

## Sample Essay 2

Dear Pat,

How's life? I'm quite busy as I have extra lessons every day. How're things going with you? Heard that you're going to join a debate competition and you're so worried that you haven't been able to sleep well. I understand that being the first speaker of the team is **stressful** but if you ask me, it's not as frightening as you imagine as long as you are well-prepared. Let me give you some advice.

As the first speaker of the team, you have to make a speech at the beginning of the debate. You need to **address the chair** and the audience, **define the motion**, state your team's arguments and **refute your opponents' arguments in advance**. Do start drafting the speech as soon as possible before the debate so that you'll have enough time to refine it.

Before writing the draft, you must know whether your team is for or against the motion and then search for useful information which is relevant to the topic. Once you've studied **thoroughly** on the topic, you'll then be able to organise your arguments and **anticipate** your opponents' arguments. Besides, **backing up** your arguments with **facts, figures** and **quotations** can make your speech more **persuasive** and powerful. Remember, always do preparation with your teammates as they can **defend** your team after your opponents make a **rebuttal**! You must share **common views** with your teammates on the motion.

You said you don't have much confidence in yourself. **Frankly**, no one can help you with this except yourself. What I mean is that you should try to be **aggressive** – try to **exaggerate** a little by using words like '**ridiculous**' and '**unreasonable**' to attack your opponents. But of course never **humiliate** them as this is **prohibited** and you'll lose marks! You may also **win** the audience over to your side by using **rhetorical questions**. I believe all these can weaken the opponents' **will** and gain the audience's support.

In fact, I'm happy and surprised that you **plucked up your courage** to participate in the competition. As your friend, I know that you're not a very **talkative** person. But don't worry. You can do it. Just practise delivering the speech in front of people a lot, then you'll **get used to it**. If you don't mind, I'm ready to help you in any way I can. Maybe I can act as your opponent to give you some **inspiration** about the **counter arguments**, or I can **proofread** the script for you.

Time to stop now. Write to me when you have time. Tell me when and where the competition will take place so that I can come and support you. If you need help, just phone me any time!

Cheers,  
Chris

(456 words)

## Grammar Analysis

1. Text type and format – You are asked to write a letter of advice to a friend. At the beginning, you should address your friend with 'Dear Pat' and end your letter with a friendly complimentary close like 'Best, Chris', 'Cheers, Chris' and 'Take care, Chris'.
2. Genre – It is an advisory and expository writing. You are expected to give advice on how to prepare for a debate, encourage your friend and boost his confidence.
3. Language and formality – When writing a letter to a friend, you don't need to use polished and formal words. Supportive language is preferred to show that you are on his side. You can use imperatives or modal verbs like 'can' and 'should' when giving advice. Contracted forms and some slang may also be used to show friendliness.
4. Organisation – You should greet Pat at the beginning of the letter. In the later paragraphs, give suggestions and recommend techniques for preparing for the debate competition with some examples, and try to cheer up Pat. At the end of the letter, you may offer more help to Pat.