

UPPER INTERMEDIATE UNIT 8

an informal article

speakout WRITING TIP

When you write an informal article, you should use conversational language and talk directly to the reader. Although the article is informal, it is important to structure it clearly. Write an introduction, separate paragraphs to illustrate your different points and a conclusion.

1A Read the first paragraph of the article below. What is it about? What advice do you think the author is going to give?

B Read the rest of the article and check your ideas. Do you think that the article is clearly structured? Why/Why not?

Do you panic when exam time comes around? Are you always up late the night before, cramming for the exam the next day? If you answered yes to these two questions, I think I might be able to help you! Here are some ideas that have worked for me when I've done exams – and they just might work for you, too!

First of all, you need to prioritise. Not all exams are equally important – some are much more important than others! So, if an exam is really vital, schedule more time for revision but if it's not crucial, don't spend so long preparing for it. For what it's worth, here's what I do ... First, I rank my exams in order of importance. Then I draw up a revision timetable a long time before the exams begin. Personally, I find it much easier to do a bit of revision every day over a long period rather than to revise like crazy just before the exam.

Second, you need to stick to your plan. This is the hard bit! A couple of months before you have to do your exams they can still seem a long way off, so it's difficult to find the motivation to get down to any serious work. Don't let this happen to you! I've found that the best way round this problem is to have a fixed routine – so I try to revise every day at the same time, just as if I was doing a job.

Finally, you're much more likely to pass an exam if you spend time revising the things that you find difficult – and not the things that you can do in your sleep! Of course, we all like to focus on stuff what we already know because it's easier. But how is studying what you already know going to help you pass your exams?

If you follow these tips, I think you'll have a much better chance of doing well in your exams. It goes without saying that you'll need to be disciplined and organised. So, have you got what it takes?

2 Put the underlined words and expressions in the article in the categories below.

1 personal examples

2 talk directly to the other person

3 contracted forms

4 conversational language

5 linkers

3 Match these formal phrases with informal ones in the article.

1 revise intensively in a short space of time (paragraph 1) _____

2 a little (paragraph 2) _____

3 rigorously follow (paragraph 3) _____

4 things (paragraph 4) _____

4 Write an informal article on one of these topics (250–300 words).

How to make friends

How to become rich

How to be healthier

Plan your writing

- Think about the content of your article. What points do you want to make? Organise your points into separate paragraphs and write a short conclusion.

Check your writing

- Have you used informal language?
- Have you used linkers to structure the article?
- Have you checked your grammar and spelling?
- Did you find any mistakes?

