

Learn how to write an opinion essay.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and tips and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Information will soon be so easy to find on the internet that people will not need to remember anything. Do you agree?

Tick the four ideas that are most relevant to this question.

- You can find information about everything on the internet.
- Not everyone has access to the internet all the time.
- Internet banking is very popular now.
- People use the internet to commit crimes.
- It is quicker to remember something than to look it up online.
- Not everything you read on the internet is true.
- The internet is an important tool for marketing.

Reading text: An opinion essay

Information will soon be so easy to find on the internet that people will not need to remember anything. Do you agree?

Nowadays all the information we could ever need is available online and some people say that means the end of having to learn anything.

It is true that these days everything you want to know is a few clicks away as long as you have internet access. However, not everyone has working internet all the time, for example in certain buildings or remote locations, so we do need to be able to remember information. Moreover, it takes time to look up everything you need to know online, whereas remembering something is immediate. The human memory is a much more efficient system.

Another problem is the quality of the information online. How do we know if it is accurate or reliable? We need to think about other facts we know and remember how to compare information from different websites. Knowing (and remembering) how to find certain information will be more important than knowing the information itself.

Finally, the internet is a good tool but it is not a useful replacement for our brains. If we did not remember anything, we would all spend even more time on our phones and computers than we already do, which is not good for society.

In conclusion, the internet offers us many things but it is still important to use our knowledge and memories. We need our memories to function without the internet and we also need to know how to use the internet properly.

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Tips

1. Read the question carefully. Respond to all ideas in it or all parts of it.
2. Plan your ideas first and then choose the best ones.
3. Introduce your essay by restating the question in your own words.
4. Show understanding of both sides of the argument.
5. Use linking words to connect your ideas.
6. Draw your conclusion from the main ideas in your essay. Don't introduce new ideas at the end.

Tasks

Task 1

Write a number (1–5) to put the essay paragraphs in order.

- _____ Main point – the advantages of using memory over searching online
- _____ Main point – the negative social effects of internet use
- _____ Introduction – an explanation of the essay question in other words
- _____ Conclusion – the internet cannot replace memory
- _____ Main point – the difficulty of finding good quality information online

Task 2

Write the linking words and phrases in the correct group.

To sum up	On the other hand	However
What's more	Moreover	As well as
Whereas	Finally	In conclusion

Contrasting	Adding ideas	Finishing

Task 3

Complete the sentences.

other hand	Moreover	Finally
Nowadays	However	whereas
more	conclusion	As well as

- , people are living longer and staying active until later in their lives.
- Most people agree that living longer is a good thing. , an ageing population presents some challenges for society.
- In the past, people lived on average 14 years past retirement age, now they can expect to live 30.
- People's retirement savings have to last longer. , there may be little or no support available from a state pension.
- On the , many companies can benefit from the experience and expertise of older workers. What's , many retired people say they enjoy working occasionally on one-off projects.
- contributing to the workplace, older members of society can spend valuable time with their children and grandchildren.

7. , caring for the elderly is also an issue. Financial and practical support should be available to help people look after their loved ones.
8. In , living longer can bring many opportunities but also some challenges. People need to plan for the future and the government should provide financial and practical support for people's retirement and medical care.

Discussion

What do you think about the question? Would it be better or worse if we never learned anything and just used the internet instead?