

## 10 Criteria for writing an article

When writing an article, you want to inform your readers about a certain issue, and express your opinion about it. You might also want to give advice or suggest actions to your readers.

Your language and its degree of formality should be appropriate for your readers. If you use ideas from other materials, restate in your own words the author's views, arguments, or examples or what might be relevant to your point.

### PREPARATION

1) Study the task carefully. Does the task tell you

- the target group your article should address?
- the kind of magazine/brochure you are writing for (e.g. political/educational/business/entertainment)?
- which aspects you should be dealing with?
- the purpose your article should fulfil: e.g. to discuss/comment on an opinion / evaluate/offer solutions to a problem?

2) If you are asked to base your article on information from a given text/s, study it/these carefully. Find and underline the information that is relevant to the task.

3) Highlight key ideas/arguments referring to the topic of your article. Consider which aspects you want to use to support your argument and message.

4) Add your own ideas based on your knowledge about the issue, making notes for your introduction, main part and conclusion:

- Select a beginning suitable for arousing the audience's interest at the beginning of the article.
- Note down arguments the main part should contain or refute.
- Note down facts, examples etc. illustrating your arguments and counterarguments.
- Find facts, experiences, values, issues/problems etc. which show that the message of your article is relevant to the readers' interest.

5) Put your notes in a convincing/logical order.

6) Make sure the content of your notes is relevant to the task, your target group and the message you want to convey.

7) Find an adequate eye-catching heading (and subheadings). Make it as catchy as possible, but bear in mind the type of magazine/brochure and target group you are writing for.

### WRITING THE ARTICLE

#### INTRODUCTION

- Try to arouse the readers' interest with an intriguing opening sentence.
- You can include anecdotes, amusing stories, interesting events, etc. to capture the readers' attention.

- Clearly define your topic focusing on the central idea/aspect of the main message you want to convey.
- Outline the facts explaining *What? Who? When? Where?*
- Make clear why your issue is important.
- Briefly introduce your main arguments.

#### **MAIN PART**

- Focus on the most important points/arguments
- If you base your article on available texts, refer to the general ideas of the material. (When using quotations and direct speech name the source.)
- Underline your main arguments by giving convincing explanations.
- Include examples, evidence, statistical information, personal experiences, etc. to illustrate and strengthen your arguments.

#### **CONCLUSION**

- Indicate that you are coming to your conclusion through phrases such as *in conclusion, finally, as a result, to sum up, etc.*
- Make sure your readers get your message through a convincing final statement / repetition of your main point(s) / an outlook for the future / a call to action etc.

#### **THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT**

- Write clear sentences.
- Be careful with lengthy sentences: Unlike German English tends to use short sentences.
- Write in an appealing way.
- Give examples, avoid clichés.
- Give well-founded arguments/convincing reasons/examples/important facts to back up your points.
- Follow a clear and logical structure by using paragraphs.
- Use active verbs wherever possible.
- Use vocabulary that is appropriate for your target group and purpose.

#### **POINTS TO REMEMBER**

- Use your own words when referring to ideas from the given material. (see above)
- Make sure what you write helps to convey your message.
- Prove what you say with facts/text references.

# 10.1 Self-assessment grid: Writing an article

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done      😐 - OK, needs some improvement      ☹ - No, needs improvement

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>		
	☹	😐	☺	☹	😐	☺	☹	😐	☺
<b>Language and structure</b>									
I have written in a style which is adequate for the target group.									
I have used active verbs wherever possible.									
I have-structured my article using paragraphs/subheadings.									
My longer sentences are also clear and correct.									
<b>Heading and introduction</b>									
I have found an adequate and eye-catching heading.									
The opening sentence and anecdotes etc. arouse the readers' interest.:									
I have clearly defined my topic and the points I want to cover.									
I have outlined the facts (What? Who? When? Where?).									
<b>Main part: convincing arguments</b>									
I have put a clear focus on the most important ideas/arguments for my purpose.									
I have used topic sentences to open my paragraphs.									
I have put forward well-founded, convincing arguments and refuted counterarguments where possible.									
I have referred to supporting evidence/examples/facts/personal experiences.									

I have used ideas from the given text(s) / from other material and my knowledge about the issue.				
<b>Conclusion: final statement</b>				
I have made clear that I am coming to my conclusion, e.g. in conclusion, as a result, to sum up.				
I have stated my most important point(s) / made a convincing final statement / a call to action etc.				
<b>Final check</b>				
I have fulfilled the general purpose of my article: commented on / offered solutions to the problem etc.				
In all parts I have focused on my aim.				
I have based all my statements on facts/examples.				
I have linked my ideas in a convincing way.				
I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling with the help of a dictionary / made sure that I have included the relevant aspects from my notes.				