

## USEFUL WORDS FOR ESSAY-WRITING

(mots utiles pour la dissertation)

### INTRODUCTION

First, firstly (*d'abord*), first of all (*tout d'abord*), in the first place (*en premier lieu*);  
above all, first and foremost, most of all (*avant tout*)  
At first, initially, at the outset, for a start, as a starting point, to start/begin with, in/at the  
beginning (*au début, pour commencer*), starting with... (*en commençant par...*);  
at first sight/glance (*à première vue, au premier abord*)  
What is it (all) about? (*de quoi s'agit-il?*). What is the main point/problem/question/idea?  
It is a matter/question of... (*il s'agit de...*). The point/question at issue is that/whether... or

### BODY OF THE ESSAY

Then, afterwards (*puis, ensuite*), next, after that (*après cela*)  
Secondly, in the second place (*en second lieu*); besides, in addition, moreover (*de plus*)  
Similarly, in the same way (*de la même façon*); also, too, as well, equally (*aussi, également*)  
Neither... nor (*ni... ni*); indeed (*en effet*), in fact, as a matter of fact, actually (*en fait*),  
of course, naturally, (quite) obviously (*bien sûr, évidemment*), it seems obvious/clear that...

### OPPOSITION (*opposition*)

But (*mais*), nevertheless, however (*cependant, toutefois*), yet (*pourtant*)  
On the contrary (*au contraire*), on the other hand (*en revanche*), conversely (*à l'opposé*)  
On the one hand... on the other hand (*d'une part... d'autre part*); al(though) (*bien que*),  
in spite of, despite (*malgré, en dépit de*), whereas, while (*tandis que, alors que*)

### CONDITION (*condition*)

If (*si*), provided/providing (*that*), on condition that (*à condition que*)  
Supposing (*à supposer que*), in case (*au cas où*), even if (*même si*), except if, unless (*à moins que*)

### TIME (*temps*)

When (*quand, lorsque*), while (*pendant que*), whenever (*chaque fois que*), as (*comme, tandis que*)  
Before (*avant que*), after (*après que*), since (*depuis que*), till, until (*jusqu'à ce que*)  
As soon as (*dès que*), as long as (*tant que*)  
Meanwhile, in the meantime (*en attendant, entretemps*)

### PURPOSE (*but*)

(In order) to, so as to (*pour, en vue de*), with a view to (*dans l'intention de*)  
In order that, so that (*généralement + modal*) (*afin que, de sorte que, de façon à ce que*)

### CAUSE (*cause*)

Because (*parce-que*), as (*comme*), since (*puisque*), for (*car*)  
Because of, owing to, due to, on the grounds of (*à cause de, en raison de*), thanks to (*grâce à*)  
Why? What for? (*pourquoi?*). This is (the reason) why... (*voilà pourquoi...*)

### CONSEQUENCE (*conséquence*)

So, thus (*donc, ainsi*), therefore, accordingly, consequently (*par conséquent*)  
Hence (*d'où*), thereby, as a result (of which) (*de ce fait*)  
So/such... that (*si/tellement... que*); so that (*de telle sorte que*)

### CONCLUSION

In short, in brief, in a word, to sum up (*en un mot, en résumé*)  
Eventually (*finaleme*nt), last (of all), lastly, in the end, finally (*enfin, en dernier lieu*)  
In conclusion, to conclude (*en conclusion*)

eter, lancer  
éveiller  
porter (vêtement)  
crire

varier  
clater exploser  
couter  
copper  
copper  
resser  
rasser, autoriser  
oser, placer  
lacer  
rmer  
tendre

rôler  
lier  
onstruire  
voir  
oser  
prendre  
aire  
ayer  
nvoyer  
entir  
épenser  
âter, gâcher

cheter  
porter  
traper  
istribuer  
éver  
ucher, sentir  
ntendre  
arder  
aisser, quitter  
erdre  
ouloir dire  
lire  
endre  
ormir  
nseigner  
lire  
enser  
leurer

## COMMENTING ON A TEXT

**This passage/text/article/poem is entitled...** (*ce passage/ce texte/cet article/ce poème s'intitule*)  
**It is an extract (un extrait) from a novel (un roman), a play (une pièce de théâtre), a short story (une nouvelle) by...** **It is a piece of prose/poetry (de la prose/de la poésie), a dialogue**  
**The passage is devoted to the description of...** (*consacré à la description de...*)

**The text is structured as follows...** (*le texte est construit de la façon suivante*) ; **with regards to..., as regards..., as far as the structure of the text is concerned...** (*en ce qui concerne...*)  
**It can be divided into two/three main parts/sub-parts which could be entitled...** (*deux/trois parties/sous-parties que l'on pourrait intituler...*)  
**The first/second part deals with (traite de), concerns (concerne), tackles (aborde) the question of...**

**The recurrent themes (les thèmes qui reviennent souvent) in this passage, the main topics (les principaux sujets, thèmes) suggested by..., the outstanding facts (les faits saillants) it tells/relates the story of... (cela raconte l'histoire de...), it is a portrait of, a detailed description of... (une description détaillée de...), a short account/narrative of... (un bref récit de...)**  
**It deals with the problem/question of drugs (la drogue), unemployment (le chômage), social inequalities/injustice (les inégalités sociales), the media (les médias), advertising (la publicité)**  
**It describes the trend of events/of ideas (le cours des événements/le mouvement des idées)**  
**The historical and political context is that of...** (*le contexte historique et politique est celui de...*)

**The various/main characters (les divers/principaux personnages), the part played (le rôle joué) by each of them, the relationships (les relations, rapports) between them, the role and significance (le rôle et la signification) of each of them, their feelings and attitudes (sentiments et attitudes)**

**This text can be analysed/interpreted on various levels (analysé/interprété à plusieurs niveaux)**  
**The writer's goal (le but recherché par l'écrivain), his/her overall purpose (intention générale), attitude towards... (attitude envers), approach to... (façon d'aborder) the problem/subject**  
**The author makes a parallel, a comparison, a connection (rapprochement) between... and... He/She opposes/contrasts (met en opposition) traditional and present-day values/views (les valeurs/points de vue traditionnel et actuel)**  
**It is a plea for/against... (un plaidoyer pour/contre). It shows the pros and cons (le pour et le contre), the advantages and disadvantages (les avantages et inconvénients), the similarities and differences (les ressemblances et différences), the objective and subjective aspects of...**  
**The author takes into account (prend en considération) the causes and consequences of...**  
**It is a sharp criticism of... (critique sévère de), a satire, a caricature, a parody...**  
**The author is well-known for his positions in defence of... (connu pour ses positions en faveur de...)**  
**I consider it as an optimistic/a pessimistic view of... (une vue optimiste/pessimiste de...), a vivid/lengthy, biased/unbiased account of... (un récit vivant/trop long, partial/impartial de...)**  
**The arguments put forward cannot be taken for granted (les arguments avancés sont discutables)**

**The means of expression (les moyens d'expression)**  
**What characterizes the author's style, language, choice of words (style, langage, choix des mots)**  
**The use of symbols (l'utilisation des symboles), of metaphors (des métaphores), of religious connotations (des connotations religieuses), of (in)direct speech (du discours (in)direct)**  
**The tone is that of humour, irony, pathos (le ton est humoristique, ironique, pathétique)**  
**The length and the structure of sentences (la longueur et la structure des phrases)**  
**The melody/rhythm of the verse/stanza (la mélodie/le rythme du vers/de la strophe)**

**The impact/influence on the reader/the general public (le lecteur/le grand public)**  
**All things considered, taking everything into account (tout bien considéré, en fin de compte)**

## DESCRIBING A PICTURE

I think/believe that... (*je pense, je crois que*), I suppose/assume that... (*je suppose que*)  
 I feel that... It seems/appears to me that... (*il me semble que*), it looks as if... (*on dirait que*)  
 In my opinion/view, to my mind (*à mon avis*), from my point of view (*de mon point de vue*)  
 My (first) impression is that..., I am under the impression that... (*j'ai l'impression que*)

In the foreground (*au premier plan*), there is (+ sg), are (+ pl) (*il y a*), you can see (*on voit*)  
 In the middle distance (*au second plan*), in the centre/middle of the picture (*au milieu...*)  
 In the background (*à l'arrière-plan*), in the (far) distance (*au loin*)  
 At the top (*en haut*), at the bottom (*en bas*)  
 On the left/right (*à gauche/droite*), on one side... on the other side (*d'un côté... de l'autre*)  
 In the top/bottom left-hand/right-hand corner (*dans le coin supérieur/inférieur gauche/droit*)

If you take a closer look at..., if you look closer up (*en examinant de plus près*)  
 You can see/notice that..., you realise that... (*on remarque que*). What stands out (*ce qui ressort*)  
 What attracts/draws your attention is..., what is striking is... (*ce qui attire l'attention, c'est ...*)

The picture represents/illustrates/symbolizes... (*l'image représente, illustre, symbolise...*)  
 The scene is set/takes place in the country/in town (*la scène se passe à la campagne/en ville*)  
 It shows/features (*représente*) a landscape (*paysage*), a range of mountains (*chaîne de montagnes*), a river (*fleuve/rivière*), forests (*forêts*), corn fields (*champs de blé (GB), maïs (US)*)  
 In the bright sunshine (*en plein soleil*), at sunset (*au soleil*), at dawn (*à l'aube*), in the morning, afternoon, evening (*le matin, l'après-midi, le soir*), at noon/midday, night (*à midi, le soir*)  
 The sky is cloudless (*dégagé*), cloudy (*nuageux*), gloomy (*maussade*), overcast (*couvert*)  
 The characters (*les personnages*): their physical appearance (*aspect*), attitudes  
 Their clothes: fashionable (*à la mode*), trendy (*dernier cri*), shabby (*miteux*)  
 Their position: standing (*debout*), sitting (*assis*), squatting (*accroupi*), lying (*couché*)  
 The expression on their faces: cheerful (*gai*), haughty (*arrogant*), exhausted (*abattu*), sad  
 Their social background/environment (*leur milieu social*): wealthy (*riche*), poor, miserable

The impression/idea the artist/photographer wants to convey (*transmettre, communiquer*)  
 An impression of peace and quiet (*tranquillité*), of sadness (*tristesse*), of despair (*désespoir*), of tension (*tension*), of aggressiveness (*agressivité*), of violence... emerges from... (*se dégage de*)  
 A relaxed atmosphere (*une ambiance détendue*), a pleasant setting (*un cadre agréable*)  
 The colours are vivid (*éclatantes*), in harmony (*s'harmonisent*), in contrast (*contrastées*)  
 Light effects (*effets de lumière*), light and shade (*clair-obscur*), against the light (*contre-jour*)  
 The art of the painter, the artist's/photographer's technique, a close-up (*gros plan*)  
 The photograph was taken from... (*la photo a été prise de*), in colour, in black and white

I agree/don't agree with this representation of.../with the artist's view (*conception*) of...  
 I (don't) appreciate his/her style, it appeals to the imagination (*cela parle à l'imagination*)  
 It is a true (*juste*), accurate (*exact*), realistic (*réaliste*), fictional (*imaginaire*), surrealistic (*surréaliste*) vision of..., a masterpiece (*un chef-d'œuvre*)  
 It has a symbolical meaning (*signification symbolique*), it illustrates the idea of...  
 it refers to... (*cela fait allusion à...*), it stands for... (*cela représente*)  
 This reminds me of a painting by... (*cela me rappelle un tableau de...*)  
 In the last/final analysis (*en dernière analyse*), all in all, in short (*somme toute*).