

Discursive Essay

Stage One: Preparation

Research: Ask your teacher, parents, friends, relatives what they know about the subject. The replies are likely to be opinions and must not be confused with evidence, except of varied opinions

Evidence: Sources of evidence can be newspaper, magazines, books, radio, television, school subjects, school or local library. Do not forget that there is nothing to prevent you writing to organizations such as C.N.D. and the U.K.A.E.A. for information.

Make notes: Keep your notes as brief as possible but make sure that you can understand them. You should also try to arrange them under headings so that information on the same aspect of a subject is in one place. Always identify the source of your information.

Read notes: Make sure that you understand the different points of view that are being put forward.

Think!!: Are you clear on the facts and opinions offered on your subject? What approach or point of view should you adopt? For? Balanced? Against? Exploratory? What is the best structure to adopt in order to present your point of view? Look at the sample

Remember that while the evidence for the Personal Review and the Literature Answers will come from the text (which must be known in great detail), the evidence for the report will come from the information printed whereas a Discursive piece for the Folio will require your own efforts.

Higher Discursive Writing

Stage Two – Writing

At this point the facts and opinions to be used, the stance to be adopted and the structure that will allow the best presentation should have been decided. However, some double checking will not be amiss.

If you are answering a Literature/Media (Paper I) question have you selected evidence that will answer the question set?

If you are writing a Report (Paper I) have you selected the most important evidence and arranged that evidence in the best order to fulfil the instructions in the Paper?

If you are writing for the Folio have you chosen the evidence that will allow you to structure the essay and to present a coherent stance throughout?

Structure: The basic structure of any piece of writing remains the same: Introduction, Development, Conclusion

Introduction: Introduce the topic by referring to the question or title, state the areas you intend to examine with a very brief general comment of any widely held points of view and, finally, your own point of view. Please remember that in Literature and Personal pieces you will be expected to show some personal response whereas in the Report you should be neutral and simply use the evidence/material presented in the Paper. Try to open with a sentence or statement that will catch the reader's attention. This may be done in several ways:

Provocative *It is difficult to see how anyone could approve / disapprove of...*

Balanced *.... Is a subject about which people hold strong views.*

Personal *I have always detested since I was physically sick while....*

Literary *Oscar Wilde once described fox-hunting as "the unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable...."*

Illustrative *On a glorious autumn morning, a terrified exhausted animal is savaged to death by a pack of barking dogs while a group of expensively dressed human encourage the dogs in their bloody work.*