Year 6 Assessment: The Art of Discussion

Learning objective: To evaluate understanding of the structure, linguistic features, and purpose of balanced discussion texts.

Read the following passage carefully before answering the questions. Ensure your answers use formal language and refer to the text where required.

Should schools be open all year round? Some argue that shorter, more frequent holidays would help children retain information more effectively. Supporters of this idea suggest that a continuous learning cycle prevents the ‘summer slide,’ where academic progress stalls. Conversely, opponents believe that long summer breaks are essential for mental health, family time, and the opportunity for children to pursue extracurricular interests outside the classroom. While teachers might benefit from a more consistent schedule, many families rely on traditional holiday patterns for travel and rest. Ultimately, the question remains whether the benefits of academic continuity outweigh the value of extended periods of relaxation.

Word bank: balanced · counter-argument · formal · conjunctions · modal verbs · perspective · objective

1. Identify two formal conjunctions used in the text to signal a shift between opposing viewpoints. (2 marks)

2. What is the primary purpose of a discussion text? Explain why the author of the passage chose to include both sides of the argument. (3 marks)

3. Find and copy one modal verb from the text. Explain how this word helps to keep the tone of the argument objective rather than opinionated. (3 marks)

4. Why is it important for a discussion text to end with a conclusion that summarises both sides, rather than just stating the writer's personal preference? (4 marks)

5. Explain the difference between a 'fact' and an 'opinion' in the context of writing a balanced discussion text. Give one example of each based on the school holidays debate. (4 marks)

6. Extended Writing Task: Write a short paragraph (4-6 sentences) arguing in favour of the school day starting later in the morning. Use at least two formal cohesive devices (e.g., 'furthermore', 'in contrast') and maintain an objective, balanced tone. (9 marks)

Draw: Draw a balanced scale. On one side, label it 'Arguments For', and on the other, 'Arguments Against'. In the middle, draw Kit the fox holding a pen, symbolising the neutral position of a discussion writer.

Extension challenge: Total: /25