

# The Great Debate: Crafting Balanced Arguments

*Learning objective: To understand the structure and linguistic features of a balanced discussion text, using formal tone and cohesive devices to present multiple viewpoints.*

Read the task requirements carefully. Use your knowledge of formal English, conjunctions, and balanced arguments to complete the activities below. Remember to use evidence-based reasoning for your responses.

In a formal discussion text, the writer does not take a personal side. Instead, they explore a complex issue by presenting arguments for and against a specific topic. A successful discussion text includes an engaging introduction, structured paragraphs presenting different viewpoints, and a conclusion that summarises the debate without necessarily choosing a winner.

*Word bank: Furthermore · Conversely · Nevertheless · In contrast · Consequently · Advocates argue · From an opposing perspective · Evidence suggests · Balanced · Objective*

**1. Identify two formal conjunctions or cohesive devices from the word bank and explain how they help a reader understand the shift between two opposing viewpoints. (2 marks)**

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**2. Max the monkey is writing a discussion text about whether it is better to live in a treehouse or a cave. Write two sentences: one that supports living in a treehouse and one that uses a counter-argument to challenge it. (3 marks)**

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**3. Explain why it is essential for a discussion text to maintain an objective tone. What might happen to the quality of the argument if the writer uses informal, emotive language? (3 marks)**

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**4. Compare and contrast the structure of a persuasive text with a discussion text. Why is a discussion text considered more 'balanced'? (3 marks)**

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**5. Justify your answer: Is a concluding paragraph in a discussion text required to state a final winner or decision? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)**

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**Draw:** Draw a 'Decision Scale' showing two sides of a debate. On one side, draw a symbol representing a positive argument (e.g., a lightbulb for 'new ideas'), and on the other, a symbol for a negative argument (e.g., a shield for 'safety').



*Extension challenge: Imagine you are discussing the topic: 'Should schools be open all year round?' Write an opening paragraph for a discussion text that sets the scene for the debate. Ensure you use at least three pieces of advanced vocabulary from the word bank and maintain a strictly formal, balanced tone.*