

## Writing Task

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You work for a Sunday newspaper and have been asked to write an article for the lifestyle magazine that accompanies it arguing the case for and against the existence of ghosts, before you give your own opinion.

Always start by reading the question and identifying the key words in it.

Check which point of view you are being asked to argue or whether you are being asked to consider both sides.

Check your:

- Audience
- Purpose

Remember to be sensitive and diplomatic to others' opinions. Calling people 'stupid' for holding an opposing opinion to you is not going to get you many marks.

Remember to use anecdotes, examples, quotations and expert opinions where relevant (make them up – the examiner does not expect you to have researched the topic before the exam).

Here are some examples of ways students have started their articles:

1. When Mrs Jones ran screaming from her house the neighbours thought she must have disturbed a burglar. What they didn't know at the time was that she was convinced she had seen her husband ... even though he's been dead for twenty years. When the neighbours did discover the reason for her fearsome noise they laughed so much she had to move house ...
2. Scientists have been debating the existence of ghosts for many years, the general public for even longer.
3. How many of us have jumped at an unexpected sound in the house when alone, been convinced 'there's something out there' in the garden late at night or even briefly thought we glimpsed a dead relative or friend at the foot of the bed?
4. Not everyone believes in ghosts. John Smith of the 'Ghosts aren't real' campaign became so frustrated by media hype and scaremongering surrounding the subject he set up a group to counteract the claims made by those who believe in the supernatural.
5. Consider the thousands of photographs that supposedly 'prove' ghosts exist. When studied in detail doesn't nearly every one have some inconsistency or small point which does not add up or make sense?

Discuss what you like and dislike about each of the openings above; they are all effective opening sentences to the article but you may prefer one to the others. Explain why you like a particular one and then use it to begin your own article.

And here's how you could begin discussing your own opinions towards the end of the article:

- Although I would love to believe in ghosts ...
- Despite the 'facts' which seem to disprove the existence of ghosts I can't help but ...