Mastering the Art of Discussion

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. Use your knowledge of formal, balanced writing to answer. Remember to use a neutral tone and consider multiple viewpoints, just like Leo the Lion does when he leads his group debates.

A discussion text explores a topic from different perspectives. It begins with an introduction that presents the issue, followed by paragraphs exploring arguments for and against. It ends with a balanced conclusion that summarises the main points.

Word bank: conjunctions · formal · viewpoint · counter-argument · cohesive devices · neutral · evidence · conclusion

1. Explain why it is important for a discussion text to remain neutral and avoid using first-person pronouns like 'I' or 'my'. (2 marks)

2. List three examples of cohesive devices (conjunctions or adverbials) that could be used to introduce a contrasting argument (e.g., 'However'). (3 marks)

3. If you were writing a discussion text about whether schools should have longer lunch breaks, write one balanced sentence that includes both a benefit and a drawback. (2 marks)

4. What is the purpose of a 'counter-argument' paragraph in a discussion text? How does it help the reader? (2 marks)

5. Why should the final paragraph of a discussion text not introduce brand new information that hasn't been discussed earlier? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'Balanced Scale' to represent a discussion text. On one side, draw a small symbol representing the 'Pros' and on the other, a symbol for the 'Cons'. In the centre, draw Leo the Lion holding a feather pen, representing the objective writer.

Extension challenge: Choose a topic, such as 'Should all children learn to play a musical instrument?', and write a short paragraph providing two distinct viewpoints using formal, academic language.