



# Writing

## 6. Using the Right Grammar, Vocabulary and Style

Now that you have selected and organised your content you can focus on the actual writing. This involves using the right grammar and vocabulary for each of the sections of the essay —that is, the introduction, body and conclusion —as well as making sure that the overall style is appropriate.

### 6.1 Grammar

No matter how good your ideas or your outlining skills are, if you do not have sufficient control of correct English you cannot communicate your brilliance. As we said at the beginning, the basic criterion for assessment is your command of English, not the contents. Grammar is the infrastructure of your writing, and if that is weak, then a clever superstructure of ideas will simply make the whole essay collapse.

The most important preparation you can make for your test essay, therefore, is to ensure that you have a good grasp of the essentials:

- the tenses**
- the use of the passive**
- correct use of parts of speech**
- correct clause structure (with subjects and finite verbs)**

Although many people worry about the correct use of the article and of prepositions, these are less important than the aspects mentioned above. They are more difficult to master and errors are less disturbing because they usually do not interfere with understanding of meaning. That does not mean that you should ignore them, but make sure you have your priorities right!

A sentence like this:

# *The develop of cheap alternative energy sources will probably be succeeded in future*  
is much worse than:

# *Development of cheap alternative energy source will probably succeed for the future.*  
(The correct sentence would of course be: *The development of a cheap alternative energy source will probably succeed in future.*)

## TASK 18      DIAGNOSTIC GRAMMAR TEST

Try to identify the errors in the following text. The Answer Key will let you know which aspects of grammar you may need to study more.

1. *Computers are an essential part of our lives. Because all aspects of modern society are affected by them. Before we had computers all transactions involved storing and retrieving information were very time-consuming and labour-intensive.*
2. *The develop of personal computers in particular effect on people's lives because small businesses can easy afford them and this makes their work more efficiency.*
3. *Now anyone who study at university need to learn how to use computer. Most lecturer expect that essay are typed and in many subject calculation and other task must also be done by computer.*
4. *In recent years software packages became easier to use and so many people who think before that they are too old to learn had actually been able to learn to do simple word processing.*
5. *Schools as well as colleges are provided computer courses in developed countries, but it is needed a big investment for such equipment to make available to many students and most schools in developing countries cannot afford this.*
6. *We could not know what future developments there would be in this area but most people think that computers would be even more wide-spread in the coming years.*

➡ Answer Key

## 6.2 Vocabulary

While grammar is one leg, vocabulary is the second leg for your writing to stand on. But note that **simple, correct** English is better than experimenting with sophisticated vocabulary and getting it wrong! You may try out unfamiliar vocabulary if you have a helpful teacher, but not during a test! There are certain words and phrases that you can make a special point of learning carefully because they are likely to be used in most, if not all essays. Make sure that you have enough vocabulary for each of the common categories:

<b>Evaluation</b>	(e.g. benefit, unsatisfactory)
<b>Consequence, cause, reason</b>	(e.g. outcome, produce, explanation)
<b>modifiers</b>	(e.g. significant, majority)
<b>connectors</b>	(under these circumstances, moreover)
<b>grouping nouns</b>	(aspect, factor, feature)

The best way to learn these is to look for examples in your reading and then copy them into your own personal vocabulary book under the appropriate headings. Be careful to copy **whole phrases**, not just single words, so that you learn the **correct use** of the expressions.

The correct use of a word involves knowing:

- the exact meaning
- the words that go with it
- the grammatical features

For example:

*cause* and *reason* do not mean the same  
*reason* is followed by *for*, while *cause* is followed by *of*  
 you *give* a reason, and you generally *show* a cause.  
*due to* is a preposition, and is followed by a noun or gerund, not a noun clause.

In other words, vocabulary and grammar go together. It is not enough to understand the meaning of a word, approximately, when you are writing. It is essential to learn the accurate usage as well.