Essay

Encouraging residents to repair household items

Full exam-style writing task with a complete model response. Original independent practice, not an official exam paper.

Your class has listened to a discussion about how a local council could encourage residents to repair household items instead of replacing them. You have made these notes: practical repair workshops; a tool-lending service; public awareness campaigns. Some opinions expressed were: "People need the confidence to try a repair." "Buying tools for one job is expensive." "Many residents do not realise how much they throw away." Write an essay for your tutor discussing two of the methods in your notes. Explain which would be more effective, giving reasons to support your opinion. You may use the opinions above, but use your own words as far as possible. Write 220-260 words.

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Write your response on separate paper before studying the model below.

One possible response

Repairing household items can reduce waste, but residents may hesitate because they lack either equipment or practical knowledge. A council wishing to change this behaviour should consider what prevents people from attempting repairs in the first place. Workshops and a tool-lending service address different parts of that problem.

A lending service would remove an obvious financial obstacle. Someone repairing a chair, for example, might need an expensive tool only once. Borrowing it would make the repair more attractive than buying a replacement. However, access to equipment does not ensure that people know how to use it safely. Without advice, some residents might borrow nothing at all, while others could damage the object they hoped to save.

Practical workshops would tackle this lack of confidence more directly. Working alongside an experienced instructor would allow residents to ask questions, practise basic techniques and recognise jobs that require professional help. Those skills could then be applied to future repairs, so the benefits would extend beyond a single session. Workshops would cost more to staff than a lending scheme, but small groups and partnerships with existing repair organisations could keep the programme manageable.

Although both approaches have value, workshops should therefore take priority. Equipment is useful only when people feel able to use it, whereas knowledge can influence many later decisions. A modest lending service could support successful workshops once the council had established which tools participants actually needed.

This is an original model, not an official marked script. Other approaches can also meet the task.

Understand the task and model

Task, reader and position

The tutor expects an essay evaluating two methods, not a proposal describing all three. This response chooses workshops and tool lending, develops both and explicitly prioritises workshops. It does not have to discuss the awareness campaign. The neutral tone suits an academic reader without sounding like a personal letter.

Plan and progression

The introduction identifies two barriers. Paragraph two explains the benefit and limit of lending; paragraph three shows how workshops address that limit and weighs their cost. The conclusion compares the methods using confidence and lasting usefulness as criteria. This creates an argument rather than two unrelated lists.

Content: make the comparison do work

"Access to equipment does not ensure that people know how to use it safely" supplies the weakness that the workshops paragraph answers. The chair example makes the financial benefit concrete. Both methods receive genuine evaluation, although the final view favours one.

Communicative achievement and qualification

"Small groups and partnerships ... could keep the programme manageable" acknowledges a limitation and suggests why it does not overturn the conclusion. Could avoids presenting a possible solution as a proven fact. No invented survey figures or guaranteed savings are needed to persuade the reader.

Organisation and language

"This lack of confidence" links paragraph three to the previous paragraph. "Whereas" in the conclusion makes the final contrast explicit. The conditional meaning of would fits a council considering action; phrases such as financial obstacle and practical knowledge are precise without obscuring the argument.

Alternatives and pitfalls

A well-supported essay could favour tool lending or select the awareness campaign instead. The requirement is to compare two methods and justify which is more effective. Avoid discussing all three superficially, copying the supplied opinions unchanged or introducing an unsupported new priority in the conclusion. This is one possible response, not an awarded score.

Check your own response

- Have I discussed exactly two of the supplied methods?
- Have I explained benefits and limitations rather than only naming them?
- Is my preferred method explicit and supported by comparison?
- Have I used my own wording and a suitable essay register?
- Does each paragraph advance the argument?
- Is the response between 220 and 260 words?