



Sports and Leisure

Essay: competitive school sport

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you write.

1. What are the benefits of competitive sport?
2. Can competition put too much pressure on students?
3. How can schools make sport enjoyable for everyone?

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 schools should focus more on competitive sport. 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:

'Competitions encourage students to work hard.'

'Team matches can build confidence and discipline.'

'Not everyone enjoys being compared with others.'

'Leisure activities should also be relaxing.'

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

Sport is an important part of school life, but there is debate about how competitive it should be. Some students enjoy matches, prizes and clear goals, while others prefer sport as a relaxed leisure activity. Both views are worth considering.

One argument in favour of competitive sport is that it can motivate students to improve. For example, training for a match can teach discipline, teamwork and resilience. It may also give confident athletes a chance to challenge themselves and represent the school.

On the other hand, too much competition can make some learners feel anxious or embarrassed. If students are always compared with others, they may avoid sport completely. This is a problem because physical activity should support health, not only achievement.

In my view, schools should offer competitive sport, but it should not be the main focus for everyone. Overall, students need both challenging competitions and enjoyable activities that keep them active.

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 why competition helps?	
Content point 2	Where does the writer explain pressure on students?	
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
why competition helps	motivation language	You are explaining how competition can encourage improvement.	One argument in favour of competitive sport is that it can motivate students to improve / For example,...
pressure on students	pressure and participation language	You are showing why some students may avoid sport.	If students are always compared with others, they may avoid sport completely... / As a result,...
your own view	balanced provision language	You are giving a view about offering different types of sport.	In my view, schools should offer competitive sport, but it should not be the main focus for everyone / 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 sport	competitive sport / matches / training / relaxed leisure activity	
describe benefits	motivate students / discipline / teamwork / resilience	
describe concerns	feel anxious / compared with others / avoid sport / pressure	
sound essay-like	Both views are worth considering... / On the other hand... / Overall...	
upgrade ideas	represent the school / support health / challenging competitions	

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.

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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 represent the school and feel anxious, improve the essay.		
Accuracy	Spelling, punctuation and sentence control are clear enough for the reader.		
WWW:			
EBI:			