

Writing an article

Overview

The purpose of an article is often to inform and persuade the reader. Articles give the reader information about a certain topic, bringing together and discussing different perspectives to provide a balanced argument which lets the reader make up their own mind about the topic. Articles can also be used to persuade the reader that a certain viewpoint is correct. For example, articles in newspapers or magazines might express a particular viewpoint or perspective; this may be positive or negative depending on the topic. The ways you use language and organise your ideas when writing an article will depend on the audience and the purpose you are writing for.

Tips for writing an article

Language – think about:

- **the audience that the article is for** – when writing an article, you do not usually know your readers personally and so you will need to think about their likely interests and experience before you write.
- **how you expect, or want, your audience to react** – remember that the tone of most articles should be semi-formal, so before deciding on your tone imagine your article being read out loud and how that might sound to your reader. For example, an article reviewing a film may be humorous, even sarcastic, but that would not work well for more serious readers or topics.
- **the purpose for the article** – is the purpose, or reason, for writing your article to persuade your readers to agree with you or to invite your readers to think about different points of view and decide for themselves? For example, do you need to sound reliable and well informed, or choose words that strongly convey a particular emotion?
- **how to keep your readers interest** – imagine how boring it would be for your reader if you used the same kind of sentences and simple repetitive vocabulary all the way through your article. Try to include a range of grammatical structures and relevant vocabulary to make sure that your reader wants to keep reading.

Organisation:

- **Plan a route through your article before you start writing it** – the structure of an article is usually in three parts. For example:
 1. **an introduction** – engage your reader's interest and introduce your argument or the main points of the topic to be discussed.
 2. **a middle** – develop relevant and interesting points about the topic to interest and/or convince your readers to think about a particular perspective.
 3. **an end** – draw your points together and leave your reader with a clear impression of the argument you want them to believe or the viewpoints you would like them to consider.
- **Organise your ideas into paragraphs as appropriate** – this will help you to develop and support your points convincingly, to build your argument and/or offer a full explanation of a particular point of view.
- **Show your reader at a glance what your article is about** – articles usually have a suitable headline to attract their readers' attention and you can choose to use subheadings (a bit like mini headlines) to help break your article up and move your reader on. Do not overdo these, but well-chosen subheadings can help to catch and keep your reader's attention, as well as sum up the main points you are making.
- **Show the connections between ideas in sentences and paragraphs** – for example, where a new point or idea follows on from what you have already said you might use linking words or phrases such as, 'in addition', 'likewise' or 'similarly'.

Example of an article

Comments

Online friendships – true or false? 1

In recent years, technology has taken over our daily lives. Many people claim that they simply couldn't imagine a life without the internet and social media. So are your online friendships doing you more harm than good? 2

It has become commonplace in our society to argue that technology is the reason for people being socially distant and experiencing loneliness. 3 Some studies do show a correlation between social media usage and low self-esteem, although there is no solid proof showing that this is the main cause. Indeed, others have come to the defence of the internet and claim it has done the opposite – helped to revive social relationships. Some people find it easier to form relationships when they are hidden behind a screen. 4 It allows them to be themselves without fear of rejection, ridicule and judgement. Soon, they become confident enough to merge their virtual personalities with their offline personalities, becoming a more authentic version of themselves.

5 However, it can be said that online relationships are weaker and not as real as face-to-face relationships. Online relationships are formed easily and quickly. They're not the same as a physical relationship. You might not know anything about an online friend other than the things they choose to post on the internet. Unless you make a point of communicating with all of them for at least two hours every week, you can't even call it a real friendship. The strength of an offline relationship lies in the experiences you share together in the real world.

True, it could be argued that online relationships are not particularly meaningful, but saying that social media friendships are false is not correct. 'You and your real friends may not always be able to meet in person,' explains one lifestyle expert. 6 Social media can be used to keep in touch and ensure that your relationship stays in tact until the next time you meet, and where

1 The learner uses a heading that is relevant to the topic of the article.

2 The learner introduces the topic in the first paragraph and uses a rhetorical question to engage the reader.

3 The paragraph identifies contrasting viewpoints, making it clear where there is support for one view or another.

4 The learner is trying to vary sentence structure and vocabulary.

5 The learner uses an appropriate linking word at the beginning of the paragraph to show they are about to offer a new contrasting argument.

6 The learner develops the argument that online friendships are useful and supports it by reference to a quotation from an expert.

Comments

else can you bond over silly and fun things like memes and cute cat videos? Your social media friendship ensures that no matter how far apart you are, you can always be there for each other. 7

7 Having discussed a number of the arguments, the learner leaves the reader with a strong impression of the value of social media friendships.