

Writing Workshop: Reasoned Opinions

By MF for C1.1 (advanced)

December Writing Task: Write a reasoned opinion in 100 or 200 words. The word count does not include the title. **Deadline:** second week of December. You can also hand it in before.

A reasoned opinion is explaining your views on a chosen topic. You need to focus on this: explaining why you believe something.

Learning to write: Notice how I organize the content structure, notice the opening / topic sentences and the transitions. Although my **register** is not too formal, I avoid contractions and slang, and try to find more elaborate synonyms for high frequency words in everyday language, e.g. "can be traced" instead of "is seen/found".

Example of a reasoned opinion in 100 words (98 words), **with comments on content structure:**

Different Everyday Life Schedules

Our cultural rejection of diversity can be traced in all kinds of human affairs. [Opening line, general idea about a human question that will set the framework for the consideration of a particular human question] One of them relates to our everyday schedules. [Topic sentence: my chosen topic, which is a case of the general idea in the opening sentence, even if so far connections may not be that obvious to the reader -- here is where the text may be creating interest to get readers to read on.] People getting up at midday and staying up all night make us feel wary! Even if they sleep the same amount of hours as early risers... [Developing the topic: now the reader knows more about how the topic relates to the opening statement] How can this possibly be? [Posing my critical question — transition to my answer to the problem in the next paragraph]

In my view, developing respect [here comes the answer] for different lifestyles involves we stop judging those people or lifestyles we fail to understand. [My general point for solving the problem] Asking first and making an effort to walk in people's shoes is a humanizing effort [A more specific wording for that]— the bottom line being a world where we can all live together. [A powerful ending because it insists on the same ideas but pointing to a final future aim we can construct today, relating "small" personal attitudes to all kinds of issues that draw us apart and make us fight.]

As you might sense, this chosen topic parts from a somewhat a humorous idea but then relates an apparently unimportant matter to a relevant human question.

EXERCISES

1. What is **my outline** for this piece? If you consider this and the word limit, you will be training! It will help you learn about how many ideas you can develop in how many words.
2. Before you sit and write, **brainstorm** a bit. Brainstorm on topics you can address and brainstorm of ideas you can develop.
3. **Sit and write:** Do your outline, write your piece, then do the word count and make whichever adjustments are needed. Remember it needs to be handwritten so you learn how much space that amount of words occupies in your own handwriting. **Handing in your work:** Your name etc should be on the top right-hand corner part of the paper and you should include the **Task Description** with the final word count too (because each piece of paper needs to include all the nec. info).