

A student-friendly guide to choosing the right composition topic

*Here's a full student-friendly **guide to choosing the right composition topic** in the Finnish English National Finals (B2–C1 level, 1300-character limit), tailored to students with different levels of confidence and skill. This includes clear criteria, advice, and **specific commentary** on the four actual **Spring 2025 topics**.*

1. In the Year 2525 99 p.

The International Futurology Society wants to hear young people's predictions for the future. What will the world be like five hundred years from now? Write a text expressing your own ideas.

2. True Crime 99 p.

This post is part of a discussion on true crime online. Write your response.

I find the whole true crime phenomenon disgusting. People are using the pain of the victims and their families for their own pleasure. What gives you the right to dig into real life tragedies and make ignorant judgements about the criminals and their victims!

3. Happiness is more important than success 99 p.

You are participating in the debating club of the International Youth Forum. Write a speech discussing the importance of happiness vs. success. Remember to give your reasons.

4. Don't judge a book by its cover 99 p.

Write a story that exemplifies and explains how things are not always what they seem.



GENERAL STRATEGY: How to Choose the Best Topic

Before jumping in, ask yourself:

- ✓ Do I **understand the topic clearly**?
- ✓ Can I think of **2–3 solid points or examples** right away?
- ✓ Do I feel **comfortable with the vocabulary** needed for this topic?
- ✓ Do I know how to write in the **right style** (speech, response, story)?
- ✓ Can I write this **without copying the prompt too closely**?

If you say **yes** to most of these, that's a good sign!



TYPES OF STUDENTS — STRATEGIC ADVICE

1. STUDENTS WHO STRUGGLE WITH ENGLISH (B1–B2)

- ◆ *Goal:* Keep it simple, clear, and correct.
- ◆ *Choose a topic that is factual or personal, NOT abstract or philosophical.*
- ◆ *Avoid:* Long, imaginative stories, abstract debates, or emotional rants.

Best picks:

- ✓ Topic 1: *In the Year 2525* → Easy to structure with imagination + simple future tense.
- ✓ Topic 3: *Happiness vs. Success* → Clear pros/cons format, relatable.

Avoid:

- ✗ Topic 2: True Crime → Emotional tone, easily goes off-topic.
- ✗ Topic 4: The story → Tricky structure, needs narrative skill and imagination.

2. AVERAGE STUDENTS (B2)

- ◆ *Goal:* Be clear, logical, and use simple but varied language.
- ◆ *Pick something where you have opinions or ideas ready.*
- ◆ *Avoid topics that need strong emotional tone or subtle language.*

Best picks:

- ✓ Topic 1: *In the Year 2525* → Allows structure (3 future ideas: tech, environment, society).
- ✓ Topic 3: *Happiness vs. Success* → Can do balanced argument style.
- ✓ Topic 4: *Story* → IF you can plan your ending early.

Avoid:

- ✗ Topic 2: True Crime → Difficult tone, risks moral over-explaining.

3. ADVANCED STUDENTS (B2–C1+)

- ◆ *Goal:* Show flair, structure, personal voice, and nuanced argument or story.
- ◆ Pick the topic where you can stand out.
- ◆ Use rhetorical devices, style shifts, or narrative techniques.

Best picks:

- ✓ Topic 2: *True Crime* → Room for irony, argument, rhetorical power.
- ✓ Topic 4: *Story* → Can shine with tone, surprise, structure.
- ✓ Topic 3: *Happiness* vs. *Success* → If you enjoy philosophical takes.

Avoid:

- ✗ Topic 1: *Future* → Risks being too vague or cliché (unless you have a smart angle).

TRAPS TO AVOID (FOR EVERYONE)

✗ Choosing a topic just because it sounds "easy".

It might be vague or hard to structure (e.g. writing "*Happiness is important*" without depth).

✗ Picking a topic with too strong an emotional reaction.

You might lose focus or go off-topic (e.g. *True Crime* rants).

✗ Choosing a story when you haven't practiced writing stories.

The idea might start well, but go nowhere or lack a clear ending.

✗ Rewriting the question in your own words.

"*In my opinion, happiness is more important than success because happiness is more important than success.*" ← This earns no points.

TOPIC-BY-TOPIC ANALYSIS

1. *In the Year 2525*

- ✓ Structure-friendly (3 future changes: tech, climate, daily life)
- ✓ Easy to use future tense and modal verbs
- ✓ Flexible tone: funny, serious, or hopeful
- ⚠ Risk: going vague or using too many sci-fi clichés

✨ 2. *True Crime*

- ✓ Advanced tone: emotional, persuasive, critical
- ✓ Great for strong opinions and rhetorical devices
- ⚠ Risk: sounding too angry, preachy, or moralizing
- ⚠ Requires a firm structure: e.g. acknowledge the emotion, argue, suggest a better approach

✨ 3. *Happiness vs. Success*

- ✓ Works well with “debate structure”: argue both sides + conclusion
- ✓ Good for average or fluent writers
- ✓ Easy to personalize
- ⚠ Risk: staying too general, repeating “happiness is good” without examples

✨ 4. *Don’t judge a book by its cover*

- ✓ Great for creative minds and narrative planning
- ✓ Opportunity for surprise, twist, or moral insight
- ⚠ Risk: weak structure, no clear ending, or going off-topic
- ⚠ Needs time to plan story beats: setting – problem – twist – resolution

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS IN SHORT

Student Type	Best Topics	Why	Topics to Avoid
Struggling (B1–B2)	1, 3	Easy structure, familiar vocabulary	2 (tone), 4 (story structure)
Average (B2)	1, 3, (4 if planned)	Balanced argument or imagination	2 (tone, focus)
Advanced (B2–C1)	2, 4, 3	Shows style, voice, originality	1 (if no fresh angle)
