

● Different styles for different audiences

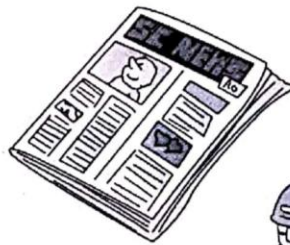
Who are you writing for?

Now that we have looked at the purpose of your writing, or what you are writing for, it's important to think about your audience, or who you are writing for. It is important that you use language and register appropriate to audience and context.

When you are writing in an examination, in one sense your audience is always one adult – the person who will mark the paper. However, sometimes for a particular writing task you will also be required to consider another specific audience, for example:



children



a school newspaper



your headteacher



a member of your local community council

It is important to think about your audience and how it should affect the way you write.

- If you are writing for children, the vocabulary you use must be simple, the sentences must be fairly short and they certainly must not be complex.
- If you are writing for your headteacher or to a member of your local community council, then it is appropriate to explore your subject in a more complex or sophisticated way, and to use more difficult or technical vocabulary.

Don't ever start your piece of writing without asking yourself the question 'Who am I writing for?' If your writing shows that you are aware of your audience, you are more likely to gain higher marks.

● Planning your writing

Structuring a piece of writing

The way in which you structure a piece of writing depends on the purpose of the piece and the audience it is being written for.

A structure is likely to go wrong if you don't plan the whole piece of writing before you start. Most importantly, you must know what the end is going to be. If you are writing an argumentative or informative piece, you need to be clear how you are going to balance the argument with points for and against, or how you are going to give one piece of information more prominence than another. If you are writing an imaginative

piece, you need to know how you are going to introduce characters and how you are going to describe them, how you are going to create atmosphere and setting, how the plot is going to develop and how your ending is going to work.

On page 70 you will find some comments about paragraphing. Paragraphing is always important but the way you use paragraphs depends on the purpose of your writing. For instance, an argumentative piece will normally be divided into paragraphs of roughly equal length, as an argument has to have a clear and balanced structure. In an imaginative piece the length of the paragraphs will probably be more varied, as the different elements of the narrative will have different degrees of importance.

Generally speaking, the structure should always have the following three parts:

- 1 Introduction: in a factual piece, this should state briefly what the theme of the piece is and – if appropriate – what opinion you are putting forward on this theme. In an imaginative piece, you may choose to set the scene or to go for a more dramatic/immediate start.
- 2 Main body of explanation/argument/narrative.
- 3 Conclusion/Story ending.

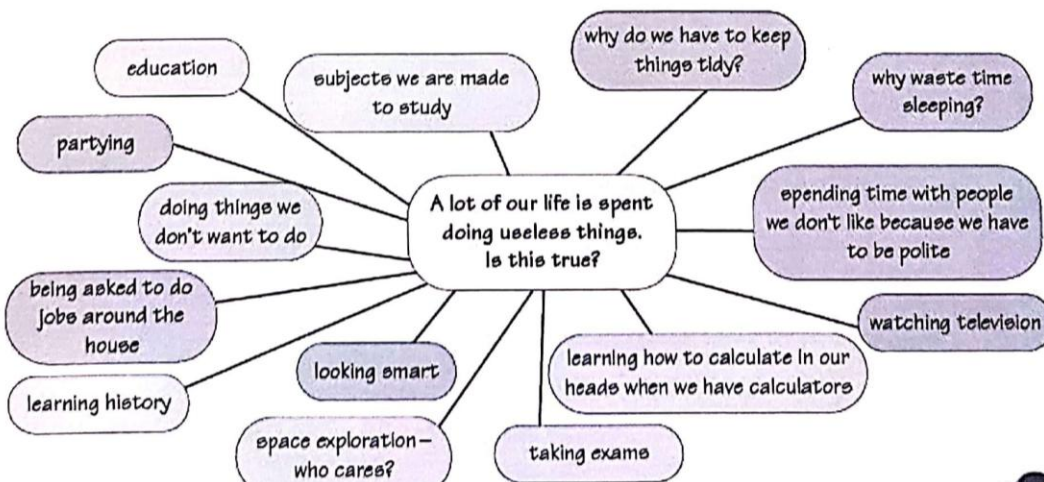
Practical ways to plan your writing

When writing in an examination, many students are so concerned about finishing in time that it is quite obvious they do not plan their work. This matters, because well-planned writing will almost always score more highly than writing that has not been planned. Whether you are doing a piece of writing in response to a text you have read (see Chapter 3) or a piece of continuous writing for a composition or coursework assignment (see Chapters 6 and 7), it is essential that you plan what you are going to write. There are various methods you can use. Spider diagrams and lists, as explained in the following pages, are two possibilities, but you may find another method that works best for you.

Spider diagrams

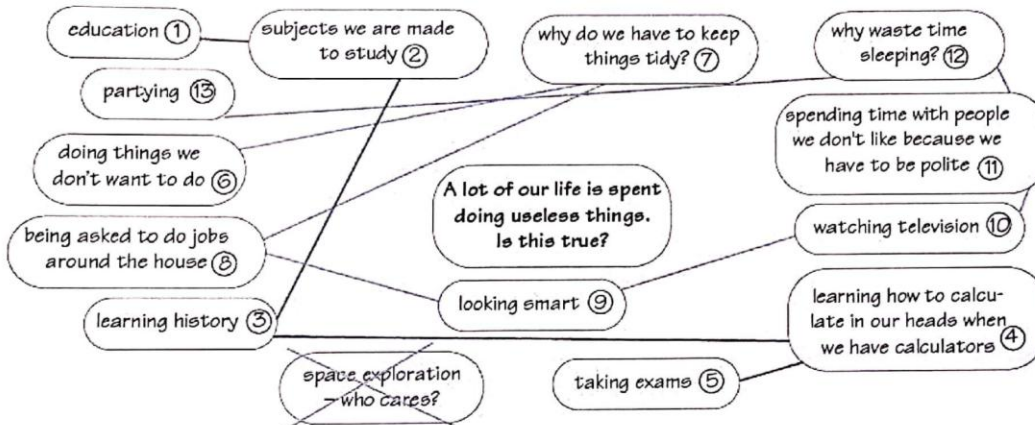
Stage 1

- Write your topic in the middle of the page and around it write down all the things that you might write about.
- At this stage, don't stop to think too much – just write down any relevant ideas that come to mind.



Stage 2

- The next stage is to decide if there are things that need to be discarded, and how to order the points that are being kept.
 - There are a number of points about education (linked by pink lines on the diagram below).
 - There are a number of points about personal life (linked by blue lines).
 - The idea about space exploration is probably going to be discarded.
- Then number the points to give them an order; each numbered point will be a paragraph or part of a paragraph in your composition.



Study tip

- 1 At this stage, don't be afraid to cross things out.
- 2 If you find that two of your ideas are closely linked, you should probably combine them.
- 3 Remember that it is not just a case of putting forward one side of the argument – the points being made need to be answered.

Stage 3

The order of the composition now looks like this:

A lot of our life is spent doing useless things. Is this true?

- Para 1 General statement about importance of education (1)
- Para 2 However – subjects we are made to study are a waste of time. (2)
Why learn history? (3) Why bother to learn to do calculations in our heads – calculators! (4)
- Para 3 Why do examinations in subjects which are of no importance? (5)
- Para 4 General statement about doing things we don't want to do (6)
- Para 5 Being pestered to keep our rooms tidy. (7) Doing jobs around the house we don't want to. (8) Being made to look smart when we want to be comfortable. (9)
- Para 6 We watch television when we can't think of anything else to do. (10)
We spend time with people we don't like (perhaps relatives) because we have to. (11)

Para 7 Why can't someone invent something which means we don't have to waste time sleeping? (12)

What we want to do is to party (13)

Para 8 Conclusion

What is important in life? What is unimportant?

This might not be how your plan would look in terms of content and ideas. However, it shows you how you might go about planning.

Why not take the topic title above and do your own plan? You could then go on to write the composition.

Lists

Instead of a spider diagram, you may prefer simply to put things down in a list. With this method, it's important to look carefully at the whole list again before you start to write.

- Don't be afraid to change the order of your points.
- Don't automatically think your first ideas are the best: check through the list and discard/replace some points if you have second thoughts.

However you choose to plan, the crucial point is this: **don't be afraid to spend time on planning!** If you have an hour to do a piece of writing, you should spend fifteen minutes planning it. One of the reasons people don't plan is because they panic about not having enough time. Look on the positive side: if you have a very clear plan in front of you, you don't have to waste time worrying about what to put next, so you will write much faster and more efficiently.