Extended Writing Course 2021

Essay Writing Lessons

*Lesson 1:* **Advanced Vocabulary**

This lesson will focus on advanced vocabulary and how to use it effectively in essays. The students will be taught how to use a strategy known as ‘word attack’ to uncover the meanings of advanced words, will learn strategies for remembering advanced vocabulary for an exam setting, and will revise how to use a thesaurus in order to expand their lexical range. We will also cover some etymology, looking at how learning about the origin of words can help us to create a more sophisticated bank of vocab and be able to delineate the meaning of words from an understanding of their roots, prefixes and suffixes. Finally, we will complete some work on ‘up-levelling’ a piece of essay writing to make a more compelling argument. This will also mark the beginning of the weekly vocab lists that will be included at the beginning of every lesson to help the students get used to using advanced vocabulary in context.

***Lesson 2:* Structure and Grammar**

This lesson focuses on structure and grammar in essay writing, thinking about how to use a variety of sentence structures, paragraph structures and overall essay structures to keep the reader captivated. It will focus on how to use high-level punctuation such as semi-colons, hyphens and parentheses to mirror a more academic style of writing, and will also consider the way arguments should be styled and structured to pack a real punch. We will also complete some work on more general grammar, covering things such as perspective and tenses, and will consider how to avoid the passive voice and unnecessary abbreviations and informalities. Finally, we will have a look at some proof-reading resources, thinking about how to spot grammatical mistakes in an exam context. This lesson is designed to give the class all the tools to write a grammatically correct essay that is also structurally varied when under time constraints!

***Lesson 3:* Analytical Essay Writing**

This lesson focuses on introducing the concept of language analysis, considering how an analytical understanding of language can be really helpful for the students’ own writing. The class will be encouraged to discuss elements such as word choice, author intent and the effect of structural and linguistic devices in analysing a non-fiction text. Using comprehension style questions, the students will be asked to pick apart different elements of the text, evaluating what is and isn’t effective and thinking about how they can mirror this in their own writing. They will also have the opportunity to ‘up-level’ this essay, using what they know about advanced vocab and structure to improve upon the writer’s work. They will then write an analytical essay outlining their thoughts and discussing the effect of the essay on the reader, using author intent as a lens through which to view language analysis.

***Lesson 4:* Mock Exam**

This lesson will contain a mock exam to help test the students’ skills, enabling them to showcase all they have learnt about essay writing over the past three sessions. They will be asked to complete a twenty minute exam under timed conditions, which we will then go through step by step as a class. They will have their exam graded and returned to them after the lesson, and can use this as a practice run for the real thing! This lesson is designed to consolidate their knowledge of essay writing, and to help them get used to the format of essay writing in exams. They should use as much high-level vocab as possible, whilst also using lots of varied punctuation, a clear layout, and interesting structural and grammatical devices- all of which we will have covered in the preceding lessons.

***Lesson 5:* Authoritative Voice and Style**

This lesson focuses on building on the students’ confidence in their own writing style, looking at how they can writing a unique and authoritative voice throughout their writing. It will consider how personal writing style is, and how literary techniques can be used to create an effective authorial tone to their writing. The class will analyse different types of writing style, thinking about how syntax, word choice and tone feed into their essays. It will also use debating skills to illustrate how to build complex arguments that reflect their views well, and will overall focus on making sure that they write with confidence and authority in their essays. This lesson aims to help them find their own unique voice, one of the most important skills for effective essay writing and something that will make their work stand out from the crowd and encourage them to experiment with lots of different types of persuasion and argument.

***Lesson 6:* Rhetorical Devices**

This lesson focuses on advancing the class’s knowledge of persuasive devices, thinking about their essays in terms of rhetoric and the flow of the argument. It will use the Aristotelian form of argument- ethos, pathos and logos- to help structure and group their ideas for a more compelling and persuasive style of writing. It will examines ideas such as ‘the tone of the powerful’, how to use anecdotes, and when to switch from a high to a low register for impact. This lesson will also teach the students about sequencing and structuring ideas to create a strong rhetorical flow to their essays, and will consider in more detail how persuasive devices can be utilised in a way that flows naturally and does not feel forced. This lesson aims to build upon what they already know about rhetoric and persuasion, helping them to revise persuasive writing techniques whilst also building upon their understanding of the most effective way to communicate their ideas.

***Lesson 7:* Essay Workshopping**

This lesson takes all of what the students have learnt over the past few months and aims to teach them how to self-evaluate by workshopping an essay of their own. Using an essay the students have written for homework, this class will comb through every part of their work and encourage the class not only to evaluate their own ideas but also to give positive feedback and constructive criticism for the work of their peers. It teaches them how to use a mark scheme effectively, goes over how to proof-read under time pressure, and most importantly gets them to recognise what it most important to an examiner when evaluating essays of this kind. They will also get to spend time re-formulating their own essays to make them the best they can possibly be, using the feedback from their classmates and their own self-evaluation to inspire a new approach to their work- which is particularly good practice in terms of learning the importance of re-drafting an essay. Finally, we will also focus on planning processes, considering what to include in a plan and how to get the most out of the time in an exam.

***Lesson 8:* Mock Exam**

This lesson will contain a mock exam to help test the students’ skills, enabling them to showcase all they have learnt about essay writing over the past three sessions. They will be asked to complete a twenty minute exam under timed conditions, which we will then go through step by step as a class. They will have their exam graded and returned to them after the lesson, and can use this as a practice run for the real thing! This lesson is designed to consolidate their knowledge of essay writing, and to help them get used to the format of essay writing in exams. They should use as much high-level vocab as possible, whilst also using lots of rhetorical devices, a clear layout, and exploring their own authoritative voice- all of which we will have covered in the preceding lessons.

Creative Writing Lessons

*Lesson 9:* **Descriptive Writing**

This lesson will build on what students already know about how to write a vivid descriptive piece, encouraging the class to expand their knowledge and use of different writing techniques to make their work stand out from the crowd. It will teach them how to use a thesaurus in aid of broadening their vocabulary, how to play with the ideas of tone and atmosphere, and will look at how to use sensory language effectively, whilst also considering how to use some advanced literary techniques such as symbols, word sounds (i.e. sibilance, assonance, dissonance) and pathetic fallacy. The class will also be asked to consider the effect and importance of word choice, using their analysis skills to read between the lines of descriptive text. The aim of this lesson is to expand what students already know about writing descriptively and stretch their abilities using some more advanced and high-level techniques to make their work stand out.

*Lesson 10:* **Advanced Literary Techniques**

This lesson focuses on how to construct, analyse and where to use literary techniques, thinking about the various ways of creating original and interesting figurative language. The class looks at how to combine genre with literary techniques, how to understand metaphor in a different light, and how to use figurative language in all different types of writing, straying away from cliched examples of literary techniques and teaching the students methods for ensuring their figurative language is novel and unique. We will be looking at how to move past more simplistic ways of using literary techniques and thinking about how to wow examiners through advanced and sophisticated use of figurative language, metaphor and symbolism.