

Candidate 2

The candidate evidence used in this workshop has achieved the following marks for this Course Assessment component.

There's no place like home school...

The candidate has chosen to write a discursive essay on home schooling. There is clear attention to purpose and audience: the essay sticks firmly to the subject, which it examines in some detail. The writer shows clear understanding of and engagement with the topic of home schooling as shown by careful research into various aspects of it. The title is aptly chosen and catches the reader's attention as does the use of a learning intention and the opening question. The essay begins by making clear society's tendency to be critical of home schooling, while indicating the writer's support. It goes on to deal with some of the problems of a structured school day set against the individual nature of home schooling and the benefits it brings. Research is used throughout to support comments on motivation, the benefits of learning through life experiences and the importance of outside activities. The expression is clear and various linguistic techniques are used successfully to create impact.

The essay provokes debate in its audience by the opening learning intention – 'to be able to enjoy learning in a non-pressurised environment'. This is followed by a question challenging formal schooling as the key to a child's success. This sets up the writer's response that she strongly supports home schooling in its use of pace and a variety of methods to suit the learner. There is a clear line of thought with each paragraph developing the argument further.

Paragraph 2 deals with the happiness of young people. It opens with a three item list of three negative feelings rarely experienced in home schooling – 'Stress, pressure, anxiety'. This is a linguistic feature used to argue or persuade. This leads the writer to proclaim that it is a human right 'to have freedom' and to contrast this right with the rigid structure of school. The advantages of home schooling in the form of sleep, and consequently health benefits to the teenagers involved are stated from research findings. Again, the writer uses a question about the reason for school's centrality in education. This leads to the careful selection of American research findings on the increased number of home schooled pupils who are happy compared to those in a formal school environment.

Paragraph 3 deals with a comparison of educational achievement between home-schooled and formally schooled students. It focuses on the specific advantages for each child being educated at home with an education tailored to that child's individual needs. Unlike the same pace for all learners approach of school, the writer states that the 'home educator has the opportunity to assess their learner's strengths, weaknesses and learning styles with the addition of identifying their personal interests in life'. The results of a Canadian study showing that home-schooled pupils outperform those in public school supports the writer's argument and again shows evidence of careful research selection, although it is based on a small sample (74 candidates).

Paragraph 4 continues to promote the benefits of home schooling in the form of motivation. This is effectively highlighted by the use of a one word sentence. While the benefits of smaller class size are established by the results of the experimental study quoted, and it does strengthen the writer's case that home schooling is more beneficial, the point is perhaps slightly less convincing. This is because the research is based on the formal setting of a kindergarten, and the writer extrapolates from this that 'one to one' teaching must therefore be better. Although this may be a reasonable assumption to make, the link with the evidence is indirect.

Paragraph 5, which begins 'Every single person's life', deals with the importance of each individual child learning through 'everyday experiences in different environments rather than a formal school setting'. The advantage of being able to access a wide variety of different educational excursions to increase knowledge in many subject areas is highlighted as being central to home schooling, while the writer concedes that formal schooling does include some of these opportunities, but to a more limited extent. The paragraph ends with the statistic of 92% on a home school blog feeling that being home schooled had been an advantage to them in later life. There is a final sentence flourish in 'Home schooling opportunities may be the road to success' before the candidate moves to consider the opposition.

Paragraph 6 clearly shows the candidate's use of structure to enhance her argument. We have had the proposition, now we turn to the opposing argument. It opens with a recognition that school does provide children with chances to socialise with those of a similar age and personality. The writer is happy to accept this point, but it is made clear that home schooled children have greater opportunities to interact with people from all age groups. Having made this point, it is backed up by Dr Ray's evidence that home schooled children are involved in 5.2 extra-curricular activities which is more than those in formal schooling.

The penultimate paragraph makes clear the writer's early experience of home schooling and her strong support as a result. The ability to cope with life's 'little puzzles' as well as learning facts has helped the writer in her family life, especially with her grandfather, and this is expressed in a finely balanced sentence using repetition and 'not only . . . but also': 'Being home schooled not only allowed me to learn in a place where I was comfortable and safe, but it also allowed me to appreciate the little solutions to huge problems'. While this provides clear evidence of the candidate's engaged stance, it could have been developed at greater length.

The final paragraph rounds off the essay neatly with the short, effective well known saying: 'There is no place like home', recalling the title and coming full circle. This sentence is then developed to make the writer's final point. The final sentence with its rhetorical echo – 'No place like home schooling, to become an intelligent individual' – leaves the reader in no doubt about this writer's line of thought and ability to use a structure which enhances the purpose of promoting home schooling.

This essay fits the band 12-10 in its clear attention to purpose and audience. There is evidence of clear understanding and engagement, careful research and selection and a clear line of thought. There are linguistic features of groups of three, use of questions, the presentation of points followed by evidence and evaluation. The structure is clear throughout. As a result, this essay has been placed in the middle of the band and given **11 marks**.