

FUNCTIONS BANK

Stimulus-based discussion

PRESENTING THE STIMULI

The material is all related to the topic of ...
The overall theme of the material is ...
The photo on the left shows ...
The headline suggests that ...
The graph gives statistics about the percentage of ...
The graph shows the numbers of ...
There's a quote from (somebody) which suggests that ...
The statistics in the box imply that ...

DESCRIBING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN PHOTOS

The most obvious similarity between the photos is that ...
The photos are similar in that ...
The most obvious difference between the photos is (that) ...
In the first picture, ... while/whereas in the other, ...
Photo 1 shows ... Photo 2, on the other hand, shows ...

DISCUSSING SUGGESTIONS AND NEGOTIATING A COURSE OF ACTION

So, let's look at the different options.
What puts me off is ...
All in all, it's / it isn't ...
I think we should move onto the next option.
This one has quite a lot going for it, in my opinion.
Can you think of any drawbacks?
I suppose there are ways around that.
I think it's definitely worth considering.
On reflection, maybe we should ...
So, have we reached a decision?
I'll go along with that.

Presentations and discussions

STRUCTURING YOUR PRESENTATION

I'd like to begin by saying ...
The first thing I'd like to say is that ...
First of all, ... / Firstly, ...
Secondly, ...
Finally, ...

OUTLINING THE ISSUE

Some people think that ...
Others maintain that ...

GIVING OPINIONS

One advantage of ... is (that) ...
One drawback of ... is (that) ...
Personally, I think that ...
I believe / I don't believe ...
In my view / opinion, ...
I agree with ... / I disagree with ...
As far as I'm concerned ...
Personally, I believe that ...
The way I look at it, ...

REACTING TO AN OPPOSING VIEW

I don't really agree with that.
That's just an opinion – there's no evidence to prove it.
But where will it end?
That's a fair point, I suppose. But in my view ...
That argument doesn't make sense.
You don't need to take things to such an extreme.
I see what you mean. But ...
You can't be serious.

AGREEING

That's how I see it too.
I go along with that.
I couldn't agree more.
That's what I think too.
I think you're absolutely right.

PARTIALLY AGREEING

That's true, but ...
I see your point, but ...
It may be true that ... , but ...
I admit that However, ...
I'm willing to concede that Nevertheless, ...

DISAGREEING

I don't accept that.
I disagree with the view that ...
I don't think that's true/right.
I take the opposite view.
I'm of the opposite opinion.
That's not how I see it at all.
That's not the way I look at it.
Surely you don't think that ...
I'm not sure about that.
You're missing the point.
I think it's wrong to say that ...
Like it or not, ...
You have to admit that ...

CONCEDING A POINT

True.
Yes, I suppose you're right.
Yes, I hadn't thought of that.

CHANGING THE SUBJECT

I'll now turn to ...
I'd now like to deal with ...
Moving on to my second argument, ...
... on the other hand ...

ACKNOWLEDGING AN OPPOSING VIEW

I freely admit that ...
Others take a different view.
... as far as the arguments for/against ... are concerned, it is
sometimes argued that ...
There is some merit in the argument that ...

DISMISSING AN OPPOSING VIEW

I don't accept there's any merit in the argument that ...
I entirely reject the notion that ...
But that is not a realistic view.
I don't think this argument holds water.

REFERRING TO SOMETHING SAID EARLIER

Returning to (the issue of/the point about ...)
To restate the main argument ...
As I said earlier, ...
To reiterate the point I made (at the start/earlier), ...

EXPRESSING DOUBT AND UNCERTAINTY

It's difficult to say, really.
I guess I'll ...
I (don't) suppose I'll .../I (don't) imagine I'll ...
I would(n't) say that ...
I doubt if I'll ...
It's unlikely that I'll ...
Assuming that ...
I may/might well ...
It depends whether/how/what, etc. ...
It's anyone's guess what/when/where, etc. ...
I could go in a number of directions.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Judging by the fact that ..., I'd say that ...
The fact that ... would suggest that ...
It's clear from the fact that ... that ...
This would point to the fact that ...
... which leads me to think that ...
I take it that ...
For that reason, I assume that ...

CORRECTING YOURSELF

What I meant to say was ...
What I should have said was ...
Come to think of it, ...
Or rather, ...

PARAPHRASING

Or to put it another way ...
In other words, ...
What I'm trying to say is ...
The point I'm trying to make is ...
I don't know what it's called in English.
It's a kind of ...

WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

I'm sorry. I don't understand the question.
What does ... mean?
Could you repeat that, please?
I don't understand what you mean.

THINKING WHAT TO SAY

That's an interesting question.
What else?
Let me see.
Well, it's difficult to say, really.
What about disadvantages? Well, ...
I've never really thought about it before.

TALKING ABOUT MEMORIES

As I recall, the trouble started when ...
With hindsight, I suppose it was ...
I found the whole thing quite ...
I can still picture it clearly.
... until it became completely ingrained in my memory.
... is a very evocative time for me.
I can't call to mind ...
I still have a clear recollection of ...

WRITING PHRASES BANK

Narratives

STARTING A NARRATIVE

Last week something happened that ...
I would never have dreamt that ...
The most wonderful thing happened ...
It was an experience that has changed my life.
Had you told me that ... , I wouldn't have believed you.
Rarely have I been so pleasantly surprised ...

SEQUENCING WORDS AND TIME EXPRESSIONS

First / then / after that / finally
The following day/week
the day/night/week before
after a while
At the end of the day/week
eventually / at last / at first / as soon as

SEQUENCING CLAUSES

Only then (did I realise that) ...
No sooner (had I arrived) than ...
After (leaving the house), they ...
Having (left the house), they ...
As they (left the house), they ...
Looking up, she saw ...

ALTERNATIVE EXPRESSIONS FOR *THERE IS / ARE*

Near the house stood a tall tree.
Beyond the road lay green fields.
Snow-capped mountains were visible from the bedroom window.
You could make out a tall ship in the distance.

DESCRIBING THINGS USING COMPARISONS

The mountain was shaped like a pyramid / in the shape of a pyramid.
The sky was lead-coloured / the colour of lead.
The alien was the size of an elephant / as big as an elephant.

Descriptions

DESCRIBING PLACES

If (shopping) is your thing, then ...
If (nightlife) is more your scene, then ...
For those seeking ...
(Cheltenham) benefits from ...
... is ideally placed for ...
... has a great deal to offer.
... has a wealth of ...
... also caters for ...

DESCRIBING PEOPLE

She wears her hair (tied back / in a pony tail / in a bob).
He always seems to be (in a good mood).
She tends to be (cheerful).
He's good company / fun to be with.
I find her quite (amusing).
He has a (gentle) side.
She can be very (sympathetic).

SUMMING UP A DESCRIPTION

All in all, then, ...
To sum up, ...
For all these reasons, I really like her.
What I like most about her is ...
I wish I could see more of him.
I'm really glad that ... is a friend of mine.

Reviews

BASIC AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The film is an adaptation of ...
The film was shot on location in ...
(The back streets of New York) provide the perfect setting for ...
(*The Two Towers*) is the sequel to ...
One of the best books/films I've ever read/seen is ...
It's one of the most famous books in English literature / films ever made.
The book/film was written/made in 1950.

DESCRIBING CHARACTERS IN A BOOK OR FILM

(Keira Knightly) was well/badly cast in the role of ...
(Brad Pitt) delivered a fine performance in the leading role.
I was very impressed with the characterisation.
The most important character is ...
The main character(s) is (are) ...
The story is full of interesting characters, such as ...
... is a fascinating character.
Another fascinating character is ...

SAYING WHY YOU LIKED IT

The movie is beautifully filmed and enhanced by digital technology.
I enjoyed this story/book/film because ...
It really makes you think.
The best bit was when ...
The best/most exciting/funniest moment is when ...
There were lots of twists and turns.
I couldn't put it down.
The book/film raises important questions about ...
The book/film is about (the problem of / importance of / what happens when ...)
Even though the story is set in (where? / when?), you feel that its message is still relevant today.
The character of ... is very (convincing/interesting/likeable/mysterious, etc.)
I identified with (a character) ...
The book is beautifully written.
There are some wonderful descriptions of ...

DESCRIBING THE STORY

As the story unfolds, ...
After numerous twists and turns, ...
The plot revolves around ...
It's the story of ...
The story is told by ...
The story is set in London.
The story is set in the nineteenth century.
At the start of the story, ...
In the course of the story ...
By the end of the story ...
There's a twist at the end.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To sum up, ...
All in all, ...
In conclusion, ...
I would recommend this book/film.
I thoroughly recommend the book/film.
It was a really good read.
You won't be disappointed.
If you're a fan of (science fiction stories), you'll love this book/film.
It's a really (gripping) story, but if you want to find out (what happens at the end / to ...), you'll have to read the book/see the film yourself!

WRITING PHRASES BANK

Essays

OPENING PARAGRAPH

..... ? This is the question we need to answer.
We should acknowledge from the start that ...
The question we need to answer is ...
Some people believe/claim that ... However, others maintain/think that ...
First of all, I'd like to say that ...
I'd like to start by ...

DESCRIBING THE CURRENT SITUATION

Over the past few decades, ...
We have now reached a point where ...
Newspapers are full of stories about ...
In some countries ..., while in others ...

RESTATING THE QUESTIONS

The key question is ...
What it comes down to is ...
What needs to be decided is ...
Many people are starting to wonder whether ...

PRESENTING ONE SIDE OF THE ARGUMENT

Firstly, it's important to state that ...
First, I'd like to present some/the arguments in favour of ...
It seems clear that ...
It is clear that ...
On the one hand, ...
It is sometimes argued that ...
One argument in favour of ... is ...
In my view/opinion, ...
I firmly believe that ...

PRESENTING THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ARGUMENT

However, ...
On the other hand, ...
Some people take the opposite view, and claim/maintain that ...
Having said that, ...
And yet, ...
Another argument in favour of (a ban on smoking) is (that) ...

ACKNOWLEDGING AN ARGUMENT AND RESTATING YOUR OPINION

While it's true to say that ..., I really do think ...
Even though some people maintain that ..., I nevertheless believe that ...
There's some truth in the view that Nevertheless, it doesn't alter my view that ...
It's hard to deny that ...
To that extent, it's true that ...

GIVING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What is more, ...
Moreover, ...
Furthermore, ...
Similarly, ...
We should also remember that ...
It is also worth bearing in mind that ...

GIVING EXAMPLES

For example, ...
For instance, ...

CONCLUSION

To sum up, I would say that ...
In conclusion, ...
On balance, ...
While it's true that ..., I firmly believe that ...
However, on balance, I believe that ...
Even though ... I would still maintain that ...
It can be argued that However, the truth of the matter is ...
Despite ... I feel that ...

ESSAY (FOR AND AGAINST)

Too much surveillance is bad for democracy. Discuss.

Over the past few years, especially after recent terrorist attacks, public safety has become an important issue. It is undoubtedly true that the use of public video surveillance (CCTV) is a popular security method, but it is also true to say that it is not without problems. This essay will take a closer look at some of the pros and cons of video surveillance.

I will start with points for video surveillance. Firstly, the use of CCTV leads to the arrest of robbers at banks and cash machines and stops bar fights and shoplifters. Secondly, with CCTV on the streets it is claimed that people are afraid of committing crime and so do not do it.

While it is true to say that CCTV does affect our behaviour, I think that there are at least three disadvantages to video surveillance. First, video surveillance may not be effective – it has not been proved that it reduces crime. Secondly, it is expensive – the money could be used for other things – such as improving education and stopping the causes of crime. Thirdly, CCTV takes away our individual freedoms and many people are starting to wonder just who is watching us and why.

While reasons for using video surveillance systems are understood, they are not the only solution to public crime and disorder. My own view is that although it seems like a quick solution to crime, in fact we will be giving away our individual freedom in the not too distant future.

- In the first paragraph, give the reader some idea about the current situation and say why the subject is important. Make sure you give the outline of the structure of your essay to help the reader follow your argument.
- Include points in favour of the topic in the second paragraph, even if you disagree with this. Show that you disagree with phrases like *While it is true to say ...*, *While the reasons for ... are understood ...*, *I will start with points for ...* to make this clear to the reader.
- In the third paragraph, give points against the topic – remember to acknowledge the opposite view and state your opinion.
- In the final paragraph, restate both points of view before giving your own opinion on the subject.

ESSAY (OPINION)

- Make sure you have understood the title of the essay and have referred to it in the introduction.
- Give an outline of the essay in the introduction to help your reader follow your argument.
- In the second paragraph, give your first main point together with any supporting points and examples.
- In the third paragraph, give your second main point together with any supporting points and examples.
- In the fourth paragraph, give your third main point together with any supporting points and examples. Remember to use linking expressions such as *for example*, *moreover*, *in addition*, and so on.
- In the final paragraph, give your opinion on the topic – if you are giving a prediction, remember to use expressions for speculating about the future.

What are the possible uses of space travel in the near future? Give your opinion.

As the world's population grows, humans will definitely need to look for other places to get resources and space to live. One hundred years from today we are very likely to have colonised space and are bound to have invented new forms of space travel. In this essay I will look at how we will go to space, and how we can live there.

The most likely way into space is by reusable spacecraft but there are other possibilities like a space elevator: a lift into space, or space balloons may well be used to lift us into orbit. Other possibilities in space are nuclear-powered spacecraft, which are very likely to be built or ships powered by solar winds – another possible alternative.

But where will we be going? Already space tourism is a strong possibility with companies offering space rides. Within the next 100 years we will almost definitely have orbiting hotels for people to stay high above the planet.

On a more serious note, it seems increasingly likely that we will need to have a base on the moon to mine minerals and provide a station to go to other places, for example NASA is already planning this for the middle of this century.

And after the moon? We know that there is water on Mars and for the long-term future of the human race, we will almost definitely need to settle on the planet and start a new colony in order to take pressure off the Earth's ecosystems.

WRITING BANK

FILM REVIEW

Slumdog Millionaire is the kind of edgy thriller that people absolutely adore. Based upon the book *Q and A* by Vikas Swarup, it was directed by Danny Boyle and stars relatively unknown actors.

The story is set in Mumbai with eighteen-year-old Jamal just one answer away from winning a twenty-million rupee fortune on the Indian version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* The handsome and terrified youth is from the slums but Jamal's unexpected success turns him into a national sensation. It starts near the end of the story with a brutal police officer wanting to know how Jamal cheated. *What the hell can a slum boy possibly know?* shouts the police chief. Jamal reveals how each question in the quiz relates to a childhood memory: growing up alone after the death of his mother; shaking hands with a film star, and so on. We learn the history of Jamal in flashbacks, as he answers questions from his own life experiences. But what Jamal really wants is to capture the heart of his childhood sweetheart, Latika.

The power of the film is the way it captures the story through the eyes of a child. The film is visually astonishing and the fast-moving action pulls you in, but it's the complex characters who hold you there.

This could be a third rate, light-hearted romance, but the gripping storyline and extremely powerful performances make it anything but that. I would thoroughly recommend this film for anyone interested in a fairy-tale film with real honesty at its heart.

- Tell the reader the title of the film, the kind of film it is, the director and actors in the first paragraph.
- Give an outline of the plot in the second paragraph. If you can, include some direct quotations from the film. Use participle clauses if possible.
- Say what you liked or disliked about the film in the third paragraph. Remember to use lots of adjectives for describing films make the reader interested in seeing the film and phrases such as *The power of the film is ...*, *it's the ... which / who hold you there, the ... pulls you in.*
- Finish the review with a recommendation to see it or not and who would be interested in it.

REPORT

- In the first paragraph, give the aims and objectives of your report and say why the subject is important. → Tourism in Ravenport has grown rapidly - the aim of this report is to review places to stay and suggest one for people coming to the city.
- Describe two examples of the subject of your report, remember to soften negative comments with more words than necessary (periphrasis) or by not being direct (euphemism). → Large hotels
There are two five-star hotels in the Ravenport city centre: the Majestic and the Palace. The Majestic has recently undergone refurbishment and now has air-conditioning and Internet access in all its rooms and boasts three very good restaurants. Unfortunately, what it gained in style, it lost in character and now looks similar to any other hotel, with its sterile, formal atmosphere. The Palace Hotel, on the other hand, is a little on the shabby side and is looking quite out-dated. However, it is still a very impressive place to stay with its art-deco architecture and old-fashioned accommodation.
- Describe two more examples. → Smaller accommodation
From the many smaller hotels and bed and breakfasts, two really stand out as quality places to stay: the Hotel Viktor Hugo and the Oriental Rooms. Both places are family run businesses with a welcoming atmosphere and clean rooms which can be a bit on the small side. That said, both places tend to somewhat rule-bound which means that the guest is restricted in their time of arrival, breakfast and what time they are allowed to stay out.
- Finish with a recommendation for the reader and give your personal opinions. → Recommendation
With a wide range of accommodation in all price ranges, it really is down to personal taste, but if you want to experience a taste of authentic Ravenstowntown hospitality, I would recommend staying at the Palace Hotel for at least one night.

REPORT DESCRIBING AN EVENT

My disastrous first day

When the alarm rang at 7:30 a.m. I felt nervous – it was my first day at work and I wasn't looking forward to it. I remembered all the advice: dress well, try to smile, remember the names of people and don't be late! I showered, had breakfast and dressed in a suit I'd bought the day before. I was starting work as an IT assistant at an American software company and I was eager to make a good impression.

Anyway, I arrived as early as possible for a meeting at nine. When I got there I was very tense – what were the people like, what would they think about me? The meeting with Jonathon, a laid-back American, went well and I thought that my first day would be fine. He gave me a talk and then showed me around the building and introduced me to the staff. The offices were in a modern building with a coffee bar where people were chatting and laughing.

Jonathon took me to meet some colleagues and bought me a coffee. 'Look', he explained, 'You don't need to dress so smart here – I'm not impressed by appearances,' he said and I began to feel less uptight. 'And cut off the price tag from the back of your jacket', he added. 'Save it for a more formal occasion.' I went as red as a beetroot when I realised I'd toured the office with a price tag on my back, but we all laughed about it later.

- A good title will interest your reader and encourage them to read further.
- Start your description by giving some background to the event like how you felt, when it happened, what other people said to you.
- You can use questions to keep the reader interested and involve them in the story, tell the reader what happened in an informal and lively style with adjectives for emotional states and synonyms.
- Use direct speech to move the story forward and similes for humorous effect. Finish the story with a conclusion to say how it affected you later.

DESCRIPTION OF A PLACE

- Include the name of the city in the first paragraph and give a reason or two why it is special.
- In the second paragraph, write about its location and tell the reader some of the things to see and do there.
- Go into more detail about things to see and do in the city in paragraph 3 and focus on one or two places to describe in detail. Use metaphors like *a stone's throw away* and *the city is buzzing* to make the description more natural and interesting.
- Finally, tell the reader your impressions of the city and finish with a question, if possible.

Once notorious for its deprivation, rundown housing and industrial dereliction, Glasgow has reinvented itself as one of the UK's trendiest and most vibrant cities. In fact the Lonely Planet travel guide rates it as one of the world's top ten cities for visitors – on a par with Chicago or Lisbon.

Scotland's biggest city is now an affluent, cosmopolitan place teeming with designer bars, first class restaurants, nightclubs and live-music venues that cater for all tastes. But that's not the whole story – Glasgow's industrial past has left the city well provided with many beautiful buildings, parks and museums dating back to the Victorian period.

The city offers some of the best museums and galleries in Britain – and nearly all of these are free. Most distinctive of all is the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, whose elegant Art Nouveau designs appear all over the city, particularly in the stunning School of Art. Almost in contrast to its architectural heritage, the old shipyards are being redeveloped as the Glasgow Science Centre with futuristic buildings a stone's throw from the river Clyde.

Best of all, though, is Glasgow's live-music scene which is one of the best in Britain, and buzzing with venues dedicated to live music. But the most impressive thing about Glasgow is the people – down to earth and humorous, proud of their working class background and leftist traditions. And besides all this, where else in the world can you land in the middle of a city in a seaplane?

ARTICLE: NARRATIVE

Jarvis – the guardian ghost

It was late summer when Alan, a twelve-year-old boy, was sitting having breakfast with his sister and his parents. Suddenly, a jar moved across the table. Alan smiled and whispered, 'Stop it, Jarvis.' His mother asked, 'How did you do that?' 'I didn't, Mum,' he replied. 'Jarvis did it.' 'Who?' asked Alan's father. 'The bloke from upstairs,' Alan explained further. 'This man comes into my room at night, he looks like a ghost – you can see through him. His name's Jarvis.'

That night, Alan's dad went quietly to his son's bedroom. He opened the door and saw Alan sitting up in bed. Near the bed was a shadowy figure which vanished as he looked at it. Alan's dad shouted, 'Alan's right! There is a ghost in his room!'

The following day, they visited a priest. The priest interviewed Alan then looked at his parents, 'Were you burgled about three months ago?' 'Yes,' said Alan's father, 'but nothing was taken.' 'Isn't that unusual?' asked the priest, 'Alan says Jarvis scared the robbers away.' Then the priest asked Alan's sister, 'Did you run in front of a car but something carried you to safety?' 'Yes,' Alan's sister replied. 'Again it was Jarvis,' the priest said kindly. 'Alan says Jarvis looks after you like a guardian angel. You'd better just live with him. He's done a lot of good.'

Unfortunately, only Alan and his sister could accept Jarvis, and the family moved home. On their last night, Alan heard Jarvis crying softly.

- Try to give your story a title that wants to make the reader continue the story.
- Give the reader some background to the story – where and when it happened and who to – in the first paragraph.
- Develop the story in paragraph two – remember to use a variety of adverbs.
- Give more details about the plot in paragraph 3 using a variety of direct and indirect speech. Remember to use a variety of reporting verbs to make the story more interesting.
- Finally, tell the reader what happened at the end of the story and any consequences that followed on.

LETTER OF COMPLAINT

- If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, start with *Dear Sir/Madam*, and remember to finish with *Yours faithfully*.

- Say why you are writing in the first paragraph and give some background to what happened. You can use phrases like *To begin with ... and When we arrived at ... to write about what happened and we were then informed and we were told that to report what the people said.*

- Describe what happened and give the first main reason for complaining.

- Describe what happened and give the second main reason for complaining.

- Give more details about what happened as a result of the company's fault.

- In the final paragraph, tell the company about the overall effect of their actions and what you would like them to do.

CarQuik
Unit 16
Marsh Business Park
Ealing
London

Dear Sir/Madam,

We recently hired a car from your company for a week and I am writing to complain in the strongest terms about several things that went wrong with the car you supplied.

To begin with, in your brochure you claim that your cars are the latest models and that they are cleaned inside and out before the next customer takes them away. When we arrived at the garage we were told that all the other cars were out and the only one available was a ten-year-old vehicle, and we were then informed that you had not had time to clean it.

However, because it was the first day of our holiday, we decided to take the car after your representative assured us that it was a very reliable vehicle. As we were driving to the coast we noticed a rumbling sound from the back of the car, which got worse as we drove on. Then a few miles later the exhaust dropped off and black smoke started pouring from the engine.

As a consequence, we had to spend the first few days of our holiday in a small village outside London waiting for the car to be repaired at our own expense.

All of this spoilt what should have been a relaxing holiday and we would like a refund for the amount the car parts and service cost as well as a full refund of the cost of the hire.

Yours faithfully,

Maria Radley

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