



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION  
Chile

## **Most frequent errors in essays in 2015**

The essays are marked on the following points:

Argument – maximum 7 points

Use of English – maximum 7 points

Structure – maximum 7 points

In the essay, two thirds of the marks are awarded for structure and argument and, in general, contestants received the lowest marks for the Argument.

### **Argument**

An argumentative essay is not a dissertation explaining everything you know about a particular subject. It is all about choosing a point of view and arguing in favour of it. The winning essay will be the one which presents the most convincing arguments to the judges. It is not enough to quote what everybody is saying on a subject, or what is taught at school or what it says in Wikipedia. Also, there is no right or wrong point of view. You might argue what you believe or even the opposite of what you believe, but it needs to be well argued. It needs to hold the reader's interest and give him or her pause for thought

One of the main mistakes in almost all the essays presented last year, was not considering the opposing view. There are always people who hold opposing views to yours and these cannot be ignored. You must consider these views and present evidence that refutes them.

Good argument essays are polemic, linear and logical and the conclusion follows the argument. The thesis may be incorrect but this is irrelevant, it is the argument that matters.

### **Use of Language**

Overall, this was good. The main mistakes were lack of agreement with tenses, tortured sentences which did not flow naturally and incorrect use of prepositions. We feel the contestants should read their essay aloud to hear the mistakes and inconsistencies.

## Structure

An argumentative essay requires that you briefly present your thesis at the beginning of the essay, preferably within the first couple of sentences, argue it in the following paragraphs and sum it up at the end. The essay should be original and hold the reader's interest.

An essay is a formal piece of writing. The judges felt that some of the pieces were too conversational and that the writer referred to him/herself or addressed the reader directly, inserting him or herself into the essay. The language should be reasonably formal and contractions such as don't, can't, wouldn't etc. should be avoided. Also, no slang words should be used, such as: kids, awesome, cool, gonna, weird.