

A DISCUSSION ESSAY

What is a discussion essay?

In a discussion essay you present two sides of an argument. The task may be presented as a declaration "School uniforms should be compulsory" or as a question "What are the advantages and disadvantages of..?" To conclude you have to give the personal opinion. In a discussion essay the three things you need to include are: Both sides of an argument, opinions and linkers of contrast.

Structure

Paragraph 1	Introduction Explain the meaning of the title in your own words. Give an introduction to the topic and to the personal opinion. Say that there are arguments for and against this idea.
Paragraph 2	Arguments for Give two arguments which support your opinion. Support at least one of your arguments with a fact or example.
Paragraph 3	Arguments against Give two arguments which support the opposite opinion. Use linkers of contrast to give the opposite point of view.
Paragraph 4	Conclusion Sum up the arguments and give own opinion. You can repeat some earlier ideas but you should try to use different words.

Content

- If it is possible, you should choose an interesting topic.
- Make sure you give a balanced argument
- Use linkers of contrast to compare ideas and linkers to sequence your ideas.
- Give examples and evidence to support your ideas.
- Use formal language. (Include passive constructions)
- Remember to give your opinion in the final paragraph.

Vocabulary

Adding ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also • As well • Besides • Furthermore • In addition • Moreover • Another argument is... • Another reason for... • Another drawback of...is... • Some people argue that... • One of the main advantages is that... • A further (dis)advantage of...is... 	Expressing contrast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although • But • Despite • Despite the fact that • Even though • However • In spite of • In spite of the fact that • One the one hand/On the other hand • Nevertheless
Sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After • Afterwards • At last • Finally • Firstly, secondly, thirdly... • In the end • Lastly • Then • First of all • Last of all • Another reason for... • Another argument is... 	Summarizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All in all, • In conclusion, • To conclude, • To sum up, • On balance, I would say that...
Giving evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example • According to... • It is clear that... • It is well-known that... • Research has shown that... • It has been proven that... • We (do not) have (any) evidence that... 	Giving an opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I strongly feel... • In my view/opinion • I think /believe that... • I (dis)agree with... • I am (not) convinced that... • I would argue that • Personally, I think that... • I partly agree that... • It seems clear to me that...

Expressions to compare and contrast arguments

- There are advantages and disadvantages to...
- There are arguments for and against...
- There are positive and negative aspects of...
- Some people think/argue..., but/while other people think/argue...
- People have different opinions/views
- There are two sides to the argument.

Writing in a formal style

- Do use plenty of passive sentences.
- Don't use contractions, e.g. they've, it's.
- Don't use colloquialisms, e.g. cool, have a go.
- Don't use simple linking words, e.g. but, so.
- Do use formal linking words, e.g. in addition, consequently.
- Don't use abbreviations.

Example:

Football players earn too much money, do you agree?

Nowadays, top football players earn a lot of money, more than even before. Is this a good thing?

On the one hand/ In addition, (1) there are many arguments against paying them so much. **To begin with/Personally**, (2) footballers do not do anything really important like saving people's lives or making scientific discoveries. **Secondly/Finally**, (3) they have much more free times than people in most other professions. **Lastly/However**, (4) earning so much money can make them become arrogant or lazy.

On the other hand/secondly, (5) there are many reasons for paying them a high salary. **Firstly/finally** (6) footballers make a lot of people very happy. They deserve to be paid well for this. **In addition/ In conclusion** (7), footballers have to train very hard and they suffer a lot of pressure from the fans, the newspapers and the newspapers and the TV. **Finally/In conclusion** (8), football generates a lot of money. An important part of this money should be for the main protagonists – the footballers themselves.

In conclusion/ Generally, (9) there are good arguments for and against paying them so much money. **On the other hand/ Personally** (10), I think they deserve to earn a lot of money, but not as much as they earn today.

Answers

- (1) On the one hand
- (2) To begin with
- (3) Secondly
- (4) Lastly
- (5) On the other hand
- (6) Firstly
- (7) In addition
- (8) Finally
- (9) In conclusion
- (10) Personally