



The 20-minute essay plan

200–300 words, one essay, 20 minutes. A fixed plan takes the panic out of it. Print this and practise with it until it's automatic.

1 Use your 20 minutes like this

Minutes	What to do
0–3	Read the prompt twice. Underline what it asks (both views? your opinion? advantages vs disadvantages?). Decide your position and note 2 reasons + 1 example each.
3–17	Write 4 paragraphs (below). Keep an eye on the word count at the bottom of the screen.
17–20	Check: word count (aim 230–270), spelling, full stops, capital letters, subject–verb agreement (<i>it helps, they help</i>).

2 Four paragraphs, about 250 words

Introduction · 40–50 words

Rephrase the topic in your own words, then state your position clearly.

Working from home has become common in many industries. In my view, its benefits clearly outweigh its drawbacks for most office workers.

Body 1 · 70–80 words

Topic sentence → reason → explanation → specific example.

The main advantage is time. ... For example, commuters in Sydney can save more than an hour a day.

Body 2 · 70–80 words

Second reason, **or** the other side and why you still hold your view. "Discuss both views" needs both views here.

However, some argue that ... While this is true, ...

Conclusion · 30–40 words

Restate your position in new words and sum up your main reasons. No new ideas.

In conclusion, I believe ... because ... and ...

3 How the essay is marked (26 points)

- **Content (6):** answer every part of the prompt with reasons and examples
- **Development, structure & coherence (6):** logical paragraphs, linked smoothly
- **General linguistic range (6):** varied, precise language

- **Form (2):** 200–300 words (120–199 or 301–380 = 1)
- **Grammar (2) · Vocabulary (2):** accurate complex sentences, precise words
- **Spelling (2):** one mistake = 1, two or more = 0

Instant zero if...

under 120 or over 380 words · written in capitals · no punctuation · only bullet points · off-topic. Don't memorise a whole template: pre-prepared material can score zero for content.



Practise with instant scoring for all 7 traits

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