

76 Academic English

A Public examinations

Exam requirements

Some public examinations in English consist of a written paper in which candidates are required to produce a piece of **extended** writing. They may be asked to **present** and develop an **argument**, **evaluate** ideas, **summarize** information, etc. Candidates are **assessed** on a number of **criteria**, including their ability to write in an organized and **coherent** way, their **command** of a range of **stylistic** features, and their ability to write in an appropriate **register**. Some tasks may ask students to write a **narrative**.

SPOTLIGHT **present** v

Present (stress on second syllable) can mean 'show, offer or describe something for others to look at and consider'.

- She's **presenting** a talk at the conference. (SYN **give a presentation** n)
 - They want to **present** their ideas at the meeting next week.
- It is also used when you give something to somebody, especially at a ceremony.
- The mayor **presented** the prizes to the winners.

GLOSSARY

extended	long or longer than usual or expected
argument	a set of reasons that sb uses to show that sth is true or correct
evaluate	form an opinion of sth after thinking about it carefully evaluation n; SYN assess v; assessment n
summarize	give a short statement that brings together the main points of sth summary n
criterion (pl criteria)	a standard or principle by which sth is judged
coherent	(of ideas, arguments, etc.) logical and well organized; clear and easy to understand OPP incoherent ; coherence n
command of sth	a knowledge of sth and an ability to use it well
stylistic	connected to the way a writer or artist does sth style n
register	the words, grammar and style that sb uses in a particular situation: a formal/informal register
narrative	a description of connected events; a story. A person is a narrator .

1 Underline the stress on these words. Use the to help you.

argument evaluate evaluation criterion incoherent
present v narrative narrator stylistic summarize

2 Circle the correct answer(s). Sometimes both answers may be possible.

- 1 He asked me to **summary** / **summarize** the main points.
- 2 Having read her essay, what is your **command** / **assessment** of it?
- 3 The events in the novel are described by a **narrative** / **narrator**.
- 4 We had to **assess** / **evaluate** the different ideas.
- 5 The single most important **criterion** / **criteria** was experience.
- 6 The chairman came to my **criterion** / **presentation** and thanked me afterwards.
- 7 It was an interesting **argument** / **register**, but I'm not sure I agree with it.
- 8 You have to be able to **summarize** / **present** your argument on paper.

3 Complete the sentences with a suitable word.

- 1 I decided to write a _____ because I'm quite good at telling stories.
- 2 You should provide a brief _____ of your ideas at the end of the talk.
- 3 What was your _____ of the essay? I found it _____ and couldn't follow it.
- 4 The use of metaphors is an important _____ feature of her writing.
- 5 What are your _____ for choosing the best essay?
- 6 To write an academic essay, you need a very good _____ of the language.
- 7 Most academic essays are written in a formal style and _____.
- 8 I didn't think the _____ he put forward in his essay was very convincing.
- 9 The head will _____ the prize for the best piece of _____ writing.
- 10 You have to develop an _____, which is completely _____, so the reader can understand it.



TEST YOURSELF

B The basics of academic writing

In a piece of academic writing, the writer will do at least some of the following:

- **outline** their main ideas
- **explore** certain ideas in greater depth
- **illustrate** their ideas
- **adopt** a particular **stance** or point of view
- **draw conclusions**

They may also compare and contrast, **condemn** or **condone**, explain, describe, analyse, evaluate, summarize, **assert**, **justify**, and – to the annoyance of some people – **sit on the fence**.

GLOSSARY

outline	give a description of the main points involved in sth outline <i>n</i>
explore	examine sth carefully: explore an idea ; exploration <i>n</i>
illustrate	make the meaning of sth clearer by giving examples illustration <i>n</i>
adopt	take a particular point of view, or use a particular method
stance (on sth)	an opinion that sb has about sth and expresses publicly position
conclusion	a decision that you make about sth after thinking about it, discussing it and looking at any evidence: draw/reach/come to a conclusion (about sth)
condemn	say publicly that you think sth/sb is bad or wrong condemnation <i>n</i>
condone	accept behaviour that most people think is wrong
assert	state clearly that sth is true assertion <i>n</i>
justify	show that sth is right or reasonable justification <i>n</i>
sit on the fence	avoid deciding or saying which side of an argument you support

- 4 The pronunciation of the underlined letters is the same in seven of the words. Which word is different? Use the **APP** to help you.

adopt assert conclusion condemn condone justify illustrate position

- 5 Which of these words clearly show a particular point of view?

condemn outline condone assert explore justify adopt a stance illustrate

- 6 Complete the sentences with a form of the word in capitals.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1 There was universal _____ of the attack. | CONDEMN |
| 2 What _____ did you draw about the reason for the delay? | CONCLUDE |
| 3 I thought he gave a good _____ of his point. | ILLUSTRATE |
| 4 The book is an _____ of the human mind. | EXPLORE |
| 5 He was correct in his _____ that the man was guilty. | ASSERT |
| 6 What was his _____ for the government's position? | JUSTIFY |

- 7 Replace the underlined words with a word or phrase that keeps the same meaning.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 She gave a <u>general picture</u> of her ideas. | She _____ her ideas. |
| 2 She was <u>very critical</u> of his behaviour. | She _____ his behaviour. |
| 3 She <u>went on to analyse</u> the idea in more depth. | She then _____ the idea in more depth. |
| 4 She wouldn't <u>accept or tolerate</u> his behaviour. | She wouldn't _____ his behaviour. |
| 5 She didn't <u>take and support</u> a clear <u>position</u> . | She didn't _____ a clear _____. |
| 6 She couldn't <u>show</u> her ideas <u>were reasonable</u> . | She couldn't _____ her ideas. |
| 7 She <u>gave examples</u> of her ideas. | She _____ her ideas. |
| 8 In the end, she <u>wouldn't agree or disagree</u> . | In the end, she _____. |
| 9 She continued to <u>state very clearly</u> that she was innocent. | She continued to _____ that she was innocent. |
| 10 He didn't <u>come to any final decisions or judgement</u> . | He didn't _____. |



TEST YOURSELF