

Opinion Essays

- 1 What are your views on the question, "Should people convicted of minor crimes do community service rather than go to prison?"
- 2  Read the viewpoints and reasons mentioned in the table below, then listen to the cassette and match each of the viewpoints with the appropriate reason. Then, identify which aspects of the Discussion Clock on p. 59 the points relate to. Finally, using the notes, give a one-minute talk on the subject, using words from the following list.

I firmly believe *For example/instance* *Finally*
The reason for this *Furthermore*
In addition *Because*

VIEWPOINTS	REASONS
1 Community service saves taxpayers' money	a Punishment includes providing care for the aged, maintaining parks, etc
2 Benefits other members of the community directly	b They keep their jobs, live at home with their families, etc
3 Prison turns minor offenders into hardened criminals	c Prisons are expensive to run, while community service costs little
4 Minor offenders doing community service remain part of normal society	d To survive prison life, they must become like other prisoners

An opinion essay is a formal piece of writing. It requires your opinion on a topic, which must be stated clearly, giving various viewpoints on the topic supported by reasons and/or examples. You should also include the opposing viewpoint in another paragraph.

A successful opinion essay should have:

- a) an **introductory paragraph** in which you state the topic and your opinion.
- b) a **main body** which consists of several paragraphs, each presenting a separate viewpoint supported by reasons. You also include a paragraph presenting the opposing viewpoint and reason why you think it is an unconvincing viewpoint; and
- c) a **conclusion** in which you restate your opinion using different words.

Points to consider

- Decide whether you agree or disagree with the subject of the topic, then make a list of your viewpoints and reasons.
- Write well-developed paragraphs, joining the sentences with appropriate linking words and phrases. Do not forget to start each paragraph with a topic sentence which summarises what the paragraph is about.
- Linking words and phrases should also be used to join one paragraph with the other.
- Apply techniques presented on p. 56 to begin and end your essay.

Introduction

Paragraph 1

state the topic and your opinion clearly

Main Body

Paragraph 2

viewpoint 1 & reason/example

Paragraph 3

viewpoint 2 & reason/example

Paragraph 4

viewpoint 3 & reason/example*

Paragraph 5

opposing viewpoint & reason/example*

Conclusion

Final Paragraph

summarise/restate opinion

* You may include more viewpoints, and thus more paragraphs in the main body.