

# Jazyková kompetence I Session III

## Essay Writing: The Basics

### I. What does a good essay need?

*Complete the gaps with suitable words.*

An academic essay aims to persuade readers of an idea based on evidence.

- An academic essay should answer .....
- It should have .....
- It should try to present or discuss something: develop a thesis via .....

### II. Essay types

*1. Answer the questions, giving reasons in each case.*

- Some people believe more women should be encouraged to study subjects such as engineering. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- What do you think about technology in education? What are the pros and cons?
- Why do you think some children dislike school and leave as early as possible? How could this problem be reduced?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of going to university? Do you think it is a good idea overall?

*2. Match the type of essay below with a definition and sample question a-d.*

**Theory-based essay**

**Contrasting viewpoints essay**

**Evaluation and opinion essay**

**Problem-solving essay**

- suggest solutions or evaluate solutions to a problem  
*Some young people find school difficult and leave early without any qualifications. What causes this problem and what measures could help reduce it?*
- present ideas about an issue, discussing possible causes and effects  
*Many more men than women choose to study maths and engineering. Why is this? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.*
- discuss different views and reach your own conclusion  
*Students are relying more and more upon technology and the internet to study. Some people see this as a benefit; others believe students are losing their ability to think for themselves.  
Discuss both points of view and give your own opinion.*
- evaluate a statement and justify your own opinion on the topic  
*University education should only be offered to the most academic students, not a large majority. To what extent do you agree?*

3. The box below contains key words from the previous exercise. Complete the table by putting nouns from the box in the correct category.

advantage    attitude    disagreement    drawback    effect    methods    point of view  
 procedures    reasons    roots    steps    pitfalls

measures	opinion	benefit	causes

4. Match the word categories above with the essay types. There may be more than one possible answer.

5. Complete the introductions for essays. Use the correct form of words from the table in 4. There may be more than one possible answer.

a) There are many ..... why some children leave full-time education too early to benefit them; it is therefore important to take ..... to prevent this damaging behaviour.

b) There is no doubt that people have differing ..... about who should have access to university education. According to many, it is important that the most able students go.

c) Men tend to outnumber women in maths and engineering courses for a number of ..... These vary from social expectations to personal preferences but the ..... is the same: fewer females choose particular subjects to study.

### III. Introduction

An essay introduction offers the reader an overview of the whole essay. It usually includes the following:

- a *statement* or 'hook' to gain the reader's interest;
- *contextualizing material* providing relevant background information;
- the *topic* and *focus* of the essay;
- the *rationale*, or reason, for writing the essay;
- an indication of the essay's *organisation*.

It may also be necessary to define any central concepts. The introduction moves from general to specific information. By the end, the reader should be clear about what the essay is going to focus on, why and how. This specific information is typically expressed in the *thesis statement*.

***In the introduction below, identify individual features described above.***

In the recent years the use of social networking has grown beyond recognition, bringing a new set of concerns with it. Most young people now text regularly and are familiar with a variety of other platforms used for communication, such as FaceTime and instant messaging. It has never been easier to keep in touch with family and friends whenever they are in the world. Despite this, however, there is evidence that social isolation is rising and not decreasing. I therefore agree that rather than helping people to communicate, technology has actually weakened social bonds. I will attempt to outline some key reasons for this.

***Write an introduction to an essay on this topic:***

***Some people believe that university education should only be offered to those who can pay for their own courses and the government should not be expected to fund higher education. To what extent do you agree?***

(adapted from Dimond-Bayir, S. (2014). *Writing for IELTS*. Macmillan.)