

AN ESSAY



1 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- Do you think that improving neighbourhoods can lead to a decrease in petty crime? Why?
- What improvements do you think can help? Why?

2 Read the essay. Does it mention any of your ideas from Exercise 1?

¹It is widely accepted that many inner-city areas are run-down and suffer high levels of petty crime. However, ²there is no real consensus on what measures could help.

According to many experts, investing in security measures such as better street lighting and security cameras can act as a deterrent to petty crime. While this may be true, these measures alone will do nothing to tackle the attitudes that lead to petty crime. The real challenge is to make neighbourhoods more pleasant places to live, and help create a sense of pride in them.

One measure which could help is to create social spaces where people can spend time together outdoors, for example parks with communal barbecue areas. If everyone in the neighbourhood is in their own home, it's no wonder the streets feel empty and unwelcoming, and petty crime thrives. However, if people can be encouraged outdoors, the whole atmosphere of the neighbourhood could be transformed. In addition to this, ³there is one measure which I am in favour of above all else. This is to set up community groups and provide them with funding to maintain buildings, parks, bus shelters, etc. Giving people a sense of ownership of their neighbourhood would help build a stronger community and would give young people a sense of belonging and pride, which might encourage them to care for their neighbourhood rather than damage it.

Petty crime leads to the degradation of a neighbourhood, and makes people feel depressed about living there. ⁴Having explored numerous options, I've come to the conclusion that investment in these areas is the best way forward. It is my belief that with the right measures in place, these neighbourhoods can be turned around, to the benefit of the people who live there and society in general.

3 The essay in Exercise 2 has an introduction, a conclusion, and two main paragraphs. Answer the questions about the main paragraphs.

- Which main paragraph mentions ideas the writer supports?
- Which main paragraph mentions ideas the writer does not support?

4 Look at the essay again. Match the underlined sentences to the functions A–D.

- A making a recommendation
- B a common opinion on the topic to serve as an introduction
- C restating a position in a conclusion
- D mentioning a question or controversy

5 Look at the Key Language for an essay. Complete the phrases with words from the essay in Exercise 2.

KEY LANGUAGE FOR AN ESSAY

Stating a common opinion

It's probably fair to say that ... It's widely ¹ / believed that ... Many people hold the opinion that ... ² to ...

Stating a problem or controversy

There is no real consensus on ... The question is, what ... The real ³ is to ...

Making suggestions

One ⁴ which could help is ... There is one approach which I am in favour of above all else.

Giving a personal opinion

It is my opinion / ⁵ that ... Personally, I ...

Contrast linkers

while, although, even though, ⁶ , nevertheless, despite, in spite of

6 Look at the introduction to the essay in Exercise 2 again. Does it include other people's opinions, or the writer's own opinion?

7 Read two more possible opening paragraphs for the essay in Exercise 2. Which one is better? Why?

1

Many people believe that the problems in deprived inner-city areas are simply too great to tackle. However, it is my opinion that much can be done to improve the quality of life for residents there and reduce petty crime.

2

It's probably fair to say that a lot of inner-city areas suffer from numerous problems and do not provide good quality living environments. Most people would agree with this. However, the question is, what to do to tackle the problems.

8 Complete sentences 1–6 with the correct word from the box.

favour measure opinion personally
probably widely

- 1 One _____ which could help is to organise groups of volunteers to help clear litter.
- 2 It's my _____ that money alone will never solve these problems.
- 3 It's _____ accepted that more employment opportunities are desperately needed.
- 4 _____, I think the people who live in an area are the best people to tackle the problems there.
- 5 It's _____ fair to say these problems have been caused by years of neglect.
- 6 There is one measure which I am strongly in of.

9 Choose the correct contrast linkers in *italics* to complete the sentences.

- 1 *While / However* these measures might make a small difference, they will not solve all the problems.
- 2 The problems still persist *although / despite* the measures that have been taken.
- 3 The situation has definitely improved. *Although / Nevertheless*, there is still much to be done.
- 4 *In spite of / Although* these measures are expensive, I believe they are necessary.
- 5 Some areas have failed to improve *even though / nevertheless* huge amounts of money have been pumped into them.
- 6 Policing in the area has been increased. *Despite / However*, crime rates remain stubbornly high.

10 When talking about solutions, we often use conditional structures and modal verbs. Choose the correct verbs in *italics* to complete the sentences.

- 1 Inner-city areas *will* / *would* only improve if governments invest money in them.
- 2 If these measures *can* / *were* put in place, I believe they would have a significant impact.
- 3 We *will* / *won't* see an improvement until the issue of unemployment is also tackled.
- 4 Investing in projects aimed at young people *could* / *must* potentially make a huge difference.
- 5 Under no circumstances *could* / *should* youth clubs be closed down.

11 Work in pairs. Read the task and discuss ideas for your essay. Make notes in the plan below and remember to include all the ideas mentioned in the task.

Your class has been discussing the issue of how young people who commit petty crimes should be punished. You have made the notes below.

What is the best way to punish young people who commit petty crimes?

- detention in a young offenders' institute
- fines
- community service

Some opinions expressed in the discussion:

'Locking young people up might make them feel even more alienated from society.'

'Most young people don't have their own money to pay fines.'

'Community service could help young people see the consequences of their actions.'

PLAN YOUR ESSAY

Introduction

Main paragraph 1: ideas you don't support

Main paragraph 2: ideas you do support

Conclusion

12 Write your essay in 220–260 words. Use the notes in your plan and phrases from the *Key Language* box.

[illegible]

13 Work with another pair. Swap essays. How many phrases from the *Key Language* box can you find in the essay? Do you agree with their conclusion? Give feedback.