

5.3 writing

essay arguing for and against

1 using paragraph conventions

- a Look at these possible layouts for an essay. Which one(s) do you think are acceptable in English writing?



- b Look at the reasons why English uses paragraphs. Which reasons are true of writing in your language?

- to make your essay 'easy on the eye'
- to help you to organize your ideas as you write
- to show when you are going to talk about something different
- to help the person reading to follow your argument
- to show which sentences are more closely connected in their ideas
- to make it clear how the different parts of your essay are connected
- to help you to 'balance' the different parts of your essay

- c Which do you think are the most important?

2 paragraphing an essay

- a Look at this Italian student's essay on the effect of television on young people. Divide it into six paragraphs to make it easier to follow.

Television has a negative effect on children and young people. What is your opinion?

Over the last thirty years we have witnessed the increasing power of television. The TV set has become a real 'window on the world'; we can see what the Americans are having for breakfast and what the Chinese are doing on the other side of the world. **On the one hand**, television tries to show exactly what is happening. The television news, **for example**, can be violent but the reports just reflect reality. The horrors of war they show are difficult to believe, but war is real; an objective report must reflect the truth. **On the other hand**, who suffers from watching all this violence? Children, **of course**, and young people. Even cartoons are becoming more and more violent in order to represent a certain kind of physical strength and power, and this can only have a negative effect on the children watching. **Moreover**, adults do little to set a good example. Why can anyone buy a gun in the USA, **for instance? Obviously** as a response to adults' desires. **But the real point is** that we are seeing a general decline in morality. Without definite laws society is falling apart. Television is the mirror of our society. If there is violence on TV, we are responsible for it, because as participants in society, we form it; we are all part of the modern world.

tip

The paragraphs in a successful 'opinion' essay are normally organized in a similar way:

State a point (this will often be the 'topic sentence')

Support your point (with explanation and/or examples)

- b Look at the essay again and say whether each paragraph uses an explanation, an example, or both to support the statement in the topic sentence.

5.3 writing

3 using linking words

Look at the words in **bold** in the essay. Which one(s) are used to:

- 1 give an example _____
- 2 balance two equally true points _____
- 3 stress a point or opinion _____
- 4 add a related point _____

4 generating ideas for writing

Read the letter to a newspaper below. Which sentence best summarizes Mr Forde's opinion?

- 1 Having guns freely available makes a society more dangerous.
- 2 Having guns freely available makes a society more secure.

Gun ownership

Living in his secure gun-carrying home of the United States, James O Johnson (Letters, 18 August) is about six times more likely to be murdered than a UK citizen, about 200 times more likely to be murdered specifically by shooting, and about 10,000 times more likely to be the victim of a shooting accident involving a legal gun.

ROBERT A FORDE *Clevedon, Somerset*

5 organizing ideas for writing

a Read the writing task in the box at the bottom of the page. Complete the table with notes for your essay. Use Mr Forde's ideas and / or your own.

| For | Against |
|-----|---------|
| | |

b Which of these possible paragraph outlines would work best for your essay?

- 1

introduction _____

your views _____

opposing views _____

your conclusions _____

2

introduction _____

views for and against _____

views for and against _____

your conclusions _____

3

introduction _____

your views _____

your views _____

opposing views and your conclusions _____

Writing task

Write an essay with the title: *Guns should be freely available to everyone. Do you agree?* Consider points both 'for' and 'against' the statement. Choose one of the outlines above, and make sure your own opinion comes through clearly.