

An essay about women in science

Learn how to write an essay that suggests reasons for and solutions to a problem.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and tips and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Complete the sentences with words and phrases from the box.

awareness	path	skills
model	opportunities	education

1. Working together on science projects helps children develop social
2. Many countries are concerned about equal in science.
3. Many toys for young children help to develop their dexterity and spatial
4. Science offers many different types of career
5. The number of women studying science in higher needs to be increased.
6. A good teacher is an adviser, mentor and role for their students.

Reading text: An essay about women in science

In most universities there are more male students than female students on science courses. What is the reason for this? What could be done to balance out the numbers?

In higher education, science subjects are typically dominated by male students. This negatively impacts the world of work, as fewer females then go into the science, technology and engineering sectors. This essay will explore the reasons for the lack of gender diversity in science and suggest ways to create equal opportunities in this area.

The most likely reason for the imbalance is that society reinforces the idea that boys and girls have different interests and abilities. We see this from a very early age when little boys are given cars and Lego while girls get dolls. The former are encouraged to build things whereas the latter learn to care for others. Later on, we are told that girls are better at languages or boys have better spatial awareness. In fact, there is no evidence that biological differences between the sexes make one gender more talented than another at a particular subject. It is society, not nature, that tells us girls should favour arts and humanities and leave maths and physics to the boys.

Coupled with this is the lack of positive female role models youngsters see doing science-related jobs. Cartoons and stories often show the crazy scientist, genius inventor, or adventurous astronaut as a man. Furthermore, there is an unfortunate perception that

scientists are geeky, have poor social skills or that their work is lonely and detached from the rest of the world. These are false stereotypes portrayed by the media, but they may mean that girls do not identify with scientists, and see science as an unappealing career path. If girls saw more positive female role models in science it would give them more confidence and a greater sense of belonging in those subjects.

Given these points, it is important to tackle this issue right from a child's early education. By the time young women are at university, it may already be too late to disprove the view that science is 'not for them'. Hence, for very young children gender-neutral play needs to be encouraged. As children get older, both the education system and the media must raise awareness of female achievements in the field of science, as well as exposing them to a more diverse set of characters in books and films. We need to find ways to show young girls that science is fun, interesting, and, most importantly, theirs too.

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Tips

1. Read the question carefully. If the question asks you to discuss the reasons for a problem and suggest solutions, make sure you do both.
2. In your introduction, restate the question in your own words and say what your essay will do. *This essay will outline the reasons for ... and offer solutions to the problem.*
3. Plan the paragraphs of your essay before you write. Start each paragraph with a topic sentence that summarises the main idea of the paragraph.
4. Develop your position fully by extending your ideas and using examples to support your arguments. Use linking expressions like *Coupled with*, *Furthermore*, *In fact* and *Given these points* to show what is coming next.
5. Try to use a wide range of vocabulary. Use natural-sounding collocations like *equal opportunities* and *role model*. Avoid repetition by using synonyms or words with similar meanings: *girls*, *young women*, *females*; *children*, *youngsters*. You can also use *the former* and *the latter* to refer to things you have just mentioned.
6. Build the conclusion from the ideas in the essay rather than introducing new ones.

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. The writer answers both parts of the question.	True	False
2. The introduction should explain the question and how the writer is going to answer it.	True	False
3. A topic sentence summarises the main idea of the essay.	True	False
4. It is better to have many different ideas about the topic than write in more depth about one or two ideas.	True	False
5. The linking words <i>Coupled with</i> , <i>In addition</i> and <i>Furthermore</i> are all for adding ideas.	True	False
6. Repeating the word <i>girls</i> many times is unavoidable with this essay question.	True	False
7. It is a good idea to save your main idea until the conclusion.	True	False
8. <i>Given these points</i> and <i>All things considered</i> are good expressions to introduce the conclusion.	True	False

Task 2

Match the phrases or sentences with the same meaning.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. An alternative approach is | a. In universities |
| 2. There is an inequality in the figures | b. there are more |
| 3. In higher education | c. balance out the numbers |
| 4. is dominated by | d. Another way of looking at the problem is |
| 5. solve this lack of diversity | e. Therefore, the answer lies in |
| 6. Hence, the solution is | f. The numbers are unequal |

Task 3

Complete the sentences with words and phrases from the box.

Given these points	Furthermore	explore	coupled
former	latter	most likely reason	suggest

1. This essay will the reasons for the decline in quality of life in cities and ways to address the problem.
2. The for the decline in quality of life in a city is paradoxically its attractiveness. The more people choose to live there, the greater pressure on its infrastructures.
3. Air pollution with traffic congestion can make big cities unpleasant environments, especially for allergy sufferers.
4. High rents hit young people and pensioners hard. The find themselves living with their parents for longer and the are forced to move out of the neighbourhoods where they have lived all their lives.
5. Higher rents also mean people have to travel further to work or to see family. , in bigger cities the cost of public transport is greater.
6. , greater investment in public transport, including subsidies for ticket prices and the creation of cycle lanes, would contribute to improving the quality of life.

Discussion

Which subjects have more female students and which have more male students in your country?

Answers

Preparation task

1. skills
2. opportunities
3. awareness
4. path
5. education
6. model

Task 1

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. True

Task 2

1. d
2. f
3. a
4. b
5. c
6. e

Task 3

1. explore | suggest
2. most likely reason
3. coupled
4. former | latter
5. Furthermore
6. Given these points