



WHAT IS DISCURSIVE WRITING?

Discursive writing looks at an issue from different perspectives. You explore the arguments for and against, consider the important factors, and then give your own balanced conclusion.

PURPOSE

- To discuss an issue fairly
- To present multiple viewpoints
- To evaluate and compare ideas and evidence
- To reach a reasoned conclusion

KEY FEATURES

- MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES**
Presents different sides of the issue fairly.
- EVIDENCE & EXAMPLES**
Uses facts, statistics and examples to support each viewpoint.
- ANALYSIS & COMPARISON**
Explains similarities, differences and importance.
- BALANCED APPROACH**
Acknowledges strengths and weaknesses of each side.
- REASONED CONCLUSION**
Gives a thoughtful overall judgement based on evidence and analysis.

EXAMPLE EXTRACT (ANNOTATED)

SHOULD STUDENTS HAVE HOMEWORK?

Homework is a common part of schooling, but whether it is truly beneficial is debated by many. Some believe it helps students learn more, while others argue it causes stress and takes time away from family and personal activities.

On one hand, homework has clear advantages. It reinforces what students learn in class and helps improve understanding. Research shows that students who complete homework regularly tend to achieve higher grades. It also builds good habits such as time management, responsibility and independent learning.

On the other hand, homework can have negative effects. Students often spend many hours on tasks, leaving little time for sport, hobbies or relaxation. Too much homework can cause stress and burnout, especially for younger students. Not all students have a quiet place at home or support from adults, which can make homework unfair.

Other factors should also be considered. The quality of homework matters more than quantity. Meaningful tasks that are linked to learning goals are more useful than repetitive worksheets. Schools should also consider individual needs and provide time in class for practice when possible.

In conclusion, while homework can support learning and build important skills, too much or poorly designed homework can do more harm than good. A balanced approach with purposeful tasks is best for student wellbeing and success.

1 INTRODUCTION

Introduce the issue and outline both views.

2 FOR (ADVANTAGES)

Presents the first point of view with reasons and evidence.

3 AGAINST (DISADVANTAGES)

Presents the opposing view with reasons and examples.

4 OTHER FACTORS

Discusses additional considerations and important factors.

5 CONCLUSION

Gives a balanced judgement and recommends a position.

DISCURSIVE TEXT STRUCTURE

- TITLE** Clearly states the issue.
- INTRODUCTION**
Paraphrase the issue and outline both sides.
- VIEWPOINT 1 (FOR)**
Present the first point of view with reasons and supporting evidence.
- VIEWPOINT 2 (AGAINST)**
Present the opposing point of view with reasons and supporting evidence.
- OTHER FACTORS**
Consider additional aspects or nuances.
- CONCLUSION**
Weigh up the views and state your overall position with reasons.

LANGUAGE FEATURES

- Modal verbs:** should, may, could, might
- Hedging:** some, often, usually, may, seems
- Connectives for addition:** furthermore, moreover, in addition
- Connectives for contrast:** however, on the other hand, although, in contrast
- Connectives for examples:** for example, such as, for instance
- Impersonal language:** It is argued that..., People believe that..., Research suggests that...
- Evaluative language:** important, necessary, beneficial, harmful, effective, unfair

USEFUL DISCURSIVE STARTERS

INTRODUCTION

- There is no simple answer to ...
- The issue of ... is often debated.
- People have different views about ...

PRESENTING BOTH SIDES

- On one hand, ...
- However, on the other hand, ...
- While some argue that ..., others believe ...

ADDING INFORMATION

- Another important factor is ...
- It is also worth considering ...
- Furthermore, ...

COMPARING / CONTRASTING

- Similarly, ...
- In contrast, ...
- On the other hand, ...

CONCLUDING

- In conclusion, ...
- Overall, ...
- Therefore, I believe that ...

DISCURSIVE WRITING CHECKLIST

- I have a clear and engaging title.
- I have introduced the issue and outlined both sides.
- I have presented the arguments for and against with reasons and evidence.
- I have considered additional factors.
- I have compared or contrasted the views.
- I have used a variety of connectives.
- I have used formal and impersonal language.
- I have given a balanced conclusion.
- I have checked my spelling and punctuation.

STRONG vs WEAK DISCURSIVE WRITING

WEAK

- Only talks about one side.
- Opinions with no reasons.
- Repeats ideas.
- Weak or no conclusion.
- Informal language.

Example (Weak):

Homework is boring and a waste of time. Students should not have it. It only causes stress. I think homework should be banned.

STRONG

- Discusses both sides fairly.
- Uses facts, examples and reasons.
- Analyses and compares ideas.
- Considers other factors.
- Strong, balanced conclusion.

Example (Strong):

Homework can reinforce learning and build important skills. However, too much can cause stress and reduce time for other activities. A balanced approach with meaningful tasks is best.

TYPES OF DISCURSIVE TASKS



Opinion Questions:

"Do you agree or disagree that ...?"



For and Against:

"Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of ..."



Problem and Solution:

"Discuss the problem and possible solutions for ..."



Discuss and Give Opinion:

"Discuss both sides and give your opinion about ..."

COMMON MISTAKES

- Not presenting both sides.
- Giving personal opinion too early.
- Using casual or emotional language.
- Not supporting ideas with evidence.
- Listing points without explaining.
- Not comparing or analysing.
- Weak or unclear conclusion.
- Spelling and punctuation errors.



CHALLENGE: IMPROVE IT!

Rewrite the weak paragraph below to make it a strong discursive paragraph.

Plastic bags are bad. They pollute the ocean and animals die. We should stop using them.

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-
-
-
-

SHOW, DON'T TELL

Don't just tell the reader—show them with evidence and detail.

DON'T SAY:

Many students find homework stressful. ❌

SHOW:

A survey found that 68% of students aged 12–16 feel stressed by the amount of homework they receive each week. ✅



TOP TIP

BE FAIR, BE CLEAR, BE CONVINCING!



EXPLORE
both sides fairly.



USE EVIDENCE
and logical reasoning.



CONCLUDE
with a balanced judgement.

GOOD DISCUSSION LEADS TO BETTER DECISIONS.

Think carefully. Write clearly. Convince your reader.

