

Answers to other types of questions that may appear in the Writing Section

Sample question for an informal letter

You should spend about 20 minutes on this question. Write your answer in the space provided on the answer sheet.

You have just moved to a new country to study or work for a year. Write to your best friend to invite them to visit. In your letter;

- invite your friend to visit you
- say why they should come to visit you
- ask them when they will come

Write about 150 words. You do not need to write any addresses, but you must use the correct salutation and sign-off for your letter.

This is an example of a good answer written by a student at the Externado University. This is a sample answer, and therefore may contain some mistakes. While the answer would pass the exam, it is not an example of perfect error-free English language.

Hi Juan!

I've just arrived in South Africa, and it is absolutely exhilarating. From the second I stepped off the plane I felt the warmth of the people and the brightness of the colors. Strangely it feels a lot like home, yet the differences are obvious which is why I came.

Culturally their traditions seem to be more alive than ours, which will help me to study the influence of their ancestors in the current social structures easier than at home. You would love to interact with the native tribes as well as with the urban people. The transportation is very good and efficient which you would adore. This a great place to study societies.

Do you think you can visit me sometime soon? I wish you could come during the summer so that we get to hang out. Please let me know if you can actually come.

I miss you lots, take care.

Kisses and Hugs

Lau

158 words

Sample question for a work email

You should spend about 20 minutes on this question. Write your answer in the space provided on the answer sheet.

You are a department manager working for a large multinational. You have a great idea how the company can make more profit.

Write an email to the Marketing Director for your country. In your email;

- describe your idea
- explain the key benefits
- seek approval to progress your idea further

Write about 150 words. You must use the correct salutation and sign-off for your email.

This is an example of a good answer written by a student at the Externado University. This is a sample answer, and therefore may contain some mistakes. While the answer would pass the exam, it is not an example of perfect error-free English language.

Mr. Smith,

In reply to your previous email, and after researching the Colombian Market, I am sending you this business proposal.

The research has shown that the best way to make more profit is through more aggressive marketing. The types of advertisements that have the best results in Colombia are TV commercials, supported by free samples in the supermarkets, as well as posters in mass transportation systems. The reason why these media work the best is because they make a better connection with the consumer.

The suggested options have been evaluated, highlighting the supermarket idea as both the cheapest and most effective. This has been concluded because it offers direct contact with the buyer, and it creates an almost sure sale. Therefore, increasing the levels of sales will translate into greater income and offer a larger net profit by the end of the term.

I believe this proposal meets your requirements, and await your approval to start drawing up a full campaign.

Kind regards,

164 words

Sample of an argumentative essay question

You should spend about 60 minutes on this question. Write your answer in the space provided on the answer sheet.

Many people believe that new technologies such as the mobile telephone have brought great benefits to our society. Other people think that some of these technologies have caused social problems.

Discuss both these views and give your own point of view.

You should write about 350 words. Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your knowledge or experience.

This is an example of a good answer written by a student at Externado University. This is a sample answer, and therefore may contain some mistakes. While the answer would pass the exam, it is not an example of perfect error-free English language.

Technology and its development has been a constant effort of humanity because of the firm conviction that it may improve people's life. The creation of medical devices such as bypass mechanisms and MRI machines have allowed huge advances in the treatment of otherwise deadly conditions such as cancer and cardiac pathologies. Nevertheless, technology has also been used with less than noble purposes. Currently, advances such as the cell phones, Instant Messaging, and online social networking offer both advantages and dangers that we should be aware of.

The main advantages that these technological advances offer are related to communication. Before the internet, email or instant messaging took over the world, long distance calls were expensive and the whole world seemed to be enormous. Keeping in touch is now very simple; an email takes no more than a minute to cross the world, and pictures can be shared with all your friends on networks such as Facebook. Additionally, there are programs that send you updates to your email account on the topics that are of your interest. Besides these advantages, you may talk for free on the internet through programs like Skype. On top of this, you can have all these benefits through a mobile phone with access to the internet no matter where you are or what you are doing.

Nevertheless, the reduction in the size of the world brings many risks closer to our homes. The internet on its own has hazards such as scams, viruses and identity theft. Inappropriate advertising and websites are easily found by children. Furthermore, the level of privacy is often very low which makes it hard for people to protect their identities. The internet gives absolute freedom of speech which makes it very hard to control. Moreover, one of the biggest issues is that people have not taken the time to

learn cell phone manners such as silencing it when going to the movies, the theatre or even church. Another problem is that young people don't leave their home to meet friends face to face, which increases sedentary behavior, and leads to obesity and other health problems.

In conclusion, technological advances have had both positive and negative effects on our behavior as social individuals. The advances and its consequences depend on regulation and education. It is necessary then to educate people on the proper use of technology; how to increase privacy settings, installing preventive software or encouraging outdoor activities. These are simple things that everyone can do with just a little information to fully take advantage of the new discoveries.

425 words

