

How to Write an Opinion Essay (Class 13 – Abitur Level)

What is an Opinion Essay?

An **opinion essay** is a formal argumentative text in which you clearly express your **personal viewpoint** on a controversial topic and support it with convincing arguments.

The main goal is to:

- present your opinion clearly
- explain your arguments logically
- support ideas with examples
- convince the reader

Difference from a discussion essay:

- **Discussion essay:** presents both sides equally before a conclusion.
- **Opinion essay:** focuses mainly on your own position, but you should still mention opposing views.

Structure of an Opinion Essay

1. Introduction (10–15%)

Purpose:

- Introduce the topic.
- Give background information.
- State your opinion (thesis statement).

Structure:

Hook + Background + Thesis

Example:

In today's digital world, social media has become an essential part of young people's lives. While it offers opportunities for communication and learning, its negative effects are

increasingly debated. **In my opinion, social media platforms have a harmful influence on teenagers because they can affect mental health and reduce real-life interaction.**

2. Main Body (70–80%)

Write **3–4 paragraphs**.

Each paragraph should contain **one main argument**.

Use the **PEEL structure**:

P – Point

Introduce your argument.

E – Explain

Explain why it is important.

E – Example/Evidence

Support your argument.

L – Link

Connect back to the topic.

Example Paragraph:

One major reason why social media can be harmful is that it negatively affects teenagers' self-confidence. Many young people compare themselves with unrealistic images online, which can create feelings of insecurity. **For example**, influencers often present idealised lifestyles that do not reflect reality. **Therefore**, excessive social media use may have a damaging impact on young people's mental well-being.

3. Counterargument (Optional but Advanced)

A strong opinion essay acknowledges another viewpoint.

Structure:

Opposing view → Response → Your position

Example:

Some people argue that social media helps teenagers stay connected and exchange ideas. Although this is true to some extent, these benefits do not outweigh the negative consequences of excessive use.

4. Conclusion (10–15%)

Purpose:

- Summarise your main arguments.
- Restate your opinion.
- End with a strong final statement.

Example:

To conclude, although social media provides certain advantages, its negative effects on young people's mental health and communication skills should not be underestimated. Therefore, users should be encouraged to develop a more balanced relationship with digital platforms.

Useful Language for Opinion Essays

Introducing the topic:

- In recent years, ...
- Nowadays, ...
- The question of whether... has become increasingly controversial.

Giving your opinion:

- In my opinion,...
- I firmly believe that...
- From my perspective,...
- It can be argued that...

Presenting arguments:

- One significant reason is...
- Another important aspect is...
- Furthermore,...
- A further advantage/disadvantage is...

Giving examples:

- For example,...
- For instance,...
- This can be seen in...

Adding contrast:

- However,...
- Nevertheless,...
- Although...
- On the other hand,...

Conclusion:

- To conclude,...
- Taking everything into consideration,...
- Ultimately,...

Language Requirements (Class 13)

A strong opinion essay should include:

- ✓ Formal vocabulary
- ✓ Complex sentences
- ✓ Clear linking words
- ✓ Examples and explanations
- ✓ Varied sentence structures

Avoid:

✗ "I think it is good."

Use:

- ✓ "I strongly believe that this approach offers significant benefits."

Opinion Essay Checklist

Content

- ✓ Clear opinion stated
- ✓ Arguments support your position
- ✓ Examples included
- ✓ Opposing view considered

Structure

- ✓ Strong introduction
- ✓ Logical paragraphs
- ✓ Clear conclusion

Language

- ✓ Formal style
- ✓ Academic vocabulary
- ✓ Good connectors
- ✓ Accurate grammar