

Mastering the Art of Discussion: Weighing Up Ideas

Learning objective: To understand the structure and linguistic features of a balanced discussion text, including the use of formal tone and cohesive devices.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of non-fiction writing to answer. Remember to use formal language and balanced arguments when asked to write examples.

A discussion text explores different viewpoints on a complex issue. It must remain objective, presenting arguments for and against a topic before offering a concluding summary. Authors use formal language, third-person pronouns, and logical connectives to guide the reader through the debate.

Word bank: consequently · furthermore · alternatively · balanced · viewpoint · counter-argument · objective · nevertheless

1. Explain why a discussion text must include a 'counter-argument'. Why is it important for the writer to remain objective? (2 marks)

2. Max the monkey is writing a discussion on whether school days should be longer. Write two formal sentences: one presenting an argument in favour, and one presenting an argument against. (2 marks)

3. Which cohesive devices from the word bank would you use to introduce a contrasting opinion? Use one of them in a sentence. (2 marks)

4. Pip the caterpillar is editing a discussion text. Should she use first-person ('I think') or third-person ('It is often argued')? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

5. What is the purpose of the concluding paragraph in a discussion text? Does it need to state the author's personal opinion? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a set of scales. On one side, label it 'Arguments For' and on the other side, label it 'Arguments Against'. In the middle, draw a balanced fulcrum to represent a fair, objective discussion.



Extension challenge: Choose a topic that interests you, such as 'Should children be allowed to bring pets to school?' Write a short paragraph (4-6 sentences) using at least three formal cohesive devices to structure your argument.