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 APP 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

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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** *n*
explore	examine sth carefully: ***explore an idea***; **exploration** *n*
illustrate	make the meaning of sth clearer by giving examples **illustration** *n*
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 SYN **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** *n*
condone	accept behaviour that most people think is wrong
assert	state clearly that sth is true **assertion** *n*
justify	show that sth is right or reasonable **justification** *n*
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 general picture of her ideas.	She _____ her ideas.
2	She was very critical of his behaviour.	She _____ his behaviour.
3	She went on to analyse the idea in more depth.	She then _____ the idea in more depth.
4	She wouldn't accept or tolerate his behaviour.	She wouldn't _____ his behaviour.
5	She didn't take and support a clear position.	She didn't _____ a clear _____.
6	She couldn't show her ideas were reasonable.	She couldn't _____ her ideas.
7	She gave examples of her ideas.	She _____ her ideas.
8	In the end, she wouldn't agree or disagree.	In the end, she _____.
9	She continued to state very clearly that she was innocent.	She continued to _____ that she was innocent.
10	He didn't come to any final decisions or judgement.	He didn't _____.

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