

Pro-Contra Discussion / Argumentative Essay / Discussion Paper

How to write it?

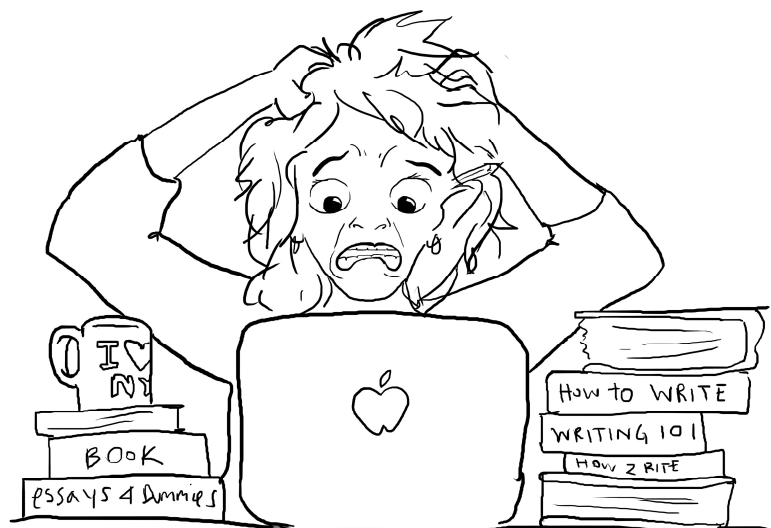
A "for and against" essay is a formal piece of writing in which a topic is considered from opposing points of view. You should present both sides in a fair way by discussing them objectively and in equal detail. A good essay of this type should consist of:

- 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 summarises 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.).



STRUCTURE OF AN ESSAY

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

Pro-and-Con Structure (Example 1)

Intro/thesis

pro

but con

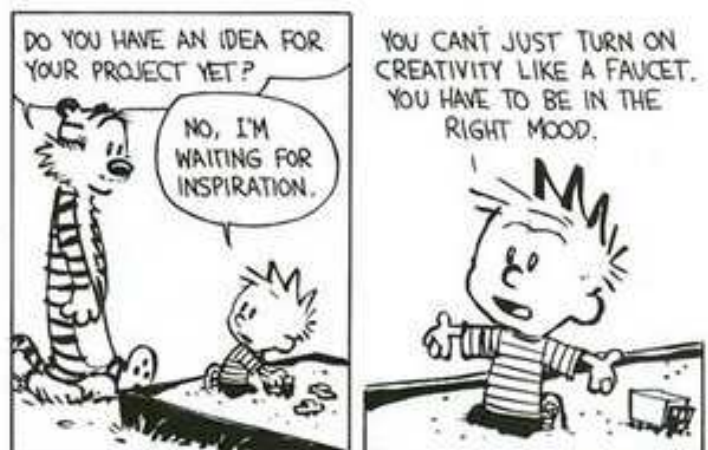
but pro

but con

but pro

but con, which leads to

Conclusion



Pro-and-Con Structure (Example 2)

Intro/thesis

pro

and pro

and pro

but con

and con

and con, which leads to

Conclusion



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 favour 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/sceptics/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 emphasise 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 ...

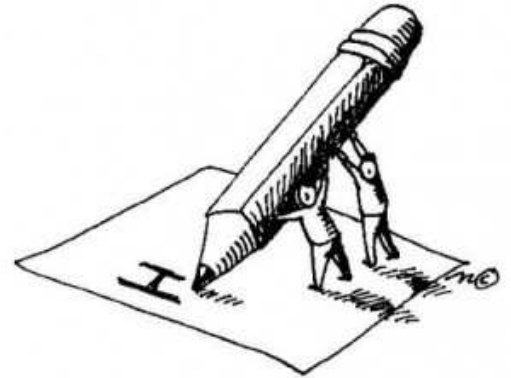
..... it is clear/obvious that...

..... 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 ...

EXERCISES

1. Complete the following sentences without changing the meaning of the sentence before.

1 It is widely maintained that recycling some products reduces the amount of damage we do to the environment.

Most people advocate

2 Some people still oppose the view that mothers can be career women too.

Some people feel

3 One argument against nuclear testing is that it has long-lasting effects on surrounding areas.

Sceptics point out that

4 It is generally held that harsher punishments for criminals would result in a decrease in the crime rate.

Many people support

5 Critics often argue that the use of computers is reducing levels of literacy.

A further common

2. Join the sentences using the words/phrases given in brackets.

1 Pets can prove to be good companions. They teach children a sense of responsibility. (not only)

2 Many people nowadays decide to open their own business. A slump in the economy has resulted in the closure of many small business. (even though)

3 Computers are time-saving devices. They can do things which people could hardly do before. (apart from)

4 Living in the countryside can be beneficial for your health. Some essentials are not so easily available in the country as in the city. (despite)

5 Voting gives you a voice in the decisions of the government. It gives you a feeling of belonging to a larger community. (not to mention that)