

## Expressing a strong opinion in a short form (200-300 words)

Whether you are asked to write an email, an informal letter or a contribution to an internet chat room debate, your basic task will usually be to express an opinion on a certain subject.

This kind of task requires you:

- to express a strong and clear opinion
- to write concisely
- to be direct and get to the point quickly
- to offer logical and justifiable reasoning to support your opinion

### **Introduction**

- 1) Use a **short opening sentence** as a way of leading in to the task and/or the topic. If you are writing an email, for example, this could be a sentence like:
  - *Thanks for your last email about...*
  - *Thanks for the information you sent me on ...*
  - *I was sorry to hear about your concerns about ...*
- 2) It is advisable to **avoid dealing in detail with points you both agree and disagree with** in this type of task. Producing a balanced argument is not part of the task of writing a short expression of opinion. However, a useful technique is to use some of the arguments which oppose your point of view as a way of introducing your opinion on a subject (see the 'Buy Nothing Day' task for an example of this)
- 3) End your introduction by **stating your opinion clearly**.

### **Paragraphs**

- 1) Each body paragraph should be based on **one main point** which supports your opinion and should consist of as many supporting sentences as possible which prove your point.
- 2) Each paragraph should be developed with **specific, clear details**. The easiest way to add detail to paragraphs is to describe a specific example you know well, which could be based on a personal experience or a news event.
- 3) One of the difficulties students have with this type of task is that they try to deal with too many major points. If you are only allowed to write 200 words, you can't deal with all aspects of a subject, so don't try to. **Simply choose one (or two) idea(s) you feel strongly about and focus on developing them.**

### **Conclusion**

Your conclusion should **restate your opinion**. If you have disagreed with or criticised something, it is also a good idea to **suggest something better**, so that you leave the reader feeling positive about your opinion.

### Planning a short expression of opinion

You are not ready to start writing until you have a plan. The plan is essential because you need something to follow. But that's not all - if somebody gave you a plan, you would not be able to write a good essay from their plan because you need to go through a *framing process* in order to write a good essay. Imagine trying to find your way around a new town without a map. You need a map to examine before you go, so you can build a mental representation of the place. After this *framing process* you are ready to see the sights.

### Steps

- 1) **Write your title** down.  
e.g. "*Wikihow should not be editable*". *How far do you agree?*
- 2) **Decide on your paragraphs** - these come from your title. You must have an introduction and a conclusion. You need one or two body paragraphs.  
- e.g. *Vandalism, Range of Subjects, Rules and regulating*
- 3) **Start thinking**. Find main ideas to put in your middle paragraph(s). Each paragraph should be based on one main idea and expressed in a topic sentence.
- 4) **Back up your main ideas**. For each point you write you need to find evidence to prove it. This could be a quote, an example, statistics, testimony, the results of a survey etc.
- 5) **Write your introduction**. Just a few key points for the plan. Make sure you don't try to put too much in the introduction, but do **make sure you state your opinion**.
- 6) **Write the concluding points**. Make sure you tie up everything nicely and that you've answered the question.
- 7) **Write links** between the paragraphs. The best pieces of writing will link between the paragraphs so it all flows smoothly. Often this is quite difficult and sometimes you might just have to move abruptly to a new topic but avoid this as much as possible.
- 8) **Write your email**. Try to stick to your plan but be flexible enough to adapt it if you need to.