

# AGADIR FRENCH HIGH SCHOOL

## Writing Strategy

### Duration

Time you generally spend on :

- ✓ the writing (as opposed to the reading section of the exam): .....
- ✓ the essay preparation on draft papers:
  - concept-mapping : .....
  - preparing the outline : .....
  - writing the conclusion : .....
  - writing the introduction : .....
- ✓ 'writing' on the answer sheet : .....
- ✓ Proofreading : .....

### Steps to follow

1. Highlight the keywords in the essay question
2. Make sure you understand them (if possible, use the "Wh" techniques : Who, What, Where, Why, When - and How)
3. Rephrase the essay question
4. Define the purpose of the essay
5. Prepare a Concept-map / Spidergram : use circle and lines (just as we do in class and associate vocabulary, concepts, ideas, arguments, examples linked to the topic (the more time you spend, the more and better ideas you may be): Find counterargument, Explain the problem, define the purpose. Don't censor yourself and don't pay attention to the grammar/spelling... "Don't get it right, just get it written"
6. Classify the ideas by order of importance and select the best ones for your essay, get rid of irrelevant ideas or the ones that you cannot support with arguments or examples
7. Organize your ideas in the outline Check the order of paragraphs within each section
8. Write the conclusion on the draft paper (follow the diagram)
9. Write the introduction on the draft paper (follow the diagram)
10. Write the essay on your answer sheet
11. Proofread your essay by paying a special attention to the common errors listed in your journal

### Baccalauréat Assessment Criteria (LV1 – LV2)

- Identification et exploitation des contenus (6pts)
- Cohérence et adaptation de la production (8pts)
- Correction grammaticale (6pts)
- Richesse de la langue (6pts)

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## Most Common Mistakes in your Essays

### Structure

- **Lack of thesis statement (what we call in French : 'problématique')** : the basic question that could sum up the debate
- **Lack of Structure in the essay/ No Outline** : You have to write the outline on your draft paper. There should be 2 paragraphs minimum in each main sections of your essay and try to have the same number of paragraph in each one.
- **Lack of Structure in each paragraph** : 1 paragraph → 1 idea → reason(s)/argument(s) → support(s)/example(s). You should direct your essay and that you can support with arguments and not just mention a fact. Example: "Wearing uniforms at school is bad."
- **No Evidence** : The objective of your essay is to prove something through arguments and examples .
- **Repetition** : Each paragraph should have a different focus (≠ ideas and arguments).
- **No Introduction or no structure in the introduction (see Diagram)** : For argumentative essays : see diagram. A person should be able to guess the essay question just by reading the introduction. For dialogues, you need to draw an introduction (Who, What, Where, When)
- **No Conclusion or no structure in the conclusion (see Diagram)**
- **Opinion given in the introduction** : the objective of the essay is to
- **Lack of Transition** : Add a simple sentence introducing the idea at the beginning of each paragraph. Draw a transition between each of the main parts also so that the statements flow smoothly from one another
- **No polite phrases in letters or emails** : you just need to learn them !

### Essay Format

- ✓ **Essay question not specified before the essay** : make sure you always mention which essay question you have chosen when two are offered. Make sure you know whether you have to answer one of them or both !
- ✓ **Wrong type of essay** : determine whether it is a letter/an email, an argumentative essay, a sequel of a story (a narrative essay), a diary entry, a dialogue...
- ✓ **No wordcount** : it is compulsory (you're allowed to go within a 10% margin)
- ✓ **Essay Set-up** : Skip 1 or 2 line(s) after the introduction and before the conclusion and skip a line after each paragraph and before and after the transition

### Style/ Vocabulary

- ✓ **Long sentences** : KISS rule : keep it short and simple
- ✓ **Incorrect Abbreviations** : Don't use abbreviations as if you were chatting with friends ('CU in Agadir 2mrw')
- ✓ **Informal Vocabulary** : In order to write an argumentative essay, you have to use formal language instead of informal / colloquialism (that is used in a conversation)
- ✓ **No link words** : Learn a couple of them. Avoid starting a sentence with 'and' and 'but'. Check the document 'structureur son discours'
- ✓ **Incorrect word usage** : To give an example, do not use 'like' but : for example, for instance, such as... and try not to mention the essay, the paragraphs or the parts (e.g. 'in my essay', 'this essay will discuss'...)
- ✓ **Imprecise words** : avoid 'bad', 'good', 'important'...

### Spelling/Grammar/Punctuation Mistakes

- ✓ **General mistakes** : make sure you check the « avoiding mistakes document »
- ✓ **Tenses** (« S » for the 3rd person simple present, irregular verbs, past in narrative essay : the same tense is used throughout the essay...)
- ✓ **Modal auxiliaries** + verb w/o to
- ✓ **Subject and Verb Agreement** : proofread to avoid that type of mistake
- ✓ **Pronoun and Noun Agreement** : proofread to avoid that type of mistake
- ✓ **Plural form** : « S » at the end and learn irregular plural forms
- ✓ **Adjectives** : adjectives precede the noun they modify, No « S » at the end for the plural form
- ✓ **English syntax** : learn the rules and proofread to avoid that type of mistake
- ✓ **Punctuation Problems** : Read through your essay one time just for punctuation
- ✓ **Wrong Capitalization** : for example : capitalize the letter 'i' when referring to yourself





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## Diagram of an argumentative Essay with 2 parts & 3 sections each

### INTRODUCTION

Start with a general statement about the topic (background information & capture reader's interest)  
Rephrase the essay question - in your own words -  
Present your outline clearly

### BODY / DEVELOPMENT

#### 1ST PART : For the ideas that are less significant according to you

1st paragraph : 1 idea (the "weakest"/the most obvious one you have) → argument(s) → example(s) : literary work / quotation / movie / personal anecdote...

2nd paragraph : 1 idea (average one) → argument(s) → example(s) : literary work / quotation / movie / personal anecdote...

3rd paragraph : 1 idea (the strongest/the most significant one) → argument(s) → example(s) : literary work / quotation / movie / personal anecdote...

### TRANSITION

#### 2ND PART : For the ideas you believe in

1st paragraph : 1 idea (the "weakest"/the most obvious one you have) → argument(s) → example(s) : literary work / quotation / movie / personal anecdote...

2nd paragraph : 1 idea (average one) → argument(s) → example(s) : literary work / quotation / movie / personal anecdote...

3rd paragraph : 1 idea (the strongest/the most significant one) → argument(s) → example(s) : literary work / quotation / movie / personal anecdote...

### CONCLUSION

Summarize what you have said in your essay  
Give a final insight / Open up the topic with a question

Wordcount