

Discussion 1

Structure

The structure of a discussion text is often (but not always):

- **Introduction**
 - **statement of the issues plus a preview of the main arguments**
- ***arguments for, plus supporting evidence; THEN arguments against [or alternative view(s)], plus supporting evidence***
- **OR**
- ***arguments and counter-arguments presented alternatively, one point at a time***
- **summary and conclusion - recommendation / perhaps giving a reasoned opinion**

Language Features

The language features of a discussion text are often (but not always):

- written in simple present tense
- focused mainly on generic participants using uncountable nouns, for example, some, most; and category nouns, e.g. vehicles, pollution (nominalisation), power (abstract)
- abstract nouns – things you cannot see (truth, justice, welfare, reason)
- constructed using logical, connectives, for example, therefore, however, consequently
- a movement usually from the generic to the specific: hunters' agree..... Mr. Smith, who has hunted for many years.....
- structural 'signposts' to your main points eg
 - There are three major issues
 - First
 - The second key question is
 - Finally
 - To sum up
- Discussion conventions
 - Don't take sides – say what 'people' think
 - Keep it balanced eg On the one hand.... On the other hand.....
 - Don't be too definite – use conditionals (sometimes called weasel words) eg It could be claimed that... This might mean... possibly.... perhaps

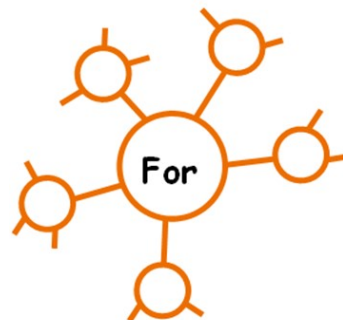
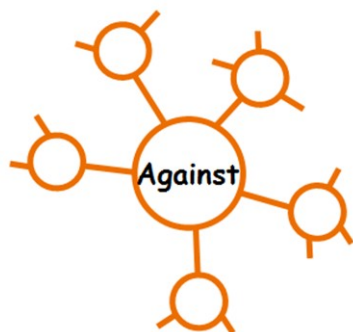


Top Tips

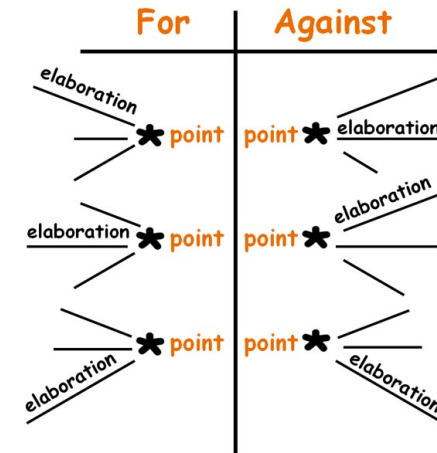
- you can turn the title into a question: Should we hunt whales?
- open by introducing the reader to the discussion – you may need to add why you are debating the issue
- try to see the argument from both sides
- make views sound more reasonable through use of modal verbs and words such as often, usually
- support views with reasons and evidence
- in your conclusion you must give reasons for what you decide
- if you are trying to present a balanced viewpoint, check you have been fair to both sides
- recognise that discussion texts can be adapted or combined with other text types depending on the audience and purpose

Planning Discussion

1. Brainstorm



2. Elaborate on points

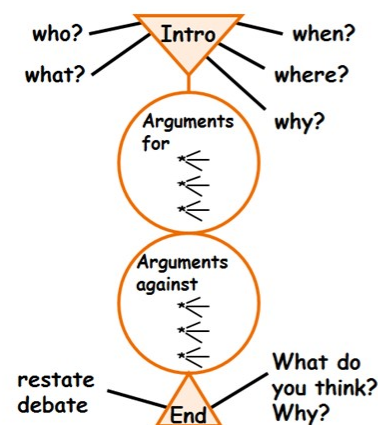


3. Organise discussion

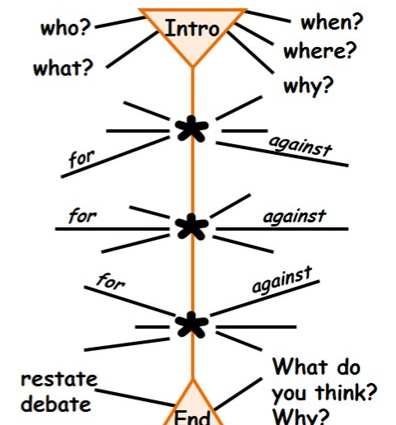
To set out arguments clearly choose one of two structures

arguments **for** + evidence
arguments **against** + evidence

arguments/counter-argument
+ evidence, one point at a time



Each side of the discussion skeleton turns into one or more paragraphs or sections.



Each point gives one paragraph or section in your writing.