



Writing an Essay

Exercise 22

Read two short extracts from magazine articles (page 2) and comment on the following statement:

We make our own luck.

Write **200–250 words**.

In your essay:

- summarize and evaluate the key points from both texts;
- express your personal opinion and give 1–2 reasons in its support.

Use your own words throughout as far as possible and follow the rules of essay writing.

Few of us like to dwell on the role that luck plays in life. Think too much about luck in the context of your past accomplishments, and it's ego-bruising: it suggests that you might not be as talented as you believe. Looking into the future, meanwhile, it's a scary reminder of how much is outside your control. This must be why people come up with such nonsense as, "You make your own luck." A comforting thought. But the problem is that it's totally wrong. Luck is that aspect of events you can't influence. If you can influence it, then, to that extent, it's not luck. "You make your own luck" just means that you can reduce the role of luck by developing certain skills. But here's the truly scary part: even that's not true. In all sorts of situations, it turns out, more skill leads to a greater dependence on luck.

[Oliver Burkeman](#)

Over the years I have interviewed 400 volunteers, asked them to complete diaries, personality questionnaires, and intelligence tests, and invited them to my laboratory to participate in experiments. The findings have revealed that luck is not a magical ability or the result of random chance. Nor are people born lucky or unlucky. Instead, although lucky and unlucky people have almost no insight into the real causes of their good and bad luck, their thoughts and behavior are responsible for much of their fortune.

My research revealed that lucky people generate their own good fortune via four basic principles. They are skilled at creating and noticing chance opportunities, make lucky decisions by listening to their intuition, create self-fulfilling prophecies via positive expectations, and adopt a resilient attitude that transforms bad luck into good.

Richard Wiseman

[Richard Wiseman](#)