

You should spend about 40 minutes on this question.

1. Write a letter to your local newspaper arguing for or against space travel.

Some points to help you:

Spend a few minutes making a *plan* before you begin and number your ideas to ensure you follow them.

Make sure that your *strongest ideas are at the beginning* of the letter: the opening will have the biggest impact on the examiner.

Remember this is a *formal letter*, so start 'Dear sir/madam' or 'Dear Editor' and end your letter 'Yours faithfully' or 'Yours sincerely' depending on your opening salutation.

Give an *overview of your opinion* in the opening paragraph so that the examiner can see exactly 'where you are going' with your letter.

Only argue for or against – don't try to do both, it only weakens your argument. You might use phrases such as, 'I am aware that some people feel ... however I think that ...'. In other words, only use the opposing opinion to strengthen your own argument.

Be polite and diplomatic. Your letter is unlikely to be published if you sound overly aggressive or even rude. Phrases such as, 'I can not believe anyone would be so stupid as to want to go into space' are unlikely to endear you to the thousands of people who think space exploration is worthwhile.

Use facts, statistics, examples, evidence, quotations – make them up if necessary. The examiner is not expecting you to personally know an astronaut so you can make up 'facts' such as, 'In a recent survey of teenagers 8 out of 10 consider the exploration of other planets to offer the most hope for an alternative living environment for future generations'.

Try to *link each paragraph*, so that one follows on fluently from the other. Write about one aspect of space travel in each paragraph and build a cohesive argument. Don't, for example, write two paragraphs about the expense of space suits; one about the danger because of insulating tiles coming off the shuttle and then one about the expense of training the astronauts. The ideas are fine but they are not in the most logical order; a more cohesive order would be: one paragraph on the difficulties of making space travel a safe activity using the example of the danger, and potential tragedy, of insulating tiles coming off the shuttle; this would then lead well into a paragraph about the precious resource onboard (the humans); and then a subsequent paragraph on the reality of the cost of training the astronauts, giving the example of the cost of space suits.

If you run out of time write a list of bullet points at the end of your letter to show the examiner you had an idea of what you were going to write.