
P R E F A C E



We have put together this collection of essays for students sitting for their 'O' Level examinations.

The essays have been classified into different types of writing styles to allow for easy reference. The compositions are written by caring individuals who have endeavoured to write at the level of 'O' Level students.

To help students get the best out of these essays, we begin with 'Brainstorm' on how each essay could be tackled. At the end of the essay we also have 'Essay Analysis' on why the essay is well written, revealing the techniques and skills of penning good essays.

Using this book as a guide, we hope that students will do well to master the art of writing. Once mastered, this skill will serve them throughout their education and beyond as well.

To all students, we hope this book is helpful. Good writing!

The Publisher

Contents :

SECTION A: **CREATIVE WRITING**

SECTION B: **ANALYTICAL WRITING**

SECTION C: **GENERAL WRITING**

SECTION D: **SITUATIONAL WRITING**

SECTION A: CREATIVE WRITING

(1) Narrative Essays (Stories)

(2) Narrative Essays (Events)

(3) Descriptive Essays



CONTENTS

(1) Narrative Essays (Stories)

1. Write a story: 'They did not see the danger until it was too late.' _____ 20
2. 'After school'. Write about this topic, interpreting the title in any way you choose.
_____ 22
3. 'Whatever happened to?' Complete this question to form a title and then write a suitable story on this theme. _____ 24
4. Write a story: 'We were amazed when we heard how lucky John had been.' _____ 26
5. Write a story: 'You were on a journey with someone who was suddenly taken ill.'
_____ 28
6. A friend asked you to keep a small parcel safe for a while. Later you discovered that it was stolen property. _____ 30
7. Write about a time when the illness of someone you know caused great problems.
_____ 32
8. Favouritism. _____ 34
9. Write a short story: 'He had been dirty, hungry and completely without hope. Now there was a chance of a new life.' _____ 36
10. An unfair punishment. _____ 38
11. Write a story: 'I made a mistake in telling him (or her) my secret.' _____ 40
12. A Mad Dog. _____ 42
13. Write a short story: 'A person whose behaviour changed suddenly and unexpectedly.'
_____ 44
14. My unlucky day. _____ 46
15. 'The wind suddenly rose ...' Continue. _____ 48



16. 'Darkness always terrified me...' Continue. _____ 50
17. An unusual person I met recently. _____ 52
18. A lost child. _____ 54
19. An unhappy bride. _____ 56
20. Write a short story: "But you promised!" she cried. "I will never trust you again."
_____ 58
21. Write a short story: 'In a famous science fiction story, the characters live in a world where they stay at their present ages forever. They will never grow older; they will never die. Imagine that you are living in such a world.' _____ 60
22. "The work was hard, it was very hot, but everyone was exceptionally cheerful ..."
Continue. _____ 62
23. "I had never seen her so depressed. Tears were running down her face as I walked towards her ..."
Continue. _____ 64
24. Write a short story: 'The traveller had a large sum of money but no passport. He seemed to be suffering from loss of memory' _____ 66
25. Write a story based on the following: "If only he would listen to me," she sobbed, "I could explain everything." _____ 68
26. The trial. _____ 70
27. Write a short story: "Someone had a great disappointment that turned out to be a blessing in disguise." _____ 72
28. Write a short story: Running away. _____ 74
29. Repaying a kindness. _____ 76
30. A rich man unexpectedly lost all his wealth. _____ 78
31. Write a story: 'A food store in your area suddenly closed and there was great trouble.' _____ 80
32. A telephone call that changed your life. _____ 82
33. Write a story based on the following: 'After the accident, she seemed to be a completely different person.' _____ 84
34. Write a story: 'It was obvious that she never intended to keep her promise.' _____ 86
35. Write a story: 'It's probably too late, but at least we can try.' _____ 88



36. Write a story: 'The owner of a local business takes strong action when threatened by outside competition.' _____ 90
37. 'Sometimes we have to treat people unkindly for their own good.' Write a story to illustrate this. _____ 92

(2) Narrative Essays (Events & Incidents)

1. The time when you failed to remember a friend's birthday. _____ 95
2. Write a story: 'A new-born baby was found abandoned at a bus-stop.' _____ 97
3. Write a story: 'A servant or worker who was badly treated by an employer.' _____ 99
4. Write a story: "I had practiced saying it a hundred times, but when the moment came, I just couldn't open my mouth!" _____ 101
5. Describe a time when efforts to please someone ended in failure. _____ 103
6. Looking back over the past year, what event or experience do you remember most clearly, and why? _____ 105
7. The time when I was given some bad advice. _____ 107
8. The signal. _____ 109
9. A disappointing holiday. _____ 111
10. An important occasion when the main guest failed to arrive. _____ 113
11. Minister praises local hero. _____ 115
12. Write about an occasion when you were given some good advice, and how you reacted to it. _____ 117
13. Write a story based on the following: "It was very odd. There were no people on the bus, but the engine was running and their belongings were there." _____ 119
14. The test. _____ 121
15. A race against time. _____ 123
16. "You have just one more chance to prove that you can do it." _____ 125
17. Write about one or more acts of selfishness that caused unhappiness. _____ 127



18. A visit to an amusement park. _____ 129
 19. An unsuccessful shopping trip. _____ 131

(3) Descriptive Essays

1. A good leader _____ 134
 2. A popular person in your age group. _____ 136
 3. Describe an old couple outside your family who live an interesting and happy life.
 _____ 138
 4. Describe the first hour of a day at school. _____ 140
 5. "That was the first time and I hope it will be the last." _____ 142
 6. To whom would you turn to for help in an emergency? _____ 144
 7. Describe a journey that you particularly enjoyed. _____ 146
 8. Describe an event which took place in a public park. It can be a real or imaginary event.
 _____ 148
 9. A crowded shopping centre. _____ 150
 10. How do you entertain yourself in your spare time? _____ 152
 11. Describe how a family discussion brought about a happy outcome.
 _____ 154
 12. Describe an occasion when you were ill and spent a week or more at home.
 _____ 156
 13. Describe a quarrel with a friend. _____ 158
 14. You were one of a crowd celebrating an important event. Describe what happened.
 _____ 160
 15. Taking the wrong bus in error. _____ 162
 16. A brother and sister who could never agree. _____ 164
 17. An exciting and enjoyable party. _____ 166
 18. Describe a famous place that you have visited. _____ 168
 19. Unwelcome visitors. _____ 170



20.	Helping in and around the house. _____	172
21.	Describe what happened during your first days at your present school. What were your feelings? _____	174
22.	Missing child found. _____	176
23.	Describe an occasion when you received an unexpected present. _____	178
24.	Write about your neighbours and the way they behave. _____	180
25.	A family argument. _____	182
26.	Describe the sights, sounds and activities at the end of a day's work. _____	184
27.	Describe an incident in which you felt you were treated unfairly. _____	186
28.	Describe an occasion when you were very frightened. _____	188
29.	A busy shopping area. _____	190
30.	The worst tempered person I know. _____	192
31.	You arrived very late for an important event. Describe what happened and how you and other people felt about it. _____	194
32.	A day you spent in strange surroundings. _____	196
33.	Give an account of some forms of dishonesty that you have met. _____	198
34.	Your greatest success. _____	200
35.	You are going to write your life story. Describe two or three incidents that will interest your readers. _____	202
36.	Write about some occasions when you felt extremely bored. _____	204
37.	You were called upon to take someone else's place at the last minute. Describe what happened. _____	206
38.	Write a description of the rush hour. _____	208
39.	Write a description of a busy eating place. _____	210
40.	Describe the suspense of waiting for something or someone to arrive, or waiting for some event to happen. _____	212

SECTION B: ANALYTICAL WRITING

(1) Argumentative Essays

(2) Reflective Essays



CONTENTS

(1) Argumentative Essays

1. The advantages and disadvantages of being an only child. _____ 215
2. What are your opinions about traditional and modern dress? _____ 217
3. Is war ever justified? _____ 219
4. Is it more important to enjoy your job than to earn a great deal of money? __ 221
5. "The computer is more of a menace than a blessing". What do you think? __ 223
6. 'Television has too great an influence on life today'. What are your views? __ 225
7. "Things were very much better when I was young," said the old person.
How far do you agree with this? _____ 227
8. "Standards of behaviour, appearance and work, among young people are very
high." How far do you agree with this point of view? _____ 229
9. It is said that young people should always respect and obey those older than
themselves. What are your feelings about this? _____ 231
10. People today are selfish and greedy. Do you agree? _____ 233
11. Person A: Many people are suffering from the effects of disease, flooding, drought
or starvation. We ought to help some of them.
Person B: I disagree. It would be too expensive and achieve very little. We should
concentrate on our own problems.
What are your views? _____ 235
12. "We do not enjoy our work, only our leisure". How far do you agree?
_____ 237
13. Professional sportsmen are more interested in making money than playing the
game. Do you agree? _____ 239
14. Should all school subjects and activities be compulsory or should you have a
choice? _____ 241



15. "Advertising exerts too great an influence on our daily lives". How do you react to this statement? _____ 243
16. How important is it that people should marry and remain living together permanently? _____ 245
17. Are rich children always happier than those who come from poorer families? _____ 247
18. Many students choose to travel overseas to study. Write about some of the advantages and disadvantages of overseas study. _____ 249

(2) Reflective Essays

1. What do you think people of your age can do to improve life in your country? 252
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses? _____ 254
3. How much of your progress at school is the result of your own ability, good luck or good teaching? _____ 256
4. Is it important that young people should know about the history of their country? _____ 258
5. What are the effects of the increased use of motor vehicles? _____ 260
6. Crowds are increasingly difficult to manage. What suggestions have you for controlling the behaviour of a large group of people? _____ 262
7. Write about how people in your area earn their living and how various jobs affect family life. _____ 264
8. Some people say that beginners have all the luck; others claim that success comes only with practice. What are your experiences of doing things for the first time? _____ 266
9. What difficulties are you having in choosing a career? _____ 268
10. What do you like and dislike most about the area or district in which you live? _____ 270
11. Do you consider that the lives of women in your country could be improved? _____ 272
12. What is being done to help poor people in your country? What other improvements are possible? _____ 274



13. What dangers should young people guard against when they leave school? _____ 276
14. What qualities will you look for in your future husband or wife? _____ 278
15. What is your idea of beauty? Describe people, places or things that attract you greatly. _____ 280
16. How do other nations influence your country? _____ 282
17. The ideal school. _____ 284
18. 'Time seems to stand still or go much too quickly.' What are your experiences? _____ 286
19. What are some of the difficulties parents experience when they have to divide their time between working and bringing up a family? _____ 288
20. Is population control necessary? _____ 290

SECTION C: GENERAL WRITING

CONTENTS

General Essays

1. Natural disasters. _____ 293
2. Grandparents are the most important people in society. Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion. _____ 295
3. Fire - friend or enemy? _____ 297
4. Parents. _____ 299
5. Describe the activities of religious people in your country. _____ 301



6.	Keeping fit. _____	303
7.	Waiting for results. _____	305
8.	Grandparents. _____	307
9.	Secret hopes and ambitions. _____	309
10.	Winners and losers. _____	311
11.	Keeping fit. _____	313
12.	Dancing. _____	315
13.	What do you most like doing in your spare time? _____	317
14.	Write about a festival or celebration held in your community. _____	319
15.	Write about some of the things (or people) that annoy you. _____	321
16.	Food. _____	323
17.	Temptation. _____	325
18.	Some people are afraid of the dark; others find it exciting. How do you feel about it? _____	327
19.	Dangers on the road. _____	329
20.	Jealousy. _____	331
21.	Keeping cool (in any sense). _____	333
22.	Wasted Opportunities. _____	335
23.	Discipline. _____	337
24.	'All young people, both male and female, should undertake a period of military or community service.' What are your views? _____	339
25.	Some people like being alone; others are happiest when they are in a crowd of people. Which do you prefer? _____	341
26.	Which household tasks are you prepared to do and which do you try to avoid? _____	343
27.	"Saying goodbye". Write about this subject in any way you choose. _____	345
28.	A good teacher. _____	347
29.	Sleep. _____	349

SECTION D: SITUATIONAL WRITING

(1) Reports and Articles

(2) Letters and Speeches



CONTENTS

(1) Reports and Articles

1. Read the following passage carefully and the instructions that follow it.
You arrived early at school one day. You were the first person to enter your classroom. You saw immediately that during the night serious damage had been done.
Write a short composition describing what you saw and what action was taken to discover who caused the damage. You might find the following notes helpful:
•broken furniture •damaged walls •books torn •litter on floor •enquiries made
_____ 352
2. A young man riding a motor cycle crashed in a busy shopping area. He accused a student of causing the accident. You witnessed the event, seeing the following:
•group of students •laughter and argument •girl stepped into the road
•fast motor cycle •loss of control •crash •injuries •ambulance called
Write your account of the incident, making it clear that the student was not to blame. _____ 353
3. Your school asked for volunteers to entertain, for a day, a small group of young people from another country. You were one of those chosen. Write an account of what you did, considering some or all of the following points:
•tour of the school •surrounding area •local activities
•meeting friends and family •food
Did your guests enjoy themselves? _____ 355
4. Write a report suitable for publication in a newspaper based on the questions set out below: **The Hero's Welcome**
A close relative who risked his life to save a friend, returned home from abroad. You arranged a special welcome for this hero.
•Where did he arrive? •How was he welcomed?
•Who made speeches and what was said? •What else was done to honour him?
•How did he respond to the occasion?
You must cover all five points in detail. _____ 356



5. You observe a person standing at a busy street corner offering hand-made articles for sale. Many people stop to look; few buy.
- What is being sold? • How is the seller encouraging people to buy?
 - What kinds of people are spending money? • Why are sales infrequent?
 - How could the seller have more success?

Write an article for your school magazine or local newspaper on the activity described above. Use continuous English and appropriate style, making sure that you answer all five questions. _____ 358

6. An unfortunate incident occurred on the school outing when an argument arose with the owner of a stall selling drinks by the wayside. As the senior student present, you have been asked to give the Principal a clear picture of what happened. You should write a report in numbered paragraphs, with a title, the date and your signature. You must answer all the following questions:
- How did the argument arise? • Who was involved?
 - Why did a student refuse payment? • What complaint was made to the teacher?
 - How was the argument finally settled?

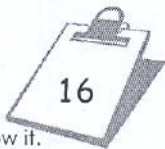
_____ 359

7. You are sitting in your school library near a window. You see a car drive up to the entrance of your school. There are two men inside. One of them gets out of the car carrying a box wrapped in red paper. He goes into the school. Shortly afterwards you hear a loud conversation followed by laughter. Then the man, accompanied by two students, hastily leaves the building; they all get into the car and drive off. Write for your school magazine an account under the heading: 'The Mystery of the Red Box.'
- You must include the following points:
- Who were the people in the car? • What was in the box?
 - What was the conversation about? • Why did they laugh?
 - Why did the students leave the school?

_____ 361

8. As a reporter for your local newspaper you attended a meeting at which an important person had been invited to speak. There you witnessed a most unusual accident. The following outline explains the situation:
- crowd waiting in hall • speaker arrived on stage • began speech
 - damp patch on ceiling • drops of water • sudden downpour • speaker soaked
 - confusion on stage • ceiling collapsed • panic in hall
 - speaker hurt, given first aid • meeting abandoned • investigation continuing.

Write a report for your editor. Begin as follows: "A most unusual accident took place recently at ..." _____ 362



13. Read the following passage carefully and the instructions that follow it.
- One day you were passing your school principal's office when you saw a student knocking at the door, and carrying a large brown envelope. This person appeared to be either excited or a little frightened. You heard the Principal's voice saying, "Come in." The student hesitated, glanced at the envelope and entered the office.

Explain in detail why the student was seeing the Principal, what was in the envelope and what happened during the interview.

Use your own words. DO NOT copy from the passage. _____ 371

14. Read the following passage carefully and the instructions below.
- You were in a shop when you saw a person taking articles from a shelf and hiding them in a bag. You realised that the person was stealing. Later, you were asked to write an eye-witness report of what happened for the police.

Write your report, based on the questions below, adding further important details.

- What did the person look like? •What articles were taken?
- How did the person try to leave without paying?
- What part did you play in the incident? •What did others in the shop do?
- Was anyone else at fault? •How did the thief escape?

_____ 373

15. Each year your school has an open day when parents of new pupils are invited to visit the school and see the work of the students. This year, your Principal has asked you to write a leaflet, a copy of which will be given to each family when they arrive; this will serve as a guide and a timetable of events.

You must include details of what can be seen in each of the following places:

- the hall ... welcome by the Principal •the classrooms ... special displays
- science laboratories •outdoor events
- practical areas such as workshops, domestic science or music rooms

The tone should be welcoming and persuasive to show off the advantages of joining your particular school. _____ 375

(2) Letters and Speeches

1. You have been asked to organise an end-of-term outing. Write a report to the school Principal including the following:
- What kind of activities would be suitable?
 - Will any special clothes or equipment be needed?
 - What food will be required? •What transport will be necessary?
 - How much will the outing cost?

_____ 378



2. A television company would like to make a programme about your school. The producer wants to film teachers and students at work, not the buildings and grounds. Your Principal has asked you, as a senior student, to suggest the people and activities to be covered and to explain in detail why you think they should be included. Write your response in the form of a letter to the Principal.

379

3. There has been an outbreak of a strange illness rather like a fever or severe food poisoning.

You represent a group of citizens, and have been asked to write a letter to the people in authority complaining about unsatisfactory local conditions. Here, in random note form, are some of your thoughts:

- people not given enough information
- local school closed
- water supply doubtful
- families suffering inconvenience
- school shopkeeper ill
- loss of education
- school and family events cancelled
- many children ill
- local food supplier dead
- sickness, diarrhoea, high temperature
- unclean food • doctors and nurses slow to act
- need for: official inquiry? medical inspections? — future prevention

Using some or all of the above notes, rearranging them, and adding your own details, write the letter. You may like to begin as follows: Dear Sir, Many people are very upset at the recent outbreak of a serious illness ... _____ 381

4. Planning a school expedition. It is your responsibility as the school organiser to arrange a visit to one of the following:
a museum, a theatre, a nature reserve, a Game Park, a National Park, a place of historical interest, a place of natural beauty, a bird sanctuary.

Produce an information sheet for students and parents. Outline the arrangements for the trip, times, transport, dress, behaviour, cost, food etc. Describe in some detail the attractions and the educational value of the place to be visited.

You might like to start as follows: Dear Parents and Students,

We are planning a school expedition to _____ 383

5. You are in hospital recovering from an operation. Your parents are away. You need to buy some personal items. You also need various books and notes for examination revision. You have some borrowed things which must be returned urgently.



Write a letter to a school friend, in which you explain what has happened; ask for help; give news about yourself and your family; ask for news of school and other friends; and add other details of interest to you both.

Make your letter friendly and informative. _____ 385

6. The following letter has appeared in a newspaper:

Dear Sir,

Two days ago a bunch of noisy teenagers knocked my cigarettes and my radio out of my hands as I was boarding a bus. They pushed me aside and shouted rude words at me.

Isn't it about time the parents and the schools did something to cure the bad manners of students who race about the streets, untidily dressed, insulting people? They have too much freedom and spare time and are always causing trouble. They never think of others.

All young people should be more severely disciplined, have less money and be made to do something useful to keep them off the streets.

Yours faithfully,

A. Beta

You feel strongly about the points made in the above letter. Write your reply to the newspaper. You should begin:

Dear Sir,

.....

Remember to end with 'Yours faithfully' and to add your signature.

_____ 387

7. An election is to be held in your school for members of the Student Council, a group set up to advise the Principal on matters concerning student welfare and discipline. One of your friends hopes to be elected. You are preparing a speech in support of your friend. You have the following notes to help you:

- excellent games player
- top in examinations
- active in school clubs
- organised end-of-year party
- public-speaking competition winner
- always helps new students

Write out your speech in full, using the above list and other ideas of your own. You should write 200 — 300 words. _____ 389

8. At the school gate _____ 391

9. What's new in school _____ 393



[A]

C R E A T I V E
W R I T I N G

(1) Narrative Essays (Stories)

Introduction

Essay titles which require you to narrate stories often give explicit instructions to write an imaginary story. But then again, in some cases, only the essay title is given - leaving the writer to write the type of essay he chooses. In other words, the title does not tell you what type of essay to write. In such circumstances, the writer is entirely privileged to write whatever he chooses. Our advice: choose what you are best at.



-
1. Write a story: 'They did not see the danger until it was too late.'
-

Title: Drugs and death

I shouted, I raved and ranted, but they did not listen. I could see the dangers as I had been there before. I had been in a similar situation and I had seen the devastation it can bring. They laughed at me mercilessly. The fools! Why could they not see that I was not jealous of their happiness? Why could they not understand that I had nothing to gain by stopping them? I could see the hell they were going to face soon. It is too late now. All I can do is cry with them.

I was passing by when I saw them huddled together. I knew they were up to no good. There was one of them looking out for the rest. He warned them. They took a look at the ragged clothes I was wearing and turned back to what they were doing. They were spiking their cigarettes. I knew the pusher who was encouraging them. His own life was ruined and he had ruined many others. He needed to do this in order to feed his own addiction. I pushed my way into the crowd and cried when I saw them ready to light up. I knocked the cigarette out of one of their hands. He was the youngest of the group; all of thirteen years I think. The pusher turned on me with a snarl and pushed me away. Then they lit their cigarettes and started puffing. I saw their faces change. I knew that they were not themselves anymore. I still spoke. I knew it was not too late then. By this time they were too excited to stop. They pushed me aside roughly.

I told them my own tragedy. I told them I had experimented too. I told them about my long jail sentence and about the ruin I had fallen into. I told them it was



The story is usually the favourite choice, the most exciting and the easiest to write. In this case, the title makes for writing an exciting story. We could write a story about a train accident, a plane crash, a collision at sea, the danger of mixing with a group of drug addicts or secret society members - the choices are legion. A good method would be to create a character first and then build a story around him or her.

Challenging Essays For 'O' Level

not too late for them. They looked at me with a superior look, laughed at me and then turned away to continue what they were doing. I cried as I turned away. I knew there was nothing I could do.

It was a month later that I saw them again. They were huddled together under the shade of the coffee stall. They looked terrible now. They were unwashed, unshaven and stank. They were sharing a bottle of water. They looked at me with sad eyes. I wondered if they recognised me. I wondered if they remembered that I was the man who tried to warn them. They turned away. I looked at them. There was no more look of cocksureness. Only quiet despair. They probably saw the danger then, but it was too late. Too late for them. Within a year, some of them will be in prison; some will go through cold turkey; the lucky ones may even die. The worst of them will be like me one day; walking the earth aimlessly; awaiting death. It is too late for me and now for them. I dropped my eyes and walked on.

(509 words)



€ § § § § §



analysis

Apparently the story about one reformed drug addict despairing over some youths about the start of the habit. The end is devastation when they do not see the danger and plunge in. We see the despair and anger in every line. Indeed an emotionally charged story.