

Discursive Writing: How to Do it Well!

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Discursive Writing is:

- When a **controversial** topic is explored in an **unbiased** manner. You must **provoke** thought in the reader and get them to consider their own opinions based on the points you present.
- You must examine the arguments **FOR** and the arguments **AGAINST** in **equal weighting**.

Discursive Vocabulary: Copy!

- **Controversial**: a topic which sparks debate – people feel very strongly about it, either way.
- **Unbiased**: balanced and impartial; your personal opinion must not come through in your writing.
- **Provoke**: to rouse thought or opinion in the reader. Your job is to challenge their pre-existing beliefs!



Topics that Affect YOU!



- Create a list of controversial topics that have for and against arguments in your groups.
- The most effective discursive essays are written convincingly because they affect the writer personally – consider this when compiling your list.

Your Topic...



- *Can Celebrities Be Considered Good Role Models to Young People in Today's Society?*

Initial Responses...

- Yes? Why? Examples?
- No? Why? Examples?
- Plan in your groups on flip chart paper.

YES	NO

A Discursive Essay Consists of...

- An introduction
- 6 key paragraphs (3 FOR and 3 AGAINST)
- A conclusion

Key Points (KP)

- A key point is the main point / idea of the paragraph. It is important to make the key point within the topic sentence of the paragraph.





Supporting Detail (SD)

- This is the remainder of the paragraph – the evidence / explanation of the key point. It should contain statistics / quotations / researched facts.
- You should also make a quick summary in relation to the overall question at the end of each paragraph (could be a rhetorical question, getting the reader to reconsider their thoughts).

Sooooo...

- When you are **planning** your essay, our plan might look like this:
 - **KP**: *good role model is someone who cares for others / does charity work: Angelina Jolie.*
 - **SD**: *her humanitarian work; adopting children; working in Haiti last year to help survivors of the earthquake; the creation of the “Jolie Pitt Foundation”; giving \$1 million to Haitian people to rebuild country.*
 - **Sum up**: *clearly illustrates that Hollywood actors can be good role models to the youth of today because they are willing to give their earnings away to good causes - inspirational.*

Now You Know!

- You should undertake this level of planning for your essay – for each paragraph.
- It will force you to research your key points.
- Remember to create a bibliography (a list of websites / articles you used) and add it to the back of your essay. Crucial.
- Watch the BrainPop video on how to create a reference list.

Writing an Introduction

1. **Explain the controversial topic.**
2. **Acknowledge a view from each side of the argument (“On one hand.... However, on the other..”).**
3. **End with a rhetorical question, prompting the reader into thought (a key technique in discursive writing).**

Use this as a template...

(1) Fox hunting is a topic of heated debate in the 21st century. For many years supporters and opposers of hunting have argued the cases for and against. (2) On one hand fox hunting is a long standing tradition within country society in the UK. On the other hand many people now see it as an unnecessary and cruel bloodsport. (3) With strong feelings on both sides of the argument, what then are the main issues surrounding fox-hunting in this country?

Middle Paragraphs:

- Always begin with the FOR arguments.
- Use a range of openers to open your topic sentences, eg. *Firstly, Secondly, Furthermore, In addition, Similarly*, etc.
- When introducing the AGAINST section, use a contrasting opener, like *However, Conversely, In spite of this, On the other hand*, etc.

Topic Sentences: Reminder!

- First sentence of any paragraph.
- Informs what the remainder will be about.
- Should contain your Key Point.
- Should be very objective (no opinions or bias).
- For example...

Opener

Objective

Link to
Question

“Firstly, many people assert that celebrities can be very positive role models for young people today because of their dedicated charity work, like actress Angelina Jolie.”

Key Point

Main Body Paragraphs...

- Ensure that your vocabulary is interesting – use a thesaurus.
- Introduce your summaries with *As a result, Consequently, Therefore, etc.*
Remember, you must summarise and make a link back to the essay question at the end of every paragraph.

Think You're Finished?

Conclusion...

- Begin “*To conclude*, “ or “*In conclusion*,”.
- Sum up the controversy.
- Sum up one argument FOR and one AGAINST.
- Then give your own opinion on the subject – you can go either way or you can “sit on the fence”- so long as you justify why you feel this way!