

Writing Model Questions

Team work

Group projects are often part of studying at university. (Source: Oxford International)

In your experience, what are the pros and cons of working in groups when studying?

Model answer – band 8

In my opinion, working in groups is an essential part of studying at university. Many teachers encourage this type of learning because they believe it improves students' cooperation and motivation. From my own experience, it brings a lot of benefits, though it can also cause certain difficulties that are not easy to deal with.

One advantage of group work is that it gives students the chance to exchange ideas and develop their critical thinking. When people study together, they usually become more creative, as they are pushed to explain their thoughts to others. It also helps them to manage time more efficiently and to stay motivated when they would have given up if studying alone. I can remember one project where I was working with three classmates, and we managed to finish earlier than if we were doing it individually.

However, working in groups can also bring problems. Sometimes decisions take longer than it should, because everyone wants their opinion to be accepted. There can also appear conflicts about how to divide the work or who is responsible for which part. In addition, when one member doesn't respect deadlines, it might affect the whole group.

To conclude, I think group work is generally positive, but it requires good organisation and respect between members. If these aspects would be improved, studying in groups could become even more effective.

Digital detox

People sometimes decide not to use digital tools, like phones or apps, for a few days.
(Source: Oxford International)

In your experience, what are the advantages and disadvantages of taking a short break from digital technology?

Model answer – band 8

Nowadays, many people choose to stay away from digital tools for a few days. They feel that phones and social media take too much of their time and attention. I tried doing a short “digital detox” last year, and I realised that this experience can bring both advantages and disadvantages.

To start with, switching off from technology allows you to feel calmer and more concentrated. Without all the notifications and messages, your brain can rest and you can focus on what is happening around you. During my break, I spent more time outdoors and I felt I could actually enjoy small things again. Another positive aspect is that it strengthens relationships, because you speak face to face instead of just texting. In general, such a break makes you understand better how dependent you became on your devices.

Even so, there are also a few downsides. In modern life, we rely on technology for many practical things, so when you stop using it, daily routines might get complicated. For instance, I couldn't find the right bus schedule or contact my friends quickly. On top of that, when I went online again, I was overwhelmed with all the messages I had to reply, which somehow cancelled the peace I had before.

All in all, taking a short break from digital tools can be very refreshing, but it needs to be done wisely. If people don't prepare for it, the return to the online world might feel even more stressful than before.

Post vs email

The Danish post service has announced it will stop letter services at the end of the year. Instead, it will concentrate on its parcel business. (Source: bbc.com)

In your experience, what are the advantages and disadvantages of sending and receiving mail through the post instead of electronic mail?

Model answer – band 10

In recent years, traditional letter services have almost disappeared in many countries, replaced by electronic communication. Although digital messages are faster and cheaper, I still believe that sending and receiving physical mail has some unique values which are difficult to substitute entirely.

One of the main advantages of postal mail is its personal and emotional character. A handwritten letter often feels more genuine and thoughtful than an email typed in a hurry. The effort of writing, sealing and posting something gives the message a sense of importance that online communication rarely achieves. In addition, physical letters are tangible objects that can be kept as memories; for instance, many people still treasure postcards or old notes from friends and relatives.

Nevertheless, there are obvious disadvantages. Postal mail is slow and sometimes unreliable, especially for international correspondence. It also requires more resources — paper, transport, and time — which makes it less sustainable in the long term. In professional contexts, letters can hardly compete with the speed and efficiency of digital tools, which allow instant exchange of information. Besides, many people simply lost the habit of writing by hand, so their letters may not express themselves as fluently as online messages do.

To conclude, while electronic communication clearly dominates modern life, traditional mail still has emotional and cultural significance. It might never return to its previous importance, but it continues to remind us that communication is not only about speed, but also about meaning.

Daily Journal

Journaling or writing in a diary for just a few minutes every day can help turn it into a stress-relieving, sustainable habit. (Source: healthline.com)

What are the advantages and disadvantages of keeping a daily journal or diary? Discuss both sides and give your own opinion.

Model answer – band 7

Nowadays many people start writing a diary because they think it can help to reduce stress and understand their feelings better. I tried this activity a few times, and in my opinion it has some good effects but also a few disadvantages.

On the positive side, keeping a journal can make your mind more calm. When you write what happen during the day, you can think more clearly and see things from different side. It also help to remember nice moments and see how you changed during time. Another advantage is that writing a diary in English or another language can practise your writing, which is good for students.

However, there are also some bad sides. Writing every day can be boring or feel like a duty if you don't have time. Some people start with energy but stop after a week because they lose motivation. In addition, it is not always safe to write private things, since somebody could read them by accident.

To sum up, I think journaling is helpful for many people, but not for everyone. It should stay something personal and enjoyable. If it becomes another task to do, then it doesn't really help with stress anymore.

Keeping clothes

Some people prefer to keep their clothes for a long time and take them for repairs when they are damaged. (Source: The Guardian)

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of keeping old, well-worn clothes instead of buying new ones? Discuss both sides and give your opinion.

Model answer – band 7

These days, many people try to buy less clothes and keep their old ones for longer. Others think it is better to buy new items more often to look modern and feel comfortable. In my view, both choices have some advantages and disadvantages.

One benefit of keeping old clothes is that it is better for the environment. If we repair or reuse what we already have, we produce less waste and save natural resources. It also helps to save money, because repairing something is usually cheaper than buying it again. Another positive point is that some clothes have special memories, so people don't want to throw them away even if they are a bit old. Wearing them can make you feel more yourself and not just follow fashion.

On the other hand, there are reasons why people prefer new clothes. Sometimes old ones don't fit anymore or don't look nice, so people feel less confident wearing them. In addition, repairing clothes can take time and effort, and not everyone has the skills or patience to do it. New clothes are easier to find and often more practical for work or social events.

In conclusion, I think it is good to keep clothes as long as possible, but not in every situation. If they are still comfortable and clean, there is no need to replace them just for style.

Strict routines

Many people like to follow a strict routine every day and are not comfortable changing these habits. (Source: LA Times)

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of following the same daily routine? Discuss both sides and give your opinion.

Model answer – band 11

Many people find comfort in following a strict daily routine, repeating the same activities at roughly the same time each day. While some see this as a sign of discipline and stability, others argue that it limits creativity and spontaneity. In my opinion, routines can be extremely beneficial, but only when they leave space for flexibility and personal growth.

One major advantage of keeping a regular routine is that it provides a sense of structure and control. When individuals know what to expect, they can plan their time more efficiently and reduce unnecessary stress. A predictable schedule can also support healthier habits: people who exercise, eat, or sleep at fixed hours are often more consistent in the long term. Moreover, routines help to avoid decision fatigue — not having to think about every small choice saves mental energy for more meaningful tasks.

However, following the same pattern day after day can also become restrictive. Without variation, life may start to feel repetitive or even meaningless. When people refuse to change their habits, they risk missing new opportunities or experiences that could broaden their perspective. In extreme cases, a rigid routine might even increase anxiety, because any unexpected event feels like a threat to one's order.

To conclude, a daily routine can bring stability and efficiency, but it should not become a cage. The ideal balance is a structure that guides life — not one that controls it.

Time alone

Some people enjoy spending time by themselves, while others prefer doing things with other people. (Source: Oxford International)

In your experience, what are the pros and cons of spending time alone?

Model answer – band 11

In today's fast-paced and highly connected world, choosing to spend time alone can seem unusual. However, from my own experience, periods of solitude are not only necessary but also deeply rewarding. While I see many advantages in being by myself, I also recognise that too much isolation can have its downsides.

Personally, I value time alone because it helps me slow down and think more clearly. When I take a walk without my phone or sit quietly at home, I often find that new ideas come more easily. Solitude gives me space to reflect on recent events and to notice how I actually feel, something that constant social activity doesn't always allow. I've also noticed that I concentrate better when I study or work alone; distractions disappear, and I get more done in less time.

That said, spending too much time by myself sometimes makes me feel cut off from others. There are moments when I miss spontaneous conversations or the energy that comes from being around people. After a few quiet days, I can even start overthinking small issues that wouldn't bother me otherwise. In that sense, solitude needs balance — it works best when I know I'll reconnect soon after.

Overall, spending time alone helps me regain energy and understand myself better, but it's equally important not to drift too far from social life. For me, the key is alternating both: silence to reflect, and company to stay grounded.

Pet presents

According to a recent survey, 59% of people said they'd given their pet a birthday present, with the average spend for birthday parties being £121. (Source: independent.co.uk)

Should people spend money to celebrate their pets' birthdays or is it just a waste of money? Discuss both sides of the argument and conclude with your own opinion.

Model answer – band 9

In recent years, many pet owners started to celebrate their animals' birthdays, often spending surprising amounts of money on gifts or even parties. Some people see this as a lovely way to show affection, while others think it's unnecessary and a bit too much. Personally, I can understand both opinions, although I believe the value depends on how and why people do it.

On the positive side, celebrating a pet's birthday can makes owners feel happy and more connected with their animals. Pets are often seen as part of the family, so giving them a small treat or toy seems natural. I've done it myself for my dog — nothing big, just a new ball and some extra snacks — and it made me realise how much joy small gestures brings. These celebrations also helps friends or family to come together and creates a cheerful atmosphere at home.

However, spending large sums on pets might not make much sense. Animals don't really understand birthdays, so big parties or expensive gifts are mainly for the owners. For some people, this money could been used in more useful ways, for example to donate for an animal shelter or to help someone in need. Besides, social media sometimes make people buy things they don't really need just to post nice photos.

To conclude, celebrating a pet's birthday isn't necessarily a waste, but it should stays reasonable. Showing love doesn't have to mean spending a fortune — attention and care are worth much more.

4-day week

“Almost 1,000 UK workers are keeping the shorter work week after trials showed less burnout, better well-being, and no loss in productivity.” (Source: theguardian.com)

In your opinion, what are some advantages and disadvantages of having a four-day work week? Discuss both sides and use what you’ve seen or know to support your own opinion.

Model answer – band 7

In my opinion, a four-day work week has both good and bad sides. I've read about companies that tried it, and from what I saw, it can make people more relaxed and motivated, but it also brings some problems.

One big advantage is that workers have more time for their personal life. If people have an extra day off, they can rest, spend time with family, or do hobbies they usually don't have time for. I think this helps them come back to work with more energy and focus. It can also reduce stress and burnout, which are quite common now. Another positive thing is that shorter weeks might be better for the environment, because people travel less to work.

On the other hand, some businesses might find it hard to keep same level of productivity. Not all jobs can be done in fewer days — for example, health services or shops that must open every day. Also, if workers still have to do the same amount of work in less time, they could feel more pressure.

To sum up, a four-day week can be great for well-being and work-life balance, but it doesn't suits every kind of job. In my view, companies should test it first before deciding if it really works.

Part-time jobs

“Some people think part-time jobs are good because they help teenagers learn life skills, like talking to new people and being responsible. However, part-time jobs can take time away from studying” (Source: The Guardian)

What are the advantages and disadvantages of working while studying? Use your own experience to explain.

Model answer – band 8

any students choose to work part-time while studying, and I did the same during my last year of school. In my opinion, this experience have clear benefits, but also some disadvantages that should be think about carefully.

One of the main advantages is that working helps teenagers to become more independent. When I worked in a café, I was learning how to communicate with customers, manage my time, and take responsibility when something goes wrong. These are skills that school doesn't always teach us. Earning even a small amount of money can gives students a feeling of confidence and freedom, which I found very motivating at that time.

However, part-time jobs can sometimes makes studying harder. When I was working weekends, I often felt too tired to focus good enough on my homework. If students take too many shifts, their grades might start to fall and stress can increase quickly. Moreover, not every job offer real learning opportunities — some are repetitive or badly paid, which can be quite discouraging.

In conclusion, working while studying can be very useful if it's managed in a balanced way. From my experience, part-time work teach valuable lessons about responsibility and teamwork, but it's important not letting it take over academic priorities. Finding that balance isn't always easy, but it's definitely worth trying.

Second Language

“Learning a second language gives young people more chances for good jobs and helps them in a global world. If fewer students study languages, schools will offer fewer choices, and it will be harder to find language teachers in the future” (Source: The Guardian)

What are the pros and cons of learning a second language? Use what you’ve seen or know to explain.

Model answer – band 12

Learning a second language has long been considered a valuable skill, but in an increasingly digital world, some people question whether it’s still essential. From what I’ve seen, speaking another language offers enormous advantages, although there are a few challenges that shouldn’t be ignored.

To begin with, a new language expands both professional and personal horizons. In my own case, learning Spanish opened doors to internships abroad and helped me connect with people whose culture I might never have understood otherwise. Beyond career benefits, bilingualism seems to change the way we think — it encourages flexibility and empathy, since we’re constantly moving between different perspectives. There’s also strong evidence that language learning improves memory and problem-solving skills, something I’ve definitely noticed when juggling tasks in daily life.

On the other hand, mastering a second language requires time, patience, and often money. Many students give up halfway because progress feels slow, especially if they don’t have real opportunities to practise. In some education systems, languages are taught mainly for exams, which can make the process mechanical and uninspiring. Another issue is that, as fewer young people study languages, schools struggle to hire qualified teachers, which in turn reduces quality even further.

Overall, despite the difficulties, I firmly believe learning another language is never wasted effort. It doesn’t just give access to better jobs — it opens the mind, making the world feel both bigger and closer at the same time.

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