

A group of diverse graduates in black caps and gowns, smiling and looking upwards against a background of green trees. The graduates are of various ethnicities and are captured in a moment of joy and celebration. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

What would you like to study at university?
Is your choice directly related to your future
job?
How will university degree prepare you for
your future career?

Name three jobs which you would need to do a vocational degree.

vocational /vəʊ'keɪʃənəl/ *adj* (of education or training) preparing students for a particular job: *Vocational courses such as costume design and catering are becoming very popular.*



Do you agree or not?!

Students should be encouraged to choose vocational courses at university instead of more traditional courses. Discuss.



Some people maintain that the benefits of vocational courses are greater than those of more traditional ones. That is the question we need to consider. It is certainly true that the workplace is becoming more competitive. A vocational course may be a more direct route into employment compared to traditional courses. It is also undeniable that certain jobs (for example nurse, hairdresser) are only available to people with a vocational qualification. On the other hand, choosing a vocational course means deciding what job you want to do when you are still at school. Many people believe this is too early. How can a teenager know what job is right for him or her? Another problem is that vocational courses only focus on what you need to learn for a particular job. Is it not better for students to explore other interests while at university? On balance, I do not believe that students should choose vocational courses unless they are sure what career they want to follow. It is wiser to opt for a course that really interests you.

- 3 Look at the paragraph plan for a for and against essay. Then decide where the paragraph breaks should come in the essay in exercise 2.

Paragraph 1: Introduction

Paragraph 2: Arguments for

Paragraph 3: Arguments against

Paragraph 4: Conclusion (the writer's opinion)



1 Some people maintain that the benefits of vocational courses are greater than those of more traditional ones. That is the question we need to consider. 2 It is certainly true that the workplace is becoming more competitive. A vocational course may be a more direct route into employment compared to traditional courses. It is also undeniable that certain jobs (for example nurse, hairdresser) are only available to people with a vocational qualification. 3 On the other hand, choosing a vocational course means deciding what job you want to do when you are still at school. Many people believe this is too early. How can a teenager know what job is right for him or her? Another problem is that vocational courses only focus on what you need to learn for a particular job. Is it not better for students to explore other interests while at university? 4 On balance, I do not believe that students should choose vocational courses unless they are sure what career they want to follow. It is wiser to opt for a course that really interests you.

4 Look at the essay in exercise 2 again. What phrase does the writer use to:

- 1 introduce the first argument for?
- 2 introduce the second argument for?
- 3 introduce the first argument against?
- 4 introduce the second argument against?
- 5 begin the conclusion?



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Writing Strategy

Rhetorical questions can make an essay more persuasive, provided you only include one or two. You do not have to answer the questions, but always make sure that the expected answer is clear, e.g.

Some people work long hours for very low pay. How can this be right? (Expected answer: It can't be right.)



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6.4 Preparatory *it*

In English, it sounds very formal and often **unnatural** to begin a sentence **with an infinitive**, an **-ing form** or **a clause**.

~~That she failed her driving test was surprising. X~~

~~To wash your hands before eating is important. X~~

It is far more common to begin this kind of sentence with a **preparatory *it***.

It was surprising that she failed her driving test.

It is important to wash your hands before eating.

We use preparatory ***it* with the verb *take* followed by an infinitive** to talk about duration.

It takes half an hour to walk to school.

We use preparatory ***it* followed by an -ing form in the following expressions**.

It's no use / little use / not much use knocking – nobody's at home.

It's (not) worth asking for a refund if you don't like the food.

1 Rewrite these sentences in a more informal style. Begin each sentence with *It ...*

1 The fact that she once played football for England is true.

It's true that she once played football for England.

2 To walk along a beach is very relaxing.

3 The fact that we arrived on time is amazing.

4 Asking for a pay rise is no use – you won't get it!

5 To go rock climbing on your own was dangerous.

6 The fact that the restaurant was closed was very disappointing.

7 To fish in this river is illegal.

8 Trying to push the car up the hill was no use.

2 It's very relaxing to walk along a beach.

3 It's amazing that we arrived on time.

4 It's no use asking for a pay rise – you won't get it!

5 It was dangerous to go rock-climbing on your own.

6 It was very disappointing that the restaurant was closed.

7 It's illegal to fish in this river.

8 It was no use trying to push the car up the hill.

LEARN THIS! Preparatory *it*

We often use *it* to avoid beginning a sentence with an infinitive, an *-ing* form or a clause, which can all sound unnatural or too formal. We use:

it + be + adjective + an infinitive or a clause.

It's important to book in advance.

It's surprising that she hasn't phoned.



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More students should choose to do voluntary work during the long holidays rather than work for money. Discuss.

Paragraph 1: Introduction (*rephrase the statement in the task*)

Paragraph 2: Arguments for (*include two*)

Paragraph 3: Arguments against (*include two*)

Paragraph 4: Conclusion (*state your opinion*)

8 Write your essay using your plan from exercise 7. Include one or two rhetorical questions.

