

Writing Tasks

Each essay need not exceed 350 words as in the Matsec syllabus but must provide a clear introduction, body and conclusion. Start each sentence or paragraph with a connecting idea from the previous ones and make use of connectives or linking words such as 'further to this situation', 'moreover', 'on the other hand', 'alternatively', 'first of all', 'secondly', 'finally' and so on. Avoid casual or abbreviated vocabulary unless it is used in direct speech and keep the reader interested by avoiding long and unnecessary narration.

Be sure to conclude your work with a summing up of your work or an appreciation of the essay title, showing that you have understood and fulfilled the examiner's request in all key words provided in the title that, after all, is there to invite and guide you to write your possible best.

It is recommended that students attempt at least three of the following essays over the holidays:

1. The best things about being a Fourth Form student and my advice to future Form Four students.

In this essay, the answer needs a clear division between what has happened to you and what you and your friends have experienced in Form 4 – as well as what you would advise any prospective fourth form students to appreciate, look out for, avoid or enjoy. Thus, two time aspects will be referred to and the various tenses need to be employed. Remember that for regular activities, the present tense needs to be used and not necessarily the future or the past. Decide from the start whether you are going to adopt the first person throughout the essay or switch to third person – as in '..... it depends on a student to decide at the outset whether he or she is going to make the most of their form four year or not ... ' Remember to include personal experiences without undue exaggeration.

2. A day in the life of a parent.

Note all the key words here. It is one day – 24 hours and it is one parent as they see it and describe a typical or actual day; or as you (the writer) discover by watching, asking questions or giving an informal interview. Do not just list activities or jobs. Find out how the parent feels about, for instance, driving to work and looking for a parking place, making the time to fit in a work schedule along with business lunches or meetings, cooking, cleaning, going to the gym, meeting clients and work, as well as home targets.

3. **'What does not kill us makes us stronger' – Learning valuable lessons from unpleasant experiences.**

This is a saying that is used to describe how we can learn from challenging events that various people experience throughout the drama of life. It is an opportunity to describe either one or more of these experiences – however awful or life-changing and describe the one positive thing that has come out of the character building event. It is possible that while you reflect on that dreadful experience, you realize that in fact you did get something out of it, or that telling others about it may help them not to encounter such future difficulties and that is how the 'positive strength from the negative experience' has come about.

4. **Practical ways to protect the planet – what can I do about it.**

This essay is not intended only for those students who take Geography or Environmental Studies. We all inhabit this planet and we all leave our own carbon footprint. Each of us can leave a positive effect or otherwise on our world. What are your suggestions or ideas on this and how much are you aware of what is being done globally to protect the planet?

5. **Taking pride in my choice of studies, enjoying school life and looking forward to the next stage in my life plans.**

What do you enjoy doing most? What are you good at? How have these considerations contributed to your choice of subjects? Did you choose sports options or dance or drama or FCS? Do you hope to continue to pursue these subjects? Do you enjoy practical work in the labs and also intend to continue to study the sciences? What are your future plans and how do you intend to achieve your goals? This is an essay where you can reflect on your future and describe your aims and achievements so far as well as your plans.

6. **Diary entries for seven days.**

This could be a factual or fictional piece of writing. It could be your own diary but you could be a famous or fictional character. The style of diary entries is different to writing an essay. You can enter planned appointments for the day as well as what has taken place on that date. The week is meant to be consecutive so that it covers a weekend. Be sure to describe or not the person you have chosen to be, even if it is yourself. Each entry may vary in length and the total must not be too brief or exceed the word limit.

7. **Report: an accident in a discotheque.**

This is a style of writing that gives descriptions similar to lab reports and makes use of the present perfect as well as the past perfect to distinguish between two events and which happened first. The past perfect is often described as the past in the past. Example – When Peter arrived at the party, all of us had already left.

8. A personal review on a recent book that I have read.

It is essential that this is your own review and not one that you have read on the Net. This should be written in the present tense. Describe particular excerpts that you enjoyed or did not. Would you have concluded the story in a different manner? Do you feel that all the characters are well portrayed and described? What would be another good title for the book? What else do you know about the author and how does this book rate amongst his or her other works?

Grammar

Revise the units covered this year from '**English Grammar in Use**' and work out at least one exercise from each unit to ensure a full understanding of the unit.

Over the summer months it is **FUNDAMENTAL** that students **READ** a minimum of **THREE** novels. Any genre is acceptable.

It is important to encourage students to read the newspapers on a regular basis to keep up to date with current events to improve their writing skills.

Literature

Revise the whole tragedy of '**Macbeth**' via class notes, handouts and York notes, focusing on the main character and themes. Study key Scenes and Speeches.

Go over all poems covered this year, with special reference to the figures of speech. It will help enormously if research on the poet and poem is carried out too.

'**Animal Farm**' – Read the book again. Along with the main themes and characters of the fable, keep the political parallel constantly in mind. Follow the notes on text book or handouts and answer some of the questions given on each chapter. Make good use of **ALL** notes including York notes.