PREFACE

We have put together this collection of essays for students sitting for their 'O' Level examinations.

The essays have been classified into different types of writing styles to allow for easy reference. The compositions are written by caring individuals who have endeavoured to write at the level of 'O' Level students.

To help students get the best out of these essays, we begin with 'Brainstorm' on how each essay could be tackled. At the end of the essay we also have 'Essay Analysis' on why the essay is well written, revealing the techniques and skills of penning good essays.

Using this book as a guide, we hope that students will do well to master the art of writing. Once mastered, this skill will serve them throughout their education and beyond as well.

To all students, we hope this book is helpful. Good writing!

The Publisher

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4. Write a story: ‘I had practiced saying it a hundred times, but when the moment came, I just couldn’t open my mouth!’

5. Describe a time when efforts to please someone ended in failure.

6. Looking back over the past year, what event or experience do you remember most clearly, and why?

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You arrived early at school one day. You were the first person to enter your classroom. You saw immediately that during the night serious damage had been done.
Write a short composition describing what you saw and what action was taken to discover who caused the damage. You might find the following notes helpful:
• broken furniture • damaged walls • books torn • litter on floor • enquiries made

(2) Letters and Speeches

(1) Reports and Articles

2. A young man riding a motor cycle crashed in a busy shopping area. He accused a student of causing the accident. You witnessed the event, seeing the following:
• group of students • laughter and argument • girl stepped into the road
• fast motor cycle • loss of control • crash • injuries • ambulance called
Write your account of the incident, making it clear that the student was not to blame.

3. Your school asked for volunteers to entertain, for a day, a small group of young people from another country. You were one of those chosen. Write an account of what you did, considering some or all of the following points:
• tour of the school • surrounding area • local activities
• meeting friends and family • food
Did your guests enjoy themselves?

4. Write a report suitable for publication in a newspaper based on the questions set out below: The Hero’s Welcome
A close relative who risked his life to save a friend, returned home from abroad. You arranged a special welcome for this hero.
• Where did he arrive? • How was he welcomed?
• Who made speeches and what was said? • What else was done to honour him?
• How did he respond to the occasion?
You must cover all five points in detail.
5. You observe a person standing at a busy street corner offering hand-made articles for sale. Many people stop to look; few buy.
   • What is being sold? • How is the seller encouraging people to buy?
   • What kinds of people are spending money? • Why are sales infrequent?
   • How could the seller have more success?

Write an article for your school magazine or local newspaper on the activity described above. Use continuous English and appropriate style, making sure that you answer all five questions. 358

6. An unfortunate incident occurred on the school outing when an argument arose with the owner of a stall selling drinks by the wayside. As the senior student present, you have been asked to give the Principal a clear picture of what happened. You should write a report in numbered paragraphs, with a title, the date and your signature. You must answer all the following questions:
   • How did the argument arise? • Who was involved?
   • Why did a student refuse payment? • What complaint was made to the teacher?
   • How was the argument finally settled? 359

7. You are sitting in your school library near a window. You see a car drive up to the entrance of your school. There are two men inside. One of them gets out of the car carrying a box wrapped in red paper. He goes into the school. Shortly afterwards you hear a loud conversation followed by laughter. Then the man, accompanied by two students, hastily leaves the building; they all get into the car and drive off. Write for your school magazine an account under the heading: ‘The Mystery of the Red Box.’

You must include the following points:
   • Who were the people in the car? • What was in the box?
   • What was the conversation about? • Why did they laugh?
   • Why did the students leave the school? 361

8. As a reporter for your local newspaper you attended a meeting at which an important person had been invited to speak. There you witnessed a most unusual accident. The following outline explains the situation:
   • crowd waiting in hall • speaker arrived on stage • began speech
   • damp patch on ceiling • drops of water • sudden downpour • speaker soaked
   • confusion on stage • ceiling collapsed • panic in hall
   • speaker hurt, given first aid • meeting abandoned • investigation continuing.

Write a report for your editor. Begin as follows: “A most unusual accident took place recently at ...” 362
9. After classes were over, you and your friend saw a stranger run out of the chemistry laboratory. Suddenly there was an explosion and you went to investigate. The Principal has asked for a written report of what you saw and did. Here are the notes you have made about what happened.

- how did the man look like
- windows narrow, bars across
- explosion in lab
- fumes and smoke
- entered lab to investigate
- breaking of windows
- attempt to put out fire
- shout for help
- more explosions behind us
- crowd gathers
- flames near door
- rescue by fire-fighters
- trapped

Write your report using some or all of the notes above and adding extra details to make clear exactly what happened. Begin as follows: "After classes on Monday we were passing near the chemistry laboratory when ..."

10. While you were playing a game at school a friend of yours was hurt quite badly. You have been asked to write a report describing what happened. Use some or all of the following notes, adding extra details of your own.

- When and where it happened
- Who was there
- What you were all doing
- Who was hurt and how
- damage to clothing, property, equipment
- What you and others felt and did
- Who, if anyone, was to blame

The above notes are very brief. You are expected to make them more realistic by enlarging on them. You may like to start as follows: "REPORT ON INCIDENT AT SCHOOL yesterday ..."

11. You were asked by a neighbour to assist in the search for her small child lost while playing near home. Write an account of the events to help the authorities in their investigations. You should expand some or all of the following notes, adding further details if you wish:

- place
- cries heard
- alarm raised
- child found
- search
- injuries
- hunt in surrounding area
- was anyone to blame?

You may begin your account with these words: "As I walked home from school, I heard a woman crying ..."

12. You were visiting a friend in hospital when a fire broke out. Write an account of what happened, using some or all of the following notes, and adding further details to create interest.

- how alarm given
- what doctors, nurses, patients did
- arrival of police and firefighters
- rescue incidents
- help for injured
- your escape
- fire under control
- skill and courage
- damage
13. Read the following passage carefully and the instructions that follow it.

One day you were passing your school principal’s office when you saw a student knocking at the door, and carrying a large brown envelope. This person appeared to be either excited or a little frightened. You heard the Principal’s voice saying, “Come in.” The student hesitated, glanced at the envelope and entered the office.

Explain in detail why the student was seeing the Principal, what was in the envelope and what happened during the interview.

Use your own words. DO NOT copy from the passage.

14. Read the following passage carefully and the instructions below.

You were in a shop when you saw a person taking articles from a shelf and hiding them in a bag. You realised that the person was stealing. Later, you were asked to write an eye-witness report of what happened for the police.

Write your report, based on the questions below, adding further important details.
• What did the person look like? • What articles were taken?
• How did the person try to leave without paying?
• What part did you play in the incident? • What did others in the shop do?
• Was anyone else at fault? • How did the thief escape?

15. Each year your school has an open day when parents of new pupils are invited to visit the school and see the work of the students. This year, your Principal has asked you to write a leaflet, a copy of which will be given to each family when they arrive; this will serve as a guide and a timetable of events.

You must include details of what can be seen in each of the following places:
• the hall … welcome by the Principal • the classrooms … special displays
• science laboratories • outdoor events
• practical areas such as workshops, domestic science or music rooms

The tone should be welcoming and persuasive to show off the advantages of joining your particular school.

(2) Letters and Speeches

1. You have been asked to organise an end-of-term outing. Write a report to the school Principal including the following:
• What kind of activities would be suitable?
• Will any special clothes or equipment be needed?
• What food will be required? • What transport will be necessary?
• How much will the outing cost?
2. A television company would like to make a programme about your school. The producer wants to film teachers and students at work, not the buildings and grounds. Your Principal has asked you, as a senior student, to suggest the people and activities to be covered and to explain in detail why you think they should be included. Write your response in the form of a letter to the Principal.

3. There has been an outbreak of a strange illness rather like a fever or severe food poisoning. You represent a group of citizens, and have been asked to write a letter to the people in authority complaining about unsatisfactory local conditions. Here, in random note form, are some of your thoughts:
   * people not given enough information
   * local school closed
   * water supply doubtful
   * families suffering inconvenience
   * school shopkeeper ill
   * loss of education
   * school and family events cancelled
   * many children ill
   * local food supplier dead
   * sickness, diarrhoea, high temperature
   * unclean food
   * doctors and nurses slow to act
   * need for official inquiry? medical inspections? — future prevention

Using some or all of the above notes, rearranging them, and adding your own details, write the letter. You may like to begin as follows: Dear Sir, Many people are very upset at the recent outbreak of a serious illness...

4. Planning a school expedition. It is your responsibility as the school organiser to arrange a visit to one of the following:
   a museum, a theatre, a nature reserve, a Game Park, a National Park, a place of historical interest, a place of natural beauty, a bird sanctuary.

Produce an information sheet for students and parents. Outline the arrangements for the trip, times, transport, dress, behaviour, cost, food etc. Describe in some detail the attractions and the educational value of the place to be visited.

You might like to start as follows: Dear Parents and Students,

We are planning a school expedition to ......

5. You are in hospital recovering from an operation. Your parents are away. You need to buy some personal items. You also need various books and notes for examination revision. You have some borrowed things which must be returned urgently.
Write a letter to a school friend, in which you explain what has happened; ask for help; give news about yourself and your family; ask for news of school and other friends; and add other details of interest to you both.

Make your letter friendly and informative.

6. The following letter has appeared in a newspaper:

Dear Sir,

Two days ago a bunch of noisy teenagers knocked my cigarettes and my radio out of my hands as I was boarding a bus. They pushed me aside and shouted rude words at me.

Isn't it about time the parents and the schools did something to cure the bad manners of students who race about the streets, untidily dressed, insulting people? They have too much freedom and spare time and are always causing trouble. They never think of others.

All young people should be more severely disciplined, have less money and be made to do something useful to keep them off the streets.

Yours faithfully,

A. Beta

You feel strongly about the points made in the above letter. Write your reply to the newspaper. You should begin:

Dear Sir,

Remember to end with 'Yours faithfully' and to add your signature.

7. An election is to be held in your school for members of the Student Council, a group set up to advise the Principal on matters concerning student welfare and discipline. One of your friends hopes to be elected. You are preparing a speech in support of your friend. You have the following notes to help you:

* excellent games player * top in examinations * active in school clubs
* organised end-of-year party * public-speaking competition winner
* always helps new students

Write out your speech in full, using the above list and other ideas of your own. You should write 200 — 300 words.

8. At the school gate

9. What's new in school
(1) Narrative Essays (Stories)

Introduction

Essay titles which require you to narrate stories often give explicit instructions to write an imaginary story. But then again, in some cases, only the essay title is given - leaving the writer to write the type of essay he chooses. In other words, the title does not tell you what type of essay to write. In such circumstances, the writer is entirely privileged to write whatever he chooses. Our advice: choose what you are best at.
Title: Drugs and death

I shouted, I raved and ranted, but they did not listen. I could see the dangers as I had been there before. I had been in a similar situation and I had seen the devastation it can bring. They laughed at me mercilessly. The fools! Why could they not see that I was not jealous of their happiness? Why could they not understand that I had nothing to gain by stopping them? I could see the hell they were going to face soon. It is too late now. All I can do is cry with them.

I was passing by when I saw them huddled together. I knew they were up to no good. There was one of them looking out for the rest. He warned them. They took a look at the ragged clothes I was wearing and turned back to what they were doing. They were spiking their cigarettes. I knew the pusher who was encouraging them. His own life was ruined and he had ruined many others. He needed to do this in order to feed his own addiction. I pushed my way into the crowd and cried when I saw them ready to light up. I knocked the cigarette out of one of their hands. He was the youngest of the group; all of thirteen years I think. The pusher turned on me with a snarl and pushed me away. Then they lit their cigarettes and started puffing. I saw their faces change. I knew that they were not themselves anymore. I still spoke. I knew it was not too late then. By this time they were too excited to stop. They pushed me aside roughly.

I told them my own tragedy. I told them I had experimented too. I told them about my long jail sentence and about the ruin I had fallen into. I told them it was
not too late for them. They looked at me with a superior look, laughed at me and then turned away to continue what they were doing. I cried as I turned away. I knew there was nothing I could do.

It was a month later that I saw them again. They were huddled together under the shade of the coffee stall. They looked terrible now. They were unwashed, unshaven and stank. They were sharing a bottle of water. They looked at me with sad eyes. I wondered if they recognised me. I wondered if they remembered that I was the man who tried to warn them. They turned away. I looked at them. There was no more look of cocksureness. Only quiet despair. They probably saw the danger then, but it was too late. Too late for them. Within a year, some of them will be in prison; some will go through cold turkey; the lucky ones may even die. The worst of them will be like me one day; walking the earth aimlessly; awaiting death. It is too late for me and now for them. I dropped my eyes and walked on.

(509 words)