

## METHOD AND TOOLS FOR WRITTEN OR ORAL COMMENTARIES IN ENGLISH

### 1. Introduction

- Open with a **short introductory sentence** to situate the document in its context or to introduce the issue.

With the growing gap / tensions / difficulties between... and...	It is often claimed that... <i>on prétend souvent que...</i>
With the advent of hybrid vehicles / e-books... <i>avec l'apparition de</i>	It is often said that... <i>on dit souvent que...</i>
Following the recent/unexpected/striking development of...	Most of the time... <i>la plupart du temps...</i>
In most cases... <i>dans la plupart des cas...</i>	In recent years... <i>ces dernières années...</i>
For most people... <i>pour la plupart des gens...</i>	At a time when the issue of... is increasingly debated...
People tend to forget that... <i>on a tendance à oublier que...</i>	<i>A un moment où le sujet... revient de plus en plus dans les débats...</i>

- Then you need to **identify the document** (source, date of publication...)

-This article/speech/leader was **published in the Guardian** on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012.  
 -This article taken from the **Guardian dates back to** last May when the government passed a law on...  
 -The article is **taken from the Guardian**, a British daily. It is dated December 2011.

- Say **what the document is about** in one sentence to show you understand it. (What, where, when?)

What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The <b>central issue / the main subject</b> is the death penalty, a highly controversial issue. <i>Le sujet principal est la peine de mort, un sujet très controversé.</i></li> <li>-This article, taken from... deals with/focuses on/addresses the issue of... <i>cet article, tire de... traite/parle de...</i></li> <li>-This article's main subject is energy consumption, a <b>recurrent theme today</b>. <i>L'article traite principalement de la consommation en énergie, thème récurrent aujourd'hui.</i></li> <li>-It <b>draws attention to / raises</b> the question of...</li> <li>-As the title seems to suggest, the article outlines the debate over... <i>Comme le titre semble le suggérer, l'article expose les grandes lignes du débat sur...</i></li> <li>-It discusses the pros and cons of... <i>Il discute des avantages et inconvénients de...</i></li> </ul>
Where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→You are supposed to know the names of cities, countries and their inhabitants.</li> <li>→Watch your grammar as far as place names are concerned—the UK, the US, as opposed to Ø England, Ø America...</li> </ul>
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The article was published right/shortly/a few months after..., it casts a new light on... <i>L'article a été publié juste/peu de temps/qqs mois après... donne un nouvel éclairage sur...</i></li> <li>-In the wake of what happened... <i>Dans le sillage de ce qui est arrivé...</i></li> <li>-The events that took place in... were widely covered by the media / triggered a controversy. <i>Les événements qui se sont déroulés à... ont été très largement couverts par les medias / ont suscité la controverse.</i></li> </ul>

- Then, you should mention the question raised by the document (to be answered in your conclusion thanks to your commentary).

-It all **boils down to** whether... *Tout revient à la question de savoir si...*  
 -The article **raises** the following question: ... ? *L'article soulève la question suivante : ... ?*  
 -The main question that **arises from** the text is: ... ? *La question essentielle qui émerge du texte est: ... ?*  
 -What is **at stake** in this article is... *Ce qui est en jeu dans cet article c'est...*

- The structure of the document needs to be mentioned at the end of your introduction. (=outlining the main ideas)

The article **starts with... then focuses on... before coming back to...**  
 Several points of interest arise in the article : **first(ly)...**, first of all... *premièrement...* / **to begin with... tout d'abord...**, then..., next..., *ensuite...*, *puis...*, **lastly...**, finally... *enfin/en dernier lieu/finalement...*  
 The main points in the article are : ...

## 2. Summary

- You presentation of document must be synthetic –i.e. provide the main facts, causes, consequences.

<b>Facts</b>	-The journalist <b>argues</b> that... <i>le journaliste défend l'idée que...</i> <b>claims / asserts that... <i>affirme que...</i>  <b>comments / remarks that...</b>          mentions the fact that...  <b>reveals / explains that...</b>          states the fact that... <i>énonce que...</i>          -He also <b>alludes to...</b> <i>Il fait également allusion à...</i> </b>	
<b>Cause &amp; effect</b>	So : <i>donc</i> Given that : <i>étant donné que</i> Thanks to : <i>grâce à</i> Owing to, due to, on account of : <i>grâce à, à cause de</i> The measure has caused / contributed to...	Consequently, as a result : <i>par conséquent</i> For that reason, on that account : <i>pour cette raison</i> That's why : <i>c'est pourquoi</i> Since : <i>puisque</i>
<b>Purpose &amp; aim</b>	In order to, so as to : <i>afin de</i>	So that, in order that : <i>afin que</i>
<b>Conditions</b>	Provided that : <i>pourvu que</i> As long as : <i>tant que</i>	Depending on (whether or not) : <i>selon, cela dépend (si oui ou non)</i>
<b>Opposition</b>	(On one hand...) on the other hand : <i>(d'un côté) d'un autre côté</i> As opposed to, contrary to : <i>contrairement à</i> Whereas, while : <i>alors que</i>	However / yet : <i>cependant</i> Even if : <i>même si</i> Unlike : <i>à la différence de</i>

## 3. Transition

- The journalist's intention, the message he intends to get across or the function of the article.

<b>Function of the article</b>	The article was written to <b>inform</b> the reader <b>defend</b> the idea that... <b>provide</b> an in-depth analysis of... <b>comment</b> (up)on... The journalists aims at <b>putting an end to</b> a fiery debate over... <i>Il cherche à mettre fin à une controverse animée sur...</i> <b>The point is to decide wheter or not...</b> <i>le but est de déterminer si oui ou non...</i>	
<b>Message conveyed</b>	The message he is trying to <b>convey</b> is / <b>to get across</b> is... <i>le message qu'il essaie de faire passer est...</i> What he is trying to <b>do/ say</b> is to (BV)... <i>ce qu'il essaie de faire/dire c'est...</i>	
<b>Point of view</b>	The implicit <b>stance</b> that lies behind the text is... <i>Le point de vue implicite que l'on devine dans le texte est...</i> The report is <b>biased / unbiased</b> ... <i>le compte-rendu est subjectif / objectif...</i> The journalist <b>takes sides with...</b> / is in favour of... The journalist <b>has adopted</b> a detached/humorous/satirical/ironical/critical <b>stance</b> ( <i>point de vue</i> )	

## 4. Commentary

- Present **arguments** in favour of/ against the point made –i.e. analyse the most crucial idea. You may need to present the other side of the issue for instance or provide relevant information left out by the journalist.

-The journalist is perfectly right in saying that... <i>Le journaliste a tout à fait raison de dire que...</i> -As the journalist says, it is indeed reasonable <b>to assume</b> that... <i>Comme le dit le journaliste, il est en effet raisonnable de supposer que...</i> -I strongly <b>support</b> the journalist in his view that... <i>Je soutiens tout à fait l'idée défendue par le journaliste, selon laquelle...</i> -The journalist <b>failed to mention</b> ... <i>Le journaliste a omis de mentionner...</i> -The journalist <b>overlooks</b> several aspects of the issue. <i>Le journaliste néglige plusieurs aspects de la question.</i> -I have a few reservations about the journalist's approach. <i>J'ai quelques réserves à l'égard de l'approche adoptée par le journaliste.</i> - <b>In other words</b> ... <i>en d'autres termes...</i> -This <b>amounts to saying</b> that... <i>cela revient à dire que...</i> -To my mind, the issue needs to be seen through à different angle. <i>A mon avis, le problème doit être vu sous un angle différent.</i> - <b>Contrary to</b> what the journalist claims, I firmly believe that... <i>Contrairement à ce que le journaliste avance, je suis fermement convaincu que...</i> -The argument he uses does not <b>stand up to scrutiny</b> . <i>L'argument qu'il utilise ne tient pas.</i>	
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- **Putting things into perspective.** Show you have detected the broader issue behind the views/aspects presented in the document and make relevant geographical / cultural comparisons.

-It brings to mind... *cela me/nous rappelled...*  
 -So far / up to now... *jusqu'à maintenant...*  
 -Unlike Europe, the US has given the go-ahead to cloned meat. *Contrairement à l'Europe, les Etats Unis ont donné le feu vert à la viande clonée.*  
 -Today / nowadays... *actuellement*  
 -It is a contemporary trend... *c'est une tendance actuelle...*  
 -Figures are on the rise... *les chiffres sont à la hausse...*  
 -Contrary to popular belief... *Contrairement aux idées reçues...*

- **Your personal take on the issue** should be brought into play with the document itself. It shouldn't necessarily come first! Provide arguments.

-I'd like to **emphasize** at least two aspects of the question... *je voudrais m'attacher à au moins deux aspects de la question...*  
 -What **strikes** me most is that... *ce qui me frappe le plus c'est que...*  
 -I am **convinced** / I firmly believe... *je suis convaincu que...*  
 -There is **every reason** to believe... *tout porte à croire que...*  
 -**Undoubtedly**... *Il n'y a aucun doute que...*  
 -To a **certain extent**... *dans une certaine mesure...*  
 -There is **no clear-cut answer** to such a question... *il n'y a pas de réponse toute prête à une telle question...*  
 -My views on the question are **rather moderate**... *mon opinion sur la question est plutôt modérée...*  
 -It seems to me that... *Il me semble que...*  
 -To the best of my knowledge... *à ma connaissance*  
 -It is often said that... however... *on dit souvent que... cependant...*  
 -It is quite **unacceptable**. *C'est inadmissible.*  
 -I **disapprove** of sth (ou V-ing) / I am strongly opposed to...  
 -I don't share such views as... *je ne partage pas une telle position puisque...*  
 -It could be objected that... *on pourrait objecter que...*  
 -What can be done? *Que peut-on (y) faire?*  
 -**Needless to say**, the problem must be addressed. *Inutile de dire qu'il faut s'attaquer au problème.*  
 -**Actually** / as a matter of fact, I'd like to add that... *En fait, je voudrais ajouter que...*

- **Possible outcomes.** What may this lead to (in the future, in the long run...)?

-The situation is **likely** to improve. Il y a **des chances que** la situation s'améliore. (≠unlikely)  
 -Carrying on regardless would most likely do more harm than good. *Continuer ainsi sans tenir compte des risques ferait probablement plus de mal que de bien.*  
 -Such a measure could very well be the answer to the problem. *Une telle mesure pourrait bien être la solution au problème.*  
 -If that line is crossed, there will be no going back. *Si cette limite est franchie, il ne sera pas possible de revenir en arrière.*

## 5. Conclusion

- **Sum up the main ideas** but only whatever is relevant to the final conclusion you are going to introduce.
- Think of a **final conclusion on the issue** or the document. Can you make any further deductions?
- You might come up with an ironic twist, a counter argument or a new idea.

-**To conclude**, I'd like to emphasize the need for... *Pour conclure, je voudrais souligner le besoin de...*  
 -**To finish with / finally**, I'd like to underline the urgent need for action. *En conclusion, je voudrais souligner le besoin urgent d'agir.*  
 -Last but not least... *Enfin, mais tout aussi important...*  
 -I'd like to conclude by saying that... *J'aimerais conclure en disant que...*