

WRITING an opinion essay

8A Look at the essay title. Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

Most people fill their leisure time with meaningless activities. Do you agree?

- 1 What do you consider a 'meaningful' and a 'meaningless' leisure activity?
- 2 What is your opinion of the statement?

B Read the essay. Do you agree with the writer's point of view?

- 1 It is said that technological development has given people more leisure time than they used to have, and that this frees them up to concentrate on pursuing their interests or improving themselves. It seems to me however, that most people spend their free time doing things that do not contribute to their development and are essentially unproductive.
- 2 **To start with**, the most popular free-time activities seem to be ones that people do alone. **For instance**, most people spend a large part of their time on the internet and, even when they are interacting with others, they are only doing so electronically; they are not communicating with a person, but with digital signals. **In addition to this**, when people do go out it is often to visit the shopping centre; for some families, their main time together consists of a few hours walking, filling a shopping trolley and eating at a snack bar in a shopping mall.
- 3 **At the same time**, there are examples of people making good use of their time. At weekends, there are parks, forests and beaches full of people doing sports or taking walks together. Some people do volunteer work for charity organisations for a few hours a week. Other people join theatre or singing groups and there are many people who enjoy reading. Sadly, however, this reflects a relatively small part of the overall population.
- 4 **In conclusion**, I agree that people use their free time wastefully, and I feel that the situation is getting worse. It is my hope that this might change in the future.

C Work in pairs. Identify the purpose of each paragraph.

D Underline three phrases for giving opinions. Which paragraphs do they occur in?

LEARN TO use linkers in an opinion essay

9A Complete the table with the linking words/phrases in bold in the essay.

firstly <i>to start with</i>	furthermore	to conclude	in contrast	for example

B Add the following phrases to the correct columns of the table.

moreover	in the first place	to sum up	as an example
as opposed to this			

10A Choose one of the essay titles below. Work alone and make notes on the questions.

- Do you agree with the opinion?
- Why/Why not? List three points.
- What examples can you give to support your points?

Using computers and the internet develops important skills in young people.

Technology has created less free time rather than more.

Leisure activities have become too expensive.

Children need more play time in order to develop into healthy adults.



B Work in groups and discuss your opinions. Make notes on any new points you could include in your essay.

C Write a plan for your essay.

Speakout

One way to organise an opinion essay is as follows:

- An introductory paragraph – state the topic and give your opinion. You can start, 'Some people believe....' or use a question or a quotation.
- The main body of the essay in two or three paragraphs. Each time you give a viewpoint, give your reasons/examples.
- A conclusion where you restate your opinion using different words.

D Write the essay (120–180 words). Then check your work for accurate grammar and for use of linkers.