

A/L GENERAL ENGLISH · PRACTICE PAPER SERIES

THE ESSAY BANK

10 model answers for Paper II, Question 13

20 MARKS

150–200 WORDS

MARK BOXES: C – L – O

5 AGREE / DISAGREE · 5 DISCUSS BOTH VIEWS

FREE TO USE · NOT FOR SALE

Written at the level a careful, average Grade 12 student can actually produce in 25 minutes, by hand. Copy the shape, not the words.

Progress Today. **Greatness** Tomorrow.

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PART 1 · BEFORE YOU READ

WHAT THESE ARE WRITTEN TO MATCH

Two consecutive argumentative essays in the real paper, so the ten below are 5 agree/disagree + 5 discuss-both-views, spread across the eight textbook units.

Year	Type	Topic	Unit
2020	Story completion	walking home at night in a storm	—
2024	Discuss both views + your opinion	arranged marriage vs choosing your own partner	03
2025	Agree or disagree	"Social media literacy should be taught in schools."	06

The level these are pitched at — read this first

These are deliberately **not** brilliant essays. They are what a careful, average Grade 12 student can actually produce in 25 minutes, under pressure, by hand. That is the point:

- Sentences are mostly **10–18 words**. Nothing long enough to go wrong.
- Vocabulary is **ordinary** — *useful, important, difficult, jobs, future, families*. No word here is one a Grade 12 student would not already own.
- Grammar is **simple but correct**: present simple, *can/should/must*, one or two *if* clauses, a few *who/which* clauses. No inversions, no perfect passives, no semicolons.
- Every essay has **four or five short paragraphs** with a visible plan.
- Linking words are the plain ones: *Firstly, Secondly, However, On the other hand, In my opinion, In conclusion, For example, Therefore*.

THE EXAMINER'S VIEW

An examiner marking C–L–O rewards relevance, a clear position, and accuracy — not vocabulary that looks borrowed. A simple correct sentence always beats an ambitious wrong one.



PART 2 · THE ESSAYS

THE TEN ESSAYS

Five agree/disagree and five discuss-both-views, one page each. Read the question first, then the essay, then the margin labels.

#	Title	Type	Unit	Words
01	AI tools in schools	Agree / disagree	06 — The Cyber World ·	185
02	Online learning and the classroom	Discuss both views	06 + 07	178
03	Mobile phones in school	Agree / disagree	06 — The Cyber World	172
04	Working abroad	Discuss both views	08 — Employment	172
05	Private tuition classes	Discuss both views	07 — Continuing Education	174
06	Protecting the environment	Agree / disagree	05 — Crime and Social Responsibility	178
07	Teaching about every community	Agree / disagree	02 — Living in Harmony	171
08	Vocational training or a degree	Discuss both views	07 + 08	167
09	The importance of English	Agree / disagree	04 — English as a Local and Global Language	172
10	Sports and clubs during the A/L years	Discuss both views	01 + 03	172



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER



AI TOOLS IN SCHOOLS

AGREE / DISAGREE

UNIT 06 — THE CYBER WORLD ·

185 WORDS

TOP-RANKED 2026 PREDICTION

THE QUESTION

It is proposed that "Artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT should be allowed in schools." Do you agree or disagree? Write an essay giving reasons for your choice.

INTRO Nowadays many students use artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT for their studies. Some people think these tools should not be allowed in schools. I agree that they should be allowed, but only with proper guidance from teachers.

BODY 1 Firstly, these tools can help students to learn faster. A student who does not understand a lesson can ask a question at any time and get a simple explanation. This is very useful for students in rural areas who cannot attend extra classes. For example, a student can ask AI to explain a difficult grammar rule in a simple way.

BODY 2 Secondly, we cannot stop the future. AI is already used in many jobs, so students must learn how to use it correctly. If schools ban it completely, students will still use it at home without knowing its dangers.

COUNTER However, I accept that some students may copy answers without thinking. Therefore, teachers should teach them to use AI as a helper, not as a shortcut.

CONCLUSION In conclusion, I believe AI tools should be allowed in schools with clear rules, because they help learning and prepare students for the future.

WHY IT SCORES · C - L - O

Content: the position is stated in the first paragraph and restated at the end; the counter-argument is admitted and answered. Language: 10–18-word sentences, present simple and modals, no risks. Organisation: Firstly / Secondly / However / In conclusion.



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER

02

ONLINE LEARNING AND THE CLASSROOM

DISCUSS BOTH VIEWS

UNIT 06 + 07

178 WORDS

THE QUESTION

Some people believe that online learning can replace classroom teaching. Others think that classroom teaching is still necessary. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

INTRO

During the pandemic, many students in Sri Lanka followed their lessons online. Since then, people have argued about whether online learning can replace the classroom. This essay will look at both sides.

VIEW 1

On the one hand, online learning has many advantages. Students can study from home and save the time and money they spend on travelling. Lessons can be recorded, so a student who misses a class can watch it again later. It also allows students in remote villages to learn from good teachers in the city.

VIEW 2

On the other hand, many people believe the classroom is still important. In a classroom, a student can ask questions immediately and get help from the teacher. Students also learn to work together and make friends, which is difficult through a screen. Moreover, not every family can afford a smartphone or a good internet connection.

OPINION

In my opinion, online learning is a useful support, but it cannot fully replace the classroom. The best method is to use both together, so that students get the benefits of technology and of face-to-face teaching.

WHY IT SCORES · C – L – O

Content: both sides get three reasons each, and the writer's own opinion is clearly given — the mark most students lose. Language: short, correct sentences with ordinary vocabulary. Organisation: On the one hand / On the other hand / In my opinion.



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER



MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOL

AGREE / DISAGREE

UNIT 06 — THE CYBER WORLD

172 WORDS

THE QUESTION

It is proposed that "Mobile phones should be banned in schools." Do you agree or disagree? Write an essay giving reasons for your choice.

INTRO | Mobile phones have become a part of every student's life. Some people say that schools should ban them completely. I disagree with this idea, because a phone can be useful if it is used properly.

BODY 1 | Firstly, a mobile phone is a good learning tool. Students can search for information, watch educational videos and download past papers. A student who does not have books at home can find them on the internet.

BODY 2 | Secondly, phones are important for safety. Many students travel long distances to school. If a bus is late or a child falls ill, the parents can be informed at once.

COUNTER | However, I understand the problem. Some students use phones during lessons, play games and even take photographs without permission. Therefore, instead of a complete ban, schools should make clear rules. Students can keep their phones in their bags during lessons and use them only when the teacher allows it.

CONCLUSION | In conclusion, I do not agree that phones should be banned. The real solution is to teach students to use them responsibly.

WHY IT SCORES · C - L - O

Content: the position is stated in the first paragraph and restated at the end; the counter-argument is admitted and answered. Language: 10–18-word sentences, present simple and modals, no risks. Organisation: Firstly / Secondly / However / In conclusion.



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER

**WORKING ABROAD**

DISCUSS BOTH VIEWS

UNIT 08 — EMPLOYMENT

172 WORDS

OVERDUE UNIT

THE QUESTION

Some people believe that young Sri Lankans should seek employment abroad because salaries and opportunities are better. Others think that qualified people should remain and build their careers in their own country. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

INTRO

Every year, thousands of young Sri Lankans leave the country to work abroad. Some people support this, while others believe that qualified people should remain at home. Both sides have strong arguments.

VIEW 1

Those who support migration think mainly about money. Salaries in other countries are often three or four times higher than salaries here. Workers can support their families, build a house and give their children a better education. The money they send home is also important for our economy.

VIEW 2

However, others say that the country loses too much. When doctors, engineers and teachers leave, the government loses the free education it gave them. Hospitals and schools are left without enough staff. Families are also separated for many years, and children grow up without their parents.

OPINION

In my opinion, people have the right to decide about their own future, and nobody should be blamed for going abroad. However, I hope our country will improve salaries and working conditions, so that talented young people will want to stay and serve their own nation.

WHY IT SCORES · C - L - O

Content: both sides get three reasons each, and the writer's own opinion is clearly given — the mark most students lose. Language: short, correct sentences with ordinary vocabulary. Organisation: On the one hand / On the other hand / In my opinion.



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER

05

PRIVATE TUITION CLASSES

DISCUSS BOTH VIEWS

UNIT 07 — CONTINUING EDUCATION

174 WORDS

THE QUESTION

Some people believe that private tuition classes are essential for success at the Advanced Level examination. Others argue that they do more harm than good. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

INTRO

Almost every Advanced Level student in Sri Lanka attends tuition classes. Some people believe that these classes are necessary, but others think they cause more harm than good.

VIEW 1

Those who support tuition give several reasons. In a tuition class, a student can get extra practice and learn examination techniques. Many school classes are large, so a student may not get enough attention from the teacher. Tuition also helps weak students to cover the parts of the syllabus they have missed.

VIEW 2

On the other hand, there are serious problems. Tuition classes are expensive, and poor families cannot afford them. Students travel from class to class until late at night and get very little rest. Some students even stop attending school because they believe tuition is enough.

OPINION

In my opinion, tuition can be helpful, but it should not take the place of school. A student should choose only one or two classes, for the subjects that are difficult. The rest of the time should be used for self-study and rest, which are equally important for success.

WHY IT SCORES · C – L – O

Content: both sides get three reasons each, and the writer's own opinion is clearly given — the mark most students lose. Language: short, correct sentences with ordinary vocabulary. Organisation: On the one hand / On the other hand / In my opinion.



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER



PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

AGREE / DISAGREE

UNIT 05 — CRIME AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

178 WORDS

THE QUESTION

It is proposed that "Protecting the environment is the responsibility of every citizen, and not of the government alone." Do you agree or disagree?

INTRO Sri Lanka is facing many environmental problems today. Rivers are polluted, forests are cut down and floods happen more often than before. Some people believe that only the government can solve these problems. I strongly agree that every citizen has a responsibility too.

BODY 1 Firstly, the government cannot do everything alone. There are millions of people in our country, but only a few officers to check them. If each person throws rubbish into a canal, no ministry can keep it clean. Change must begin at home.

BODY 2 Secondly, small actions can bring big results. If we refuse polythene bags, plant a tree and use water carefully, we save a great deal in one year. When many families do the same thing, the effect is very large.

COUNTER Of course, the government must also make strong laws and punish those who break them. However, laws alone are not enough without public support.

CONCLUSION In conclusion, I firmly believe that protecting the environment is a duty we all share. The country we leave for our children depends on what each of us does today.

WHY IT SCORES · C - L - O

Content: the position is stated in the first paragraph and restated at the end; the counter-argument is admitted and answered. Language: 10–18-word sentences, present simple and modals, no risks. Organisation: Firstly / Secondly / However / In conclusion.



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER



TEACHING ABOUT EVERY COMMUNITY

AGREE / DISAGREE

UNIT 02 — LIVING IN HARMONY

171 WORDS

NEVER USED IN A MAJOR QUESTION

THE QUESTION

It is proposed that "All schools should teach students about the religions and cultures of every community in the country." Do you agree or disagree?

INTRO Sri Lanka is a country with many communities, languages and religions. Some people suggest that every school should teach students about all of them. I completely agree with this idea.

BODY 1 Firstly, most misunderstandings happen because people do not know each other. A student who never learns about the festivals of another community may easily believe false stories about it. If children learn the truth at school, they will not be misled later.

BODY 2 Secondly, this knowledge is useful in daily life. When we start working, we meet people from every community. A person who understands different customs can work with others easily and avoid hurting their feelings.

COUNTER Some people may argue that the syllabus is already too heavy. This is true, but such lessons need not be long. Even one period a week, or a shared festival celebrated in school, would be enough.

CONCLUSION In conclusion, I agree that all schools should teach about every community. Our country has suffered enough from misunderstanding, and education is the safest way to build lasting harmony.

WHY IT SCORES · C - L - O

Content: the position is stated in the first paragraph and restated at the end; the counter-argument is admitted and answered. Language: 10–18-word sentences, present simple and modals, no risks. Organisation: Firstly / Secondly / However / In conclusion.



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER



VOCATIONAL TRAINING OR A DEGREE

DISCUSS BOTH VIEWS

UNIT 07 + 08

167 WORDS

THE QUESTION

Some people believe that young people should follow vocational training instead of trying to enter university. Others believe that a university degree is still the best choice. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

INTRO

After the Advanced Level examination, students must decide what to do next. Some believe that vocational training is the better choice, while others still prefer a university degree.

VIEW 1

Those who support vocational training say it is practical. The courses are short, and students learn a real skill such as welding, hotel management or information technology. There are many jobs waiting for skilled workers, both in Sri Lanka and abroad. Also, only a small number of students can enter a state university, so the others should not waste years waiting.

VIEW 2

On the other side, a university degree still has great value. Degree holders can enter the professions and usually earn more over their whole career. University life also develops confidence, English and the ability to think independently.

OPINION

In my opinion, neither path is better than the other. What matters is the interest and the ability of the student. A good technician is far more useful to the country than an unhappy graduate who cannot find a suitable job.

WHY IT SCORES · C - L - O

Content: both sides get three reasons each, and the writer's own opinion is clearly given — the mark most students lose. Language: short, correct sentences with ordinary vocabulary. Organisation: On the one hand / On the other hand / In my opinion.



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER



THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH

AGREE / DISAGREE

UNIT 04 — ENGLISH AS A LOCAL AND GLOBAL LANGUAGE

172 WORDS

THE QUESTION

It is proposed that "A good knowledge of English is essential for every young Sri Lankan today." Do you agree or disagree?

INTRO English is used everywhere in the world today. Some people say that a young Sri Lankan can succeed without it. I strongly disagree with them, because English has become necessary in almost every field.

BODY 1 Firstly, English is needed for higher education. Most university lectures, textbooks and research papers are in English. A student who is weak in English will find it very difficult to follow a degree course, even if that student is clever in the subject.

BODY 2 Secondly, English is important for employment. When we look at newspaper advertisements, most of them ask for a good knowledge of English. In banks, hotels and companies, workers must speak to customers and write letters in English every day.

COUNTER Some people say that we should protect our own languages instead. I agree that our mother tongue is precious, but learning English does not mean forgetting Sinhala or Tamil. We can be good at all three.

CONCLUSION In conclusion, I firmly believe that English is essential today. It opens doors to education, employment and the wider world.

WHY IT SCORES · C – L – O

Content: the position is stated in the first paragraph and restated at the end; the counter-argument is admitted and answered. Language: 10–18-word sentences, present simple and modals, no risks. Organisation: Firstly / Secondly / However / In conclusion.



PAPER II · QUESTION 13 · MODEL ANSWER

**SPORTS AND CLUBS DURING THE A/L YEARS**

DISCUSS BOTH VIEWS

UNIT 01 + 03

172 WORDS

THE QUESTION

Some parents believe that Advanced Level students should give up sports and clubs and study only for the examination. Others believe that these activities are still necessary. Discuss both views and give your opinion.

INTRO

When students enter the Advanced Level class, many parents ask them to stop sports and other activities. Others believe that such activities are still necessary. Let us look at both opinions.

VIEW 1

Parents who want students to stop have a reason. The Advanced Level examination is very competitive, and only a small number of students enter university. Practices and matches take many hours every week. A student who is tired after a long practice may not be able to study at night.

VIEW 2

However, the other side is also strong. Sports keep the body healthy and reduce the stress of studying. In clubs, students learn leadership, teamwork and how to speak in public. These qualities are needed at interviews and in every workplace, but they are never taught in a textbook.

OPINION

In my opinion, students should not give up these activities completely. A balance is the best answer. Two or three hours a week for sports will not spoil anyone's results, but it will keep a student healthy, happy and ready to work hard.

WHY IT SCORES · C - L - O

Content: both sides get three reasons each, and the writer's own opinion is clearly given — the mark most students lose. Language: short, correct sentences with ordinary vocabulary. Organisation: On the one hand / On the other hand / In my opinion.



PART 3 · METHOD

HOW TO USE THESE TEN ESSAYS

DO NOT MEMORISE THEM

Examiners read thousands of scripts and recognise a memorised answer instantly; worse, a memorised essay almost never fits the exact question asked, and Content is the first thing you lose.

- 1 **Copy the shape, not the words.** Every one of these follows the same plan. Learn the plan.
- 2 **Practise the opening two sentences** until you can write them for any topic in ninety seconds. That is where most students waste time.
- 3 **Steal the linking words.** They are the same eight or nine in all ten essays.
- 4 **Time yourself: 25 minutes.** Five to plan, eighteen to write, two to check.

The plan behind all ten

AGREE / DISAGREE · ESSAYS 1, 3, 6, 7, 9

INTRO

Say what the topic is (1 sentence). Say what some people think (1 sentence). State YOUR position clearly (1 sentence).

BODY 1

"Firstly, ..." → your strongest reason + an explanation + an example.

BODY 2

"Secondly, ..." → your second reason + explanation.

COUNTER

"However, ..." / "Some people may argue that ..." → admit the other side in one sentence, then answer it in one sentence.

CONCLUSION

"In conclusion, I believe ..." → restate your position in different words and end with one strong idea.

DISCUSS BOTH VIEWS · ESSAYS 2, 4, 5, 8, 10

INTRO

Say what the situation is (1 sentence). Say that opinions are divided (1 sentence). Say you will look at both sides (1 sentence).

BODY 1

"On the one hand, ..." / "Those who support X say ..." → 3 reasons for side one.

BODY 2

"On the other hand, ..." / "However, others say ..." → 3 reasons for side two.

CONCLUSION

"In my opinion, ..." → your own position, with a reason.

THE MISTAKE THAT COSTS MOST MARKS

Giving both sides and then never saying what you think. The question says "give your opinion." If your opinion is missing, Content marks go.



PART 4 · TOOLKIT

THE PHRASE BANK USED IN THESE ESSAYS

Everything below appears in at least one of the ten. This is all you need.

Purpose	Phrases
Opening	<i>Nowadays many students ... · Every year, thousands of ... · Sri Lanka is a country with ... · After the Advanced Level examination, ...</i>
Naming the debate	<i>Some people think ... · Some people say that ... · Others believe that ... · This essay will look at both sides. · Let us look at both opinions.</i>
Stating your position	<i>I agree that ... · I disagree with this idea, because ... · I strongly agree that ... · I completely agree with this idea.</i>
Ordering reasons	<i>Firstly, ... · Secondly, ... · Also, ... · Moreover, ...</i>
Giving both sides	<i>On the one hand, ... · On the other hand, ... · Those who support ... say ... · However, others say that ...</i>
Giving an example	<i>For example, ... · When we look at ...</i>
Admitting the other side	<i>However, I accept that ... · Some people may argue that ... · Of course, ... · This is true, but ...</i>
Cause and result	<i>because ... · so ... · Therefore, ... · As a result, ...</i>
Concluding	<i>In conclusion, I believe ... · In my opinion, ... · I firmly believe that ...</i>

Ten sentence patterns that carry these essays

Learn these frames and you can write about almost any topic:

- 1 Some people believe that ____, but others think that ____.
- 2 Firstly, ____ can help students to ____.
- 3 A student who ____ can ____.
- 4 This is very useful for ____ who cannot ____.
- 5 For example, ____.
- 6 If ____, ____ will ____.
- 7 However, I accept that ____.
- 8 Therefore, ____ should ____.
- 9 In my opinion, ____, but ____.
- 10 In conclusion, I believe that ____, because ____.

Checklist before you hand the paper in

- ☐ Did I answer the **exact** question, or a similar one I had practised?
- ☐ Is my **own opinion** clearly stated?
- ☐ Are there **four or five paragraphs** with visible gaps between them?



- ☐ Am I between **150 and 200 words**? (For most handwriting, that is 12–16 lines.)
- ☐ Capital letter at the start of every sentence, full stop at the end?
- ☐ Subject–verb agreement in every sentence (*students are, a student is*)?
- ☐ Did I use at least **four different linking words**?
- ☐ Can the examiner read my handwriting?

A note on the story format

In **2020**, Question 13 was not an essay at all — it was **story completion** from a given opening paragraph. That format has not returned in 2024 or 2025, but it costs you nothing to be ready for it. The essentials:

- Continue from the exact moment given; do not start again.
- Stay in the **past tense** and keep the same person (I / he / she) throughout.
- **One incident only.** Two hundred words is not room for a plot.
- Use time markers: *Suddenly, / A few minutes later, / Just then, / Finally,*
- End with one sentence of reflection: *I will never forget that evening.*