to spend more time in nature.” The writer has used the verb “need” to emphasise that there is no choice in the matter – it is vital that children spend more time outdoors.

TASK 2 - Writing Assessment

In the last activity, you analysed this example of an opinion article:

<https://childmind.org/article/why-kids-need-to-spend-time-in-nature/>

Now, it is time to start thinking about writing your own opinion article!

At A level, you are required to write opinion articles both for your coursework, and in exams, so it is a useful skill to regularly practice.

The Task

“Teachers and students are emerging from the pandemic having learnt a huge amount about online learning. We must prepare students by moving to digital assessment”.

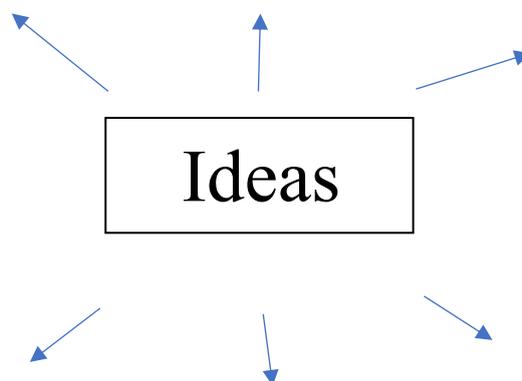
Write an opinion article where you argue your view on this statement.

There are many ideas that you could discuss. Perhaps you would like to discuss:

- How all subjects should use online learning resources- give some examples of good learning resources you used in school.
- How your school embraced online resources eg. Parents evening
- How might assessment move online? Have you had any online experience of this?
- How digital assessment might help make results, fairer? Faster? More accessible- can be done from anywhere?
- How it might help prepare students for the world of work?

Step 1: Initial planning

You might find it helpful to make a mind map of different points you could make. Some research on the internet might help.



When you are ready, choose your focus!

Step 2: More detailed planning

Now you have your main focus, use this table to help you plan your article. You may need to do more research to ensure your pieces of evidence, such as any facts, are true!

Part	What to do	Ideas
Headline	Make the topic of your article, and your viewpoint clear	
Introduction	Use an interesting story, anecdote or statement to engage readers. Then, briefly explain your point of view.	
Paragraph 1	Explain your first reason or idea. Use supporting evidence such as facts or statistics. Make sure you research any facts you use!	
Paragraph 2	Explain your second reason or idea. Use supporting evidence such as a quote from an expert or ordinary person. This should be real!	
Paragraph 3	Explain your third reason or idea. You could use a real-life story as evidence here. Make sure it's true!	
Final message	Aim to finish your article with a punchy statement that summarises your viewpoint.	

Step 3: Write your article

When you are ready, it's time to write your article. Your new teacher will mark this article, so remember what you have learnt about writing a good article from GCSE!

- Write as clearly and explain your ideas in detail
- Ensure each paragraph has a clear focus and use connectives to link your ideas
- Use ambitious vocabulary and a range of persuasive techniques (such as a rhetorical question, powerful language, a command and direct address).
- Take care with spelling, punctuation and grammar. Aim to be as professional as you can!

For more help with how to write an opinion article, watch this video by Mr Bruff:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ONklmwWrvc>