
Training schedule

1. Read through slide two of the presentation.
2. Hand out copies of the *Biology essay titles* document. Do not give out the indicative content yet.
 - Are the titles what teachers would expect?
 - Are there titles that teachers would immediately identify as easier to answer than others?
3. Read through slide 3.
4. Choose a couple of essay titles from the last few years. Teachers work together to list the topics from the specification that could be included in an essay relating to these titles.
5. Hand out the indicative content for each essay title. Compare the list of titles that teachers produce with the indicative content list for those topics.

Teachers will see that:

- a. titles are broad, so can cover many aspects
- b. the topics in the indicative content are what they would expect.

6. Read through the *Paper 3 essay marking guidance* document.

Things to note:

- Essays that deal with a number of topics need to have links between the topic and essay title to gain high marks.
 - For the very top marks (only), reading outside the A-level is required.
 - There are now overarching levels (1-5 marks, 5-10 marks, 10-15 marks etc) to provide additional guidance, which is new for this specification. First, determine the level that the essay fits best into and then the appropriate mark within that level.
7. Choose an essay title. Divide five or six topics from the indicative content list up between the teachers. Each teacher writes a paragraph on each of their topics, relating it to the essay title. They should spend no more than five minutes on each paragraph.

What the teachers will have produced is a series of separate paragraphs, each on a topic related to the title. Putting these together would form a rudimentary essay. Although the biology is (likely to be) correct, the individual paragraphs do not form an “interrelated” whole that relates to the theme/concept of the essay title, which would limit the marks available.

8. Teachers should then spend some time considering how they would link each paragraph/topic to the essay title.
9. Hand out the marked specimen answers. It is worth noting at this point that most candidates write an essay plan of some sort at the start of their essay. It's also worth noticing that students' handwriting can make a big difference to examiners' ability to mark effectively.

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10. In pairs, teachers should mark some of the answers using the mark scheme. They should then compare the mark they give the essay with the mark on the answer (typed section at the end).
 11. Read through the last three slides of the presentation. Teachers discuss how they will prepare their students for the essay question.