

**Writing Section: Instructions**

09.05.2007

- You have 2 hours (FP1 and 2)/ 2½ hours (FP3) in which to do this section,
- give yourself half an hour to think through your ideas and plan your essay,
- you may use your own print dictionaries,
- **write between 500 and 700 words (between 600 and 800 words if you are doing FP3)**
- write the number at the end of your essay.

Do not forget to put:

- your **registration number** at the **top of each page** of your essay,
- **which Fachprüfung** you are doing,
- and **the title of the essay**. (Do NOT invent your own title!)

**PLEASE NOTE:**

1. The essay should be written in a **formal, objective style**.
2. Please note that an essay is **not** a personal account or an 'inner monologue', and should be written **as far as possible from the third person perspective**.
3. You **must answer the question** (which means fulfil the task) **and include** ideas of your own.

<b>Write an essay on the following topic</b>
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**The Austrian government proposes lowering the voting age to 16.**

**Is this a good idea?**

**You MUST:**

- give *reasons* for this proposal,
- describe what this will entail for *parents, teachers* and *anyone else* concerned,
- state whether this is a *good* or a *bad proposal* and say *why*.

**The Austrian government proposes lowering the voting age to 16.  
Is this a good idea?**

In Austria all those young people who pass the age of 17 are legally considered adults. This does not only mean no more restrictions when to come home but also the right to vote. Politicians are now demanding to lower the voting age from 18 to 16. This step is, however, seen as controversial among the Austrian society. In order to find out whether this proposal is a good idea we have to take a closer look at the advantages as well as disadvantages it will bring along.

The main reason why politicians want to lower the voting age is that the number of voters would increase enormously. Moreover they are well aware of the fact that 16 year old teenagers are still very easy to influence. By using the right tactics and arguments they are definitely easier to catch as adults. Consequently thousands of new and inexperienced voters would be available for the political parties and their election pledge.

This leads us to the question of how it can be avoided that teenagers believe political arguments blindly. Fact is that most 16-year old girls and boys do not have a very good political background knowledge. This can be also contributed to the fact that they are not very interested in politics. Consequently a basic political education is necessary so that teenagers are more critical about politics and think carefully about the feasibility of certain election pledge.

However, it is not only the responsibility of the school to get teenagers in contact with political questions; also parents can definitely contribute to make politics more interesting and accessible to teenagers. They could, for example, discuss newspaper articles or watch political discussions on TV. This would definitely have a very positive effect on the teenagers' attitude towards politics.

However, it is important to point out that objectivity is very important in terms of political education. This, however, is not always easy, especially in terms of politics.

Teachers may transfer their own political opinion indirectly to the students. Moreover parents may also force their children somehow to vote for a certain political party. Subjectivity is important so that teenagers decide on their own which party they vote.

Considering all this we can come to the conclusion that it is definitely not a very good idea to realise the proposal. The main reasons which speak against this are that 16 year-old boys and girls are still teenagers, lack in their knowledge of politics and can be easily influenced. Even if political education is introduced it is not advisable to confront so young people with such a huge amount of responsibility. At this age they do not stand on their own feet, they still try out how far they can go and make their first life experiences. Even though the right to vote would only be reduced two years we must not forget that at this age level an essential grow of maturity takes place. Only two years later things can be seen from a different perspective.

(515 words)

**Band 5****Justification**

Overall development of text is clear and the text is satisfactorily structured.

Some significant errors in the use of cohesive devices (e.g. *however* in para 5).

Internal contradictions (e.g. *advantages* in para 1 are not referred to again; *objectivity* – *subjectivity* in para 5).

The final paragraph compensates for shortcomings in textual competence.