Grade 12 English: Essay & Creative Writing Guide

Grade 12 | English Home Language | Study Guide | 2024

Free Study Resources for South African Matric Learners

1. Types of Writing (Paper 3)

Transactional Texts

- Formal letter: date, address, salutation (Dear Sir/Madam), body, closing (Yours faithfully)
- Informal letter: friendly tone, personal; closing (Yours sincerely or Love)
- Report: heading, purpose, findings, recommendations, conclusion; formal and objective
- Newspaper/magazine article: headline, intro paragraph (5Ws), inverted pyramid
- Speech/address: audience engagement, rhetorical questions, conclusion
- CV/Resume: personal details, education, experience, references
- Dialogue: realistic conversation; new paragraph per speaker
- Review: film/book; balanced opinion; evidence from text

Essay Types

- Argumentative essay: take a stance and defend it with evidence and reasoning
- Discursive essay: presents BOTH sides of an argument fairly
- Narrative/creative essay: tells a story; focus on plot, character, setting, conflict
- Reflective essay: personal reflection on experience or idea

2. Essay Structure

Introduction (10% of length)

Hook the reader (striking statement, question, quote, surprising fact).
Provide background/context.
End with a clear thesis statement (your main argument).

Body Paragraphs (80% of length)

PEEL structure:
- Point: topic sentence stating the main idea of the paragraph
- Evidence: example, quote, fact to support your point
- Explanation: explain HOW the evidence supports your point
- Link: connect back to thesis or lead to next paragraph

Conclusion (10% of length)

Restate thesis in new words.
Summarise main arguments.
End with a memorable closing thought (do NOT introduce new arguments).

3. Language & Style Tips

- Vary sentence length: short sentences for impact; long sentences for detail
- Use active voice more than passive (makes writing stronger)
- Avoid cliches: find fresh, original ways to express ideas
- Use precise vocabulary: avoid vague words like "thing", "good", "bad", "nice"
- Paragraphing: one main idea per paragraph; link paragraphs with transitions
- Proofread: check spelling, grammar, punctuation, tense consistency

4. Argumentative Essay Tips

-

State your position clearly in the introduction

- Present your strongest argument first
- Acknowledge and refute the opposing view (shows balance and critical thinking)
- Use evidence: statistics, examples, expert opinions, real-world examples
- Avoid emotional language; use logical reasoning
- Conclusion: call to action or strong final statement

TIP Matric Paper 3 essays are marked on: content and planning (30), language use and conventions (10), and structure/format (10). Content mark is highest - make sure your IDEAS are strong.