

10 Final Hints on Getting that C in English

Before the exam:

1. Read things – newspapers, magazines, cereal boxes – anything. The more you can read, the more confident you will become in using language.
2. Keep learning the spellings in your planner. To learn them, use visuals (“be-lie-ve”), sounds (“govern+ment”) and memory devices (necessary = “never eat chips eat sausage sandwiches and raspberry yoghurt”).

In the exam:

a) Structuring your answer

3. In the exam, do a plan before you write anything. This shows the examiner that you can structure your ideas.
4. On Paper 1, the letter is probably the most straightforward task. On Paper 2, the description task is probably the most straightforward. Choose the task that appeals to you, and then plan 5-7 paragraphs as a spider-diagram, mind-map, or set of bullet-points. Aim to write 2 sides in the writing task (though 1½ will be all right).
5. Use paragraphs. To make them really clear to the examiner leave one or two lines free between each paragraph. Aim for 3-5 paragraphs per page.

b) Using language

6. Use short and long sentences. Short sentences are five words or fewer. Long sentences are 20 words or fewer. Use both in every paragraph.
7. For “persuade” tasks use words like “suggest, consider, would, could, should, must, challenge, idea, benefit, advantage, concern ...”. For “describe” tasks try to paint pictures of people, places, sounds, smells, textures.
8. Create interesting 2-part sentences by starting some with the connectives “As”, “Although”, “When” ... (“**As** I walked into the room, I knew that something had happened”).
9. Make some sentences more interesting by using “which / that / who” in the middle (eg “The car, **which** had been parked in the street all night, suddenly started to move”).
10. Make some sentences more interesting by using “-ing” in the middle: “I want to explain why a new school uniform is a good idea, **hoping** that you will then accept my proposals”.

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