

The Great Forest Debate: Should We Build a Bridge?

Learning objective: To analyse the structure and language of a balanced discussion text.

Read the text carefully below. Use your knowledge of discussion texts to identify arguments for and against the proposed bridge in the Whispering Woods, then answer the questions provided.

In the heart of the Whispering Woods, a heated discussion has emerged regarding the construction of a new stone bridge across the Silver Stream. Proponents of the bridge, led by Kit the Fox, argue that it would provide a safer route for the woodland animals during the winter floods. They suggest that the structure would connect the northern and southern habitats, allowing for easier social interaction and faster travel. Furthermore, Kit believes a bridge would encourage exploration and help younger animals navigate the forest floor with confidence.

Conversely, many residents are deeply concerned about the environmental impact. Nova the Owl, an expert on the forest's delicate ecosystem, worries that the construction process could disturb the nesting grounds of rare birds. Opponents suggest that building the bridge might disrupt the natural flow of the stream and threaten the homes of local water creatures. Additionally, there is a fear that a permanent structure would ruin the serene, wild aesthetic of the woods. Whilst the bridge offers undeniable convenience, one must consider whether the potential harm to the habitat outweighs the benefits of easier travel for the forest dwellers.

Word bank: pros and cons · balanced · perspective · impartial · consequently · furthermore · nevertheless · argument

1. Identify two reasons why Kit the Fox believes the bridge should be built. (2 marks) (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what are the two main environmental concerns raised by Nova the Owl? (2 marks) (2 marks)

3. Why might the author have used the word 'conversely' at the start of the second paragraph? (2 marks) (2 marks)

4. Explain why Nova the Owl might feel more protective of the stream than Kit the Fox. (3 marks) (3 marks)

5. Do you believe the bridge should be built? Justify your decision using evidence from the text to support your viewpoint. (3 marks) (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a map of the Whispering Woods showing the Silver Stream. Include a design for the proposed bridge and label the areas where the animals live on both sides of the water.



Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph from the perspective of a neutral party—perhaps a woodland badger—who is trying to find a compromise between Kit and Nova. What alternative solutions could be proposed to satisfy both sides of the argument?