

Task 4 – Extended writing: The advantages and disadvantages of using mobile phones

Level: ISE II

Focus: Task 4 – Extended writing

Aims: To write an essay on the advantages and disadvantages of using mobile phones and also give an opinion

Objectives: Planning an essay, writing an introduction, giving advantages and disadvantages, writing a conclusion and giving an opinion

Skill: Writing an essay in four paragraphs

Topic: Technology

Language functions: Highlighting advantages and disadvantages, and giving opinions, preferences and reasons

Lexis: Essay writing

Materials needed: Student worksheet

Timing: 1 hour

Preparation

Print or copy one worksheet per student.

In class

1. Tell the class they are going to do an activity which will help them prepare for ISE II Task 4 – Extended writing. For this part of the exam, they have to write an essay of between 150-180 words in 40 minutes.
2. Write 'Mobile Phones' on the board. Ask the class to think of one word which they think of when they see those words. Ask the students to whisper to their partner what that word is.
3. Ask 5-10 students for some words their partner thought of. Write some of the good examples on the board (eg 'great', 'convenient', 'essential', 'expensive', 'easy', 'fun', 'apps', 'friends', 'music').
4. Give each student a number from 1-4 (depending on class size – maximum six students per group). Now ask all number 1s to work together, all the number 2s to work together, all the number 3s and the number 4s to work together. Give them a few minutes to find their groups and ask them to sit in different parts of the room.
5. Give each student one worksheet and tell the groups of 1s and 3s they are going to work on advantages of mobile phones, and the groups of 2s and 4s that they are going to work on disadvantages of mobile phones. Ask students if they know the meaning of advantages (good or positive things), and disadvantages (bad or negative things). For 10 minutes, each group talks together and writes down their ideas under A on the worksheet. Ask them to write at least five advantages or disadvantages.
6. Now ask the groups to present their ideas to the class. Write down the ideas on the board under two columns: Advantages and Disadvantages.

Advantages	Disadvantages

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7. Ask the class which ideas they think are the best. Choose four good ideas for advantages and four for disadvantages. Leave only the good ideas on the board. Now ask the students to look at B on the worksheet, which introduces an essay question. Tell the students that this is a typical exam question.
8. Ask the students the following questions about essays:
 - ▶ *What is an essay?*
 - ▶ *What is the purpose of an essay?*
 - ▶ *Who do you write an essay for?*
 - ▶ *What types of language do you use in an essay?*

First ask the students to discuss the questions with their partner and then give feedback in open-class.

9. Explain to the class that before writing any essay, it is essential that they think carefully about the essay question for 10 minutes and write down any ideas they may have in note form. Ask them why they think this is important. (Answer: It gives them time to think about the topic and focus on the best ideas.)
10. Elicit from the students how many paragraphs they think is best for this type of essay. Explain that four paragraphs are appropriate for this type of essay and this is how it should be structured: paragraph 1 – an introduction, paragraph 2 – a paragraph on the advantages, paragraph 3 – a paragraph on the disadvantages and paragraph 4 – the conclusion. Ask the students to complete C on the worksheet and then give feedback in open-class.
11. Now ask the students to discuss with their partner what the purpose of the introduction is and what they should include. Elicit some ideas from the students. Then tell the students that in the introduction they should:
 - ▶ introduce the topic (for example: 'There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to using mobile phones ...')
 - ▶ then tell the audience what the purpose of the essay is (for example: 'In this essay I will discuss both the advantages and disadvantages of using mobile phones and finally I will give my opinion.').

Ask the students to complete D on the worksheet.

12. Draw the students' attention to some of the common expressions used to express the advantages or disadvantages of something. See E on the worksheet. Ask the students to place the expressions in the correct column. Ask students to complete the task individually and then give feedback in open-class.
13. Ask the students to discuss what they should include in paragraph 2 (the first paragraph of the main body). In paragraph 2, they should discuss the advantages (or disadvantages) of using a mobile phone. Elicit some ideas from the students. For example, 'One advantage of having a mobile phone is that you can contact anyone at any time. This has made life much easier because you can be more flexible and you can contact people at the last minute to change plans.' Ask the students to complete the first part of F on the worksheet.
14. Ask the students to discuss what they should include in paragraph 3 (the second paragraph of the main body). In paragraph 3, they should discuss the disadvantages (or advantages) of using a mobile phone. Elicit some ideas from the students. For example, 'One disadvantage of having a mobile phone is that you might become addicted to using it and you use it too much, so you stop talking to people and instead play games on your phone or use social media.' Ask the students to complete the second part of F on the worksheet.
15. Draw the students' attention to 'linking expressions' on the worksheet. Explain they are words or phrases used to connect or join language. For example, 'this is because...' Ask the student to complete G on the worksheet.
16. Finally, ask the students to discuss what they should include in paragraph 4 (the conclusion). The final paragraph should be a short conclusion. Elicit from the students what they should include. (For example: It should state both the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones and their opinion – 'In conclusion, there are both advantages and disadvantages to using a mobile phone. In my opinion the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and mobile phones are essential for our lives today – we could not live without them'.)
Draw the student's attention to key phrases such as 'in conclusion' and 'in my opinion'. The students should complete H on the worksheet. Give feedback in open-class.
17. Give students feedback on their writing and review the main focus of the lesson.

Extension activity

More advanced students can write down the advantages and disadvantages of something else.

Further support activity

Students finding the task difficult can practise writing the notes for longer, and writing fewer words.

Homework

Ask the students to write an essay (150-180 words) (four paragraphs) on the advantages and disadvantages of going to university.



Student worksheet: The advantages and disadvantages of using mobile phones

You are going to do an activity which will help you prepare for ISE II Task 4 – Extended writing. For this part of the exam you have to write an essay. The topic of the essay is mobile phones.

A. Introduction to the topic

- ▶ What is the first word you think of when you see the words 'mobile phones'?
- ▶ Tell your partner quietly what the word is. Tell your teacher what your partner's word is.
- ▶ Working with your group, think of some advantages (good things), or disadvantages (bad things), about mobile phones. Write down your best ideas.
- ▶ You should spend 10 minutes on this activity. Think of five or more ideas.

Ideas

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

B. An essay question

Look at the essay question below.

Write an essay (150–180 words) for the school magazine about the advantages and disadvantages of using mobile phones. Give your opinion about whether there are more advantages than disadvantages.

C. Overview of an essay (fill in the gaps)

An essay this length should have paragraphs

- An i
- A paragraph about
- A paragraph about
- A c

D. Writing the introduction

Paragraph 1

With your partner, discuss what the purpose of an introduction is and what it should include.

Write an introduction to an essay on mobile phones using the following model.

There are a number of and to in this essay. I will discuss both and give my opinion.

.....

.....

.....

E. Common expressions

Here are some expressions used for expressing advantages and disadvantages:

- ▶ A negative effect
- ▶ A good point
- ▶ The downside
- ▶ A drawback
- ▶ An objection
- ▶ A positive aspect
- ▶ An argument in favour of
- ▶ A negative aspect
- ▶ A criticism of

Decide which expressions can be used for advantages, and which ones are used for disadvantages. Write them in the box.

Advantages	Disadvantages

F. Main body paragraphs

Paragraph 2

In the next paragraph you should discuss the advantages of using mobile phones.

For example, 'One advantage of using a mobile phone is that you can contact anyone at any time. This has made life much easier because you can be more flexible and you can contact people at the last minute to change plans.'

Now write a paragraph about the advantages of using mobile phones. **Write three advantages.** Begin like this, 'One advantage of using a mobile phone is that...'. Try to use some of the expressions you learned in section E.

Paragraph 3

In the next paragraph you should discuss the disadvantages of using mobile phones. For example, 'One disadvantage of having a mobile phone is that you might become addicted to using it and you use it too much, so you stop talking to people and instead play games on your phone or use social media.'

Now you write a paragraph about the disadvantages of using mobile phones. **Write three disadvantages.** Begin like this 'One disadvantage of using a mobile phone is that...'. Try to use some of the expressions you learned in section E.

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G. Linking expressions

Now here are some linking expressions. What is a linking expression? What does 'link' mean? Decide together or look it up in a dictionary.

Link means

Here are some common linking expressions:

- ▶ A common example of this is when
- ▶ This is because
- ▶ In other words
- ▶ However
- ▶ So
- ▶ Therefore
- ▶ Another objection to (this) is that

Write three sentences explaining the advantages of using mobile phones with your best ideas. Use a common expression from the box on the previous page, and a linking expression from the box above. You have 10 minutes to do this.

Now write three sentences explaining the disadvantages of using mobile phones with your best ideas. Use a common expression from the box on the previous page, and a linking expression from the box above. You have 10 minutes to do this.

H. The conclusion

Paragraph 4

The final paragraph should be a short conclusion stating both the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones and giving your opinion.

For example: 'In conclusion there are both advantages and disadvantages to using mobile phones. In my opinion the advantages **outweigh** the disadvantages and they are essential for our lives today, we could not live without them.' What do you think **outweigh** means?

Now we are going to work on a conclusion to your essay. Begin like this: 'In conclusion, there are both advantages and disadvantages to using mobile phones. In my opinion...'

Answers: The advantages and disadvantages of using mobile phones

C. Overview of an essay

- A. An *introduction*
- B. A paragraph about *advantages*
- C. A paragraph about *disadvantages*
- D. A *conclusion*

D. Writing the introduction

There are a number of *advantages* and *disadvantages* to *consider* in this essay. I will discuss both and give my opinion.

E. Common expressions

Advantages:

A good point, a positive aspect, an argument in favour of

Disadvantages:

A negative effect, the downside, a drawback, an objection to, a negative aspect, a criticism of

Model essay

There are a number of advantages to using mobile phones. In this essay I will discuss both the advantages and the disadvantages and give my opinion.

An argument in favour of using mobile phones is that you can contact anyone at any time. A common example of this is when you are going to be late and you can tell people about it so they are not kept waiting. Another positive aspect is that we are all better informed as we can check the internet whenever we want.

On the other hand, there are various drawbacks of using mobile phones. One is that people can no longer have so much privacy, so, they may be busy with something important but their phone rings and disturbs everybody. A further objection is that people use them so much they become addicted, this is a problem.

In conclusion, there are both advantages and disadvantages to using mobile phones. In my opinion the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and they are absolutely vital for our lives today, we simply could not live without them.