

Argumentative Essay (in-depth)

For and against essays

A **"for and against" essay is a formal piece of writing in which a topic is considered from opposing points of view.** You should present both sides in a fair way by discussing them objectively and in equal detail. A good essay of this type should consist of:

- a) an introductory paragraph in which you clearly state the topic to be discussed, without giving your opinion;
- b) a main body in which the points for and against along with your justifications, examples or reasons are presented in separate paragraphs; and
- c) a closing paragraph in which you state your opinion or give a balanced consideration of the topic.

Note: Opinion words (I think, I believe, In my opinion, etc.) can only be used in the closing paragraph where you give your opinion on the topic.

Points to consider

- Before you start writing your essay you should make a list of the points for and against.
 - Each paragraph should start with a topic sentence which summarizes the topic of the paragraph.
e.g. In addition, many people feel reading is a relaxing and worthwhile activity.
 - Do not use informal style (e.g. short forms, **colloquial language**, etc.) or strong language to express your opinion (e.g. I know..., etc.). Express your opinion in a non-emotional way (e.g. It seems that, I therefore feel, etc.).
 - Well-known quotations relevant to the topic you are writing about will make your composition more interesting. For example, if you are writing an essay on education, a quotation you may include is: "Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance." (Will Durant)
- Note: Although these are "balanced" arguments, if you feel that either the for or against side is stronger and should be supported, this side should be presented in paragraphs 4 & 5, thus leading the reader to your conclusion.

Introduction

Paragraph 1

state topic (summary of the topic without giving your opinion)

Main Body

Paragraphs 2 & 3

arguments for & justifications, examples, and/ or reasons

Paragraphs 4 & 5

arguments against & justification, examples, and/or reasons

Conclusion

Final Paragraph

balanced consideration/ your opinion directly or indirectly

Practical Exercises

Useful expressions and linking words/phrases

- To list points:

Firstly, First of all, In the first place, To begin/start with, Secondly, Thirdly, Finally

- To list advantages:

One/Another/A further/An additional (major) advantage of... is ... The main/greatest/first advantage of... is ...

- To list disadvantages:

One/Another/ A further/An additional (major) disadvantage/drawback of. The main/greatest/most serious/first disadvantage /drawback of... Another negative aspect of...

- To introduce points/arguments for or against:

One (very convincing) point/argument in favor of... / against, A further common criticism of... / It could be argued that.....

often claimed/suggested

It is widely argued maintained that.....

generally felt/believed/held

Some/many/most people/experts/scientist/skeptics/critics

claim/suggest/argue/feel that...

maintain/believe/point out/agree/hold that...

advocate (+ing/noun)/support the view that...

oppose the view that...

are in favour of/against...

are of the opinion that/convinced that...

are opposed to...

- **To add more points to the same topic:**

in addition (to this), furthermore, moreover, besides, apart from, what is more, as well as, not to mention (the fact) that, also, not only ... but also/as well, both ... and, There is another side to the issue/question/argument of...

- **To make contrasting points:**

on the other hand, however, still, yet, but, nonetheless, nevertheless, even so,
it may be said/argued/claimed that,...
others/many people oppose this viewpoint/strongly disagree..., claim/feel/believe this argument
is incorrect/misguided
although, though, even though, while, whilst, whereas, despite/in spite of (the fact that),
regardless of the fact that
Opponents of ... argue/believe/claim that...
The fact that... contradicts the belief/idea that...
While it is true to say that..., in fact...
While/Although ..., it cannot be denied that...

Useful expressions and linking words/phrases

- To introduce examples:

for example, for instance, such as, like, in particular, particularly, especially, This is (clearly)
illustrated/shown by the fact that... One/A clear/striking/ typical example of (this)... The fact
that.... shows/illustrates that...

- To emphasize a point:

clearly, obviously, it is obvious, naturally, of course, needless to say, indeed

- To express reality:

In fact, the fact (of the matter) is, actually, in practice, it is a fact that, in effect

- To make general statements:

as a (general) rule, generally, in general, on the whole, by and large, in most cases

- To make partially correct statements:

to a certain extent/degree, to some extent/degree, in a way/sense, this is partly true (but), to a
limited extent, there is some truth in (this), in some cases, up to a point

- To explain/clarify a point:

in other words, that is to say, this/which means that

- To express cause: owing to, due to (the fact that), on account of, on the grounds that, given
that, because, as, since

- To express effect: therefore, thus, as a result/consequence, consequently, so, for this reason,
if... were to happen, ... the effect/result would be...

- To express intention: to, so as to, in order to, so that, with the intention of (+ing)

Useful expressions and linking words/phrases: Conclusion expressing balanced considerations/opinion indirectly

In conclusion,

On balance,

All things considered,

Taking everything into account/consideration,

To conclude,

To sum up,
All in all,
Finally/Lastly,

..... it can be said/claimed that ...
..... it seems/appears that...
..... it would seem that...
..... it is likely/unlikely/possible/foreseeable that ...
..... it is clear/obvious that...
..... there is no/little doubt that ...
..... it is true to say that ...
..... although it must be said that ...
..... it may be concluded/said that ...

Useful expressions and linking words/phrases: Conclusion expressing opinion directly

In conclusion,
On balance,
All things considered,
Taking everything into account/consideration,
To conclude,
To sum up,
All in all,

..... it is my belief/opinion that ...
..... I (firmly) believe/feel/think that ...
..... I am convinced that ...
..... I am inclined to believe that ...
..... I (do not) agree that/with ...

NOTE

1. **A for and against essay** can end in a **balanced consideration** in which you restate that there are points **for** and **against** the topic using appropriate expressions given above.
2. Alternately, it can end by expressing an **opinion**, in which

case you state, directly or indirectly, that you are either in favor of **or** against the topic, using appropriate expressions given above.

9 Read the conclusions below and say whether they express a balanced consideration, or the writer's opinion directly/indirectly.

1 To conclude, although it must be said that a sense of responsibility is one of the most important qualities which can be instilled in young people, it should not be forgotten that there are other, equally important qualities.

2 For the above-mentioned reasons, therefore, I firmly believe that if people are taught a keen sense of responsibility towards themselves and others, then they will have the best possible start in life. The way I see it, taking full responsibility for one's own actions is central to leading an honest life.

3 To sum up, it would seem that, once young people know how to take responsibility for their actions, they are better equipped to learn about life. While there are other important qualities, a highly-developed sense of responsibility provides the ideal foundation for personal development.

4 On balance, it seems that a sense of responsibility has a role to play in a young person's development. Nevertheless, when placed alongside other human qualities, such as honesty and integrity, it is by no means the most useful.

10 Read the main body of the for and against essay below on the topic: "Discuss the view that advertising promotes excessive consumerism." Then read the beginnings and endings and say which of the techniques on p. 56 has been used in each one. Finally, replace the bold type words or phrases in the main body with ones similar in meaning.

Beginning...

1. Whether it is on TV, radio or hoardings at the side of the road, advertisements have become a part of our lives, advertising simply a means of informing the public or does it encourage consumers to purchase products they do not really need?

2. Advertising is a powerful and persuasive medium. You may feel this is an intrusion in your daily life, and resent the pressure on you to spend money. Others, however, enjoy the variety which this highly creative industry brings to everyday life.

3. Advertising is an effective way of selling new products, and many people argue that its effectiveness brainwashes us into unnecessary spending. Others, however, disagree. As Jeremy

Tunstall says, "Advertising can't sell any product can only help to sell a product the people want to buy."

One of the main arguments for advertising is that it generates wealth for a country. That is to say, taxes paid on goods sold, help governments to pay for essential services such as education and health care. Moreover, the number of jobs created for producing, marketing and servicing these goods helps to reduce the unemployment problem, which is also a great advantage for a country's economy.

What is more, advertising raises money for a huge number of sporting events and artistic performances which would otherwise not be held. Without sponsorship from companies who advertise their products, these events would disappear due to lack of funding. In other words, although consumerism is promoted through advertising, it is beneficial to both the consumer and society.

On the other hand, advertisements can cause people to be dissatisfied with what they already have, and make them want more. Being exposed again and again to products which one cannot afford produces frustration and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, not all parents are in a position to afford the goods which their children see advertised and want to possess. This often leads to feelings of inadequacy, especially among the less well-off.

In addition to this, advertising creates materialism and causes people to place too much importance on material goods. The fact that people are prepared to work long hours, or even turn to crime in order to gain the goods on offer, shows that advertising persuades people to go to great lengths to keep the same standard of living as those they see around them. It is a fact, though, that neither crime nor the stress caused by overwork can benefit society.

Endings....

A To sum up, it is true to say that advertising does provide some benefits. However, do you not agree that the drawbacks of a greedy, materialistic society far outweigh the advantages, and we need to be careful that we do not lose sight of what is most important - a spirit of co-operation rather than competition?

B To conclude, it must be said that, while advertising may create jealousy and inequality in society, without it we would lose a valuable source of revenue which is used for the benefit of the majority. What would our lives be like without advertisements?

C In conclusion, I believe that advertising exists to generate wealth by encouraging people to spend unnecessarily. It fosters greed and breeds dissatisfaction while distracting us from focusing on more vital things. As Marion Harper Jr said, "Advertising is found in societies which have passed the point of satisfying the basic animal needs."

11 Read the four topic sentences below and match each with the corresponding paragraph. Does each topic sentence adequately summarize the argument it presents? What would a suitable introduction and conclusion be for this essay?

"Living in a foreign country cannot be better than living in your own." Discuss.

a Furthermore, people who move to a foreign country may be regarded with suspicion and treated unfairly.

b On the other hand, living abroad can be a way to escape a variety of problems presented in one's country of birth.

c. One argument in favor of staying in one's native country is that the problems of adapting to a new way of life cannot always be overcome.

d. Finally, it may be said that by living in a foreign country, people are able to establish a greater understanding between nations.

1.

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The fact of the matter is that, even in cases where the language is the same, there are other changes, such as cultural differences, which an outsider might find difficult to adjust to. Even the weather can force some people to return to their country of origin. For example, take an Inuit and an Amazonian Indian. They would almost certainly find it impossible to adapt to the extreme climates of each other's native homes.

2.

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In countries with a large number of immigrants there are often social problems, and immigrants stand out as being "different" and even inferior. As a consequence, the host country may react in a variety of ways, from open hostility and racism to depriving the immigrants of the right to equal pay.

3.

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For example, war, political or religious intolerance, and natural catastrophes are among the reasons for people seeking a new home in a foreign land. In such cases, people are often able to start a new life abroad with greater freedom and a higher standard of living.

4.

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That is to say, by working and living among foreigners, some of the barriers between countries can be broken down, helping to create a more peaceful world. Needless to say, better diplomatic relations would be of benefit to all.

12 Which of the following are arguments in favor and which are arguments against the topic: "School plays a more important role than die family in shaping one's personality." Discuss. Suggest examples/justification for each argument. Finally, write the composition in about 350 words.

1. Moreover, so much of the school day is devoted to competition and preparation for examinations that there is little time left for personality development.
2. On the other hand, most children have a closer relationship with their parents than with their teachers.
3. An additional argument in support of school is that young people are exposed to a wide variety of subjects.
4. One point in favour of the role of schools is that it is at school where children first learn to socialise.
5. Furthermore, children usually spend five years of their lives at home before they even go to school.
6. What is more, the average child spends as many as eight hours a day in school.

PLANNING & ORGANISATION

- There is an alternative paragraph plan you may use when writing for and against essays. When following this plan you present both an argument in favour and the opposing viewpoint in the same paragraph.

In such essays the arguments for and against must be equal in number.

Introduction

Paragraph 1

State topic (summary of topic without stating your opinion)

Main Body

Paragraph 2

first argument for & against

Paragraph 3*

second argument for & against

Conclusion

Final Paragraph

give balanced consideration/ your opinion expressed directly/indirectly

- You may include more paragraph in the main body if you wish to include more points

13 "Greater freedom does not necessarily lead to greater happiness" Discuss.

Read the model and say which arguments have been presented in each paragraph. Do the topic sentences clearly summaries the content of each paragraph? Finally, underline all the useful expressions and linking words or phrases and replace them with ones similar in meaning.

Over the years, mankind has recognised the need for personal and social freedom, and this is perhaps one of the most important social advancements ever made. However, whether it has led to increased personal happiness is highly debatable; many people would argue that greater freedom has led to increased social disorder and personal dissatisfaction.

Firstly, it is true that people are now more at liberty to choose how to live their lives. For example, in the Western world at least, the choice of where to live, what career to pursue and which religion to follow has never been greater. In addition to this people have more leisure time in which to enjoy a wider range of recreational activities. On the other hand, it can be argued that this increased freedom can lead people to take things for granted and expect too much from life. As an example of this, the greater choice of material goods available has resulted in people quickly growing bored with their possessions. Consequently, no sooner have they acquired something new than they tire of it. They find short-term happiness in material goods and entertainment, but boredom and frustration soon send them looking for fresh distractions. Secondly, social and moral attitudes have become less rigid. This has allowed for a greater variety of lifestyles and a freedom in human relations. This is illustrated by the fact that pupils and teachers now treat each other as equals, and parent-child relationships are now much more relaxed. Nevertheless, some people believe that this increase in freedom has resulted in the escalation of social problems. They argue that the current lack of discipline has given rise to a breakdown in the traditional family and the decay in educational standards as well as the rise in juvenile delinquency. Thus, it may be said that society is becoming more and more dangerous because of the very fact that people are more open-minded than they were in the past.

To conclude, there is evidence both to support and refute the view that greater freedom does not necessarily lead to greater happiness. On the one hand, people have more opportunities to raise their standard of living. On the other hand, the many examples of protests, strikes and criminal activities which are a feature of modern society are a sign that, although people may be free, they are not necessarily happier.

14 Read the following arguments and match each argument in favour of using animals for entertainment with the corresponding argument against. Then, following the paragraph plan (the second one), say which arguments you would include in each paragraph. Finally, write a clear topic sentence for each paragraph.

Arguments for using animals for entertainment.

1. Zoos can be educational and also help to increase the numbers of endangered species through controlled breeding programmes.
2. Animals used in television programmes, advertisements and films are very appealing and attract large audiences.
3. Circus animals are loved, well-treated and only perform for short periods.
4. Racing animals have a very short working life and are well-treated throughout.

Arguments against using animals for entertainment.

- a Animals are forced to perform unnatural acts for the pleasure of the public.
- b Keeping animals in cages so the public can see them is unnecessary because documentaries produced today take away the need for such places.
- c With new technology and special effects, there is no need to use live animals as realistic models can be used instead.
- d Racing animals have grueling training schedules and are often placed in unnecessary danger.

DISCUSS and WRITE

The discussion clock

- When considering a topic you may refer to the discussion clock, which will help you think of ideas when planning your essay.
- Referring to the discussion clock is a useful "brainstorming" technique, as it helps you examine a topic from various viewpoints and decide on ideas/points to include in your essay.
- Keep in mind that a topic may not relate to all the aspects presented in the discussion clock.
- Remember that for each viewpoint you have thought of, there is usually an opposing argument. Think of the opposing arguments when planning your essay.

12-psychological

1-religious

2-scientific

3-artistic

4-economic

5-educational

6-social

- 7-political
- 8-moral
- 9-historical
- 10-health
- 11-personal

15 Read the following composition topic and answer the questions below.

"Should countries encourage tourism?" Discuss.

- What are the two sides of the question?
- Which of the following arguments are for and which against?

1. The desire to attract tourists to a certain area often encourages governments to improve local facilities.
2. Over-development leads to ugly, crowded tourist spots and environmental damage.
3. The impact of tourism may destroy the local way of life.
4. Many people claim that tourism is an important source of income.
5. A country's economy may become so dependent on tourism that it is weakened.
6. Tourism allows people to experience other cultures.

- What aspects of the discussion clock do these arguments deal with?
- Can you think of any additional arguments?
- Which paragraph plan would you follow to write this essay?
- Which arguments would you include and in what order?
- Which techniques would you use to begin and end your essay?
- Which useful phrases and linking words could you use?

16 Now, using the information from your answers to the above questions, write the essay in about 350 words.