



Future Plans and Ambitions

Essay: choosing a career early

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you write.

1. At what age should students think seriously about careers?
2. Can choosing early help students focus?
3. Why might plans change as people grow older?

Exercise 6 at a glance

Write an essay, often for a teacher.
Present an argument or point of view.
Support ideas with reasons and examples.
Use a formal or neutral register.

2. Exam-style task

Your class has recently discussed whether young people should choose a future career while they are still at school. Your teacher has asked you to write an essay giving your opinion about this topic.

In your essay, you should discuss both sides of the argument and give your own view.

Here are some comments from students to help you:

'A clear goal can motivate students.'

'Career plans help with subject choices.'

'People change a lot as they get older.'

'Some students feel pressured too soon.'

Now write an essay for your teacher.

The comments may give you some ideas, and you should also use some ideas of your own.

Write about 120 to 160 words.

3. Model essay

Choosing a career while still at school can be useful, but it can also feel too early for many students. Young people are still discovering their strengths, interests and values. Therefore, career planning should guide students without trapping them.

One argument in favour of early career choices is that a clear goal can improve motivation. For example, students who know they want to work in medicine, engineering or design may choose relevant subjects and look for useful experience. This can make their studies feel purposeful.

On the other hand, teenagers often change their minds. If they are pushed to decide too soon, they may feel anxious or ignore subjects they actually enjoy. A fixed plan could also limit their confidence to explore new possibilities.

In my view, schools should encourage career thinking, but not demand a final decision. Overall, it is better for students to have flexible ambitions than to feel locked into one path too early.

4. Explore the model: structure, argument and register

Work with the model essay. Underline, label or make short notes.

Focus	What to find	Done?
Essay structure	Find the introduction, argument for, argument against and conclusion.	
Content point 1	Where does the writer explain benefits of career planning?	
Content point 2	Where does the writer explain pressure to decide?	
Own view	Where does the writer give a clear personal view in a formal or neutral way?	
Audience and register	Find two places where the essay sounds formal or neutral rather than chatty.	
Development	Find one reason, example or effect that improves the argument.	

5. Language from the task prompts

The task prompts can guide your grammar and content choices. Notice which language each prompt naturally needs.

Prompt	Useful language	Why it fits	Example from the model
benefits of career planning	purpose language	You are explaining why career planning may help students focus.	One argument in favour of early career choices is that a clear goal can improve motivation / For example,...
pressure to decide	possibility and pressure language	You are showing why early decisions may not suit everyone.	If they are pushed to decide too soon, they may feel anxious or ignore subject... / As a result,...
your own view	flexible opinion language	You are giving a view that avoids an extreme position.	In my view, schools should encourage career thinking, but not demand a final decision / Overall,...

6. Build a clear essay

Notice how essay phrases help you organise arguments and make your viewpoint clear.

Job	Useful essay phrases
introduce the issue	This question is not simple. / Many people believe that... / It is important to consider both sides.
present one side	One argument in favour of... is that... / For example,... / This can help...
present the other side	On the other hand,... / However,... / This may cause...
show result	As a result,... / Therefore,... / This means that...
state your view	In my view,... / I believe that... / Overall,...
conclude clearly	The best solution is... / A balanced approach would... / ...without creating unnecessary problems

7. Vocabulary and useful essay phrases

Use chunks that sound natural for this task. You can also upgrade your writing with precise, formal or neutral phrases.

Purpose	Useful chunks / language	Add your own
describe ambitions	career choices / clear goal / future plans / subject choices	
describe benefits	improve motivation / useful experience / purposeful studies	
describe concerns	feel pressured / change their minds / fixed plan / explore possibilities	
sound essay-like	Therefore... / On the other hand... / In my view...	
upgrade ideas	flexible ambitions / relevant subjects / locked into one path	

8. Plan your own essay

Use the same task, or change the details to another school-life issue.

Section	My idea	Useful language
introduction / issue		This question is not simple. / Many people believe...
argument for		One argument in favour of... / For example...
argument against		On the other hand... / This can lead to...
my view		In my view... / I believe that...
conclusion		Overall... / The best solution is...

9. Write your own essay

Write a formal or neutral essay for the task. Discuss both sides, develop your ideas and make your view clear.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

10. Self-check and peer-check

Success criteria	What to check	Self	Peer
Content	The essay discusses both sides of the issue and gives a clear view.		
Essay structure	The answer has an introduction, organised argument paragraphs and a conclusion.		
Audience and register	It sounds formal or neutral and suitable for a teacher.		
Prompt-led language	The writing uses opinion language, contrast linkers and cause/effect language accurately.		
Cohesion	Ideas connect naturally with formal linking phrases such as <i>One argument in favour of...</i> , <i>On the other hand,...</i> , <i>As a result,...</i> and <i>Overall...</i>		
Vocabulary	Topic words and precise phrases, such as flexible ambitions and feel pressured, improve the essay.		
Accuracy	Spelling, punctuation and sentence control are clear enough for the reader.		
WWW:			
EBI:			