

Exercise walk-through

8.1

Discursive and argumentative essays

IGCSE English

Discursive essays and argumentative essays

Discursive

Consider different sides fairly; explain benefits and drawbacks.

Argumentative

Develop a main view with relevant reasons and examples.

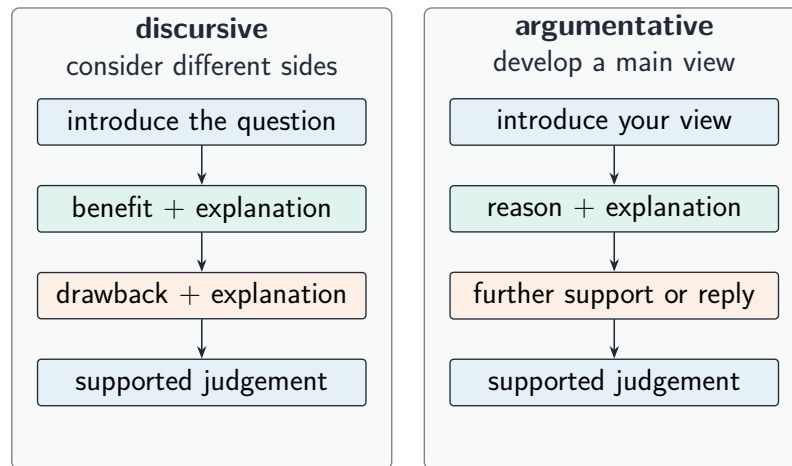
The instruction decides

Include both sides if required. Give your opinion when asked; it can be qualified.

Flexible organisation

A relevant objection and reply may help. A separate counterargument paragraph is not always required.

Two possible routes, not two fixed formulas



Example routes, not fixed paragraph counts.
Include both sides or your opinion when instructed.

These routes illustrate organisation. Paragraph count and a compulsory opposing paragraph do not decide the mark.

Point, explanation and a possible example

an illustrative paragraph

School sport can help students build friendships.

point: a
qualified claim

Team practice gives students time to cooperate and know one another.

explanation:
how it could
happen

For example, weekly practice partners may become friends outside sport.

example:
a possible
situation

This example shows how a claim can be developed. It does not prove that sport always creates friendships.

Exercise 2.1 (a)

2.1 For each task, say whether it is discursive or argumentative.

[3]

(a) “Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in a large city.”

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[3]

(a) “Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in a large city.”

(a)

- **discursive**

Exercise 2.1 (b)

2.1 For each task, say whether it is discursive or argumentative.

[3]

(b) “Homework should be abolished. Do you agree?”

Exercise 2.1 (b)

2.1 For each task, say whether it is discursive or argumentative.

[3]

(b) “Homework should be abolished. Do you agree?”

(b)

- **argumentative**

Exercise 2.1 (c)

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[3]

(c) “What are your views on the amount of time young people spend online?”

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(c) “What are your views on the amount of time young people spend online?”

(c)

- **discursive**, though it also requires a view

Exercises 2.2-2.3

2.2 Write a five-line paragraph plan for: “*Schools should teach cooking to every student.*”
Do you agree? [3]

2.3 Write a conclusion sentence that states a position and the condition it depends on,
for the task in 2.2. [2]

Exercises 2.2·2.3

2.2 Write a five-line paragraph plan for: “*Schools should teach cooking to every student.*”
Do you agree? [3]

2.2

- any five-line plan, one idea per line
- an introduction stating a position; two developed arguments; a counter-argument; a conclusion

2.3 Write a conclusion sentence that states a position and the condition it depends on, for the task in 2.2. [2]

2.3

- a position **and** a condition
- e.g. “Cooking should be taught to everyone, because it is one of the few skills every student will use every week – provided it replaces something of less value rather than being added to an already full timetable.”

Exercises 3.1·3.2

3.1 “Young people today have more freedom than any generation before them, and less real independence.” Write an essay giving your views. Write about 200 words. [8]

3.2 A student’s essay gives four arguments for and none against, then concludes. Explain why this limits the mark even if every argument is well developed. [2]

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 “Young people today have more freedom than any generation before them, and less real independence.” Write an essay giving your views. Write about 200 words. [8]

3.1

- **content (4)**: a clear position, at least two developed arguments, a fairly stated counter-argument that is answered, and a conclusion that follows
- **language (4)**: appropriate formal-neutral register, varied linking, accurate and varied sentences

3.2 A student’s essay gives four arguments for and none against, then concludes. Explain why this limits the mark even if every argument is well developed. [2]

3.2

- the task requires engagement with the **opposing view**, and an essay with none has not fulfilled it
- a reader cannot tell whether the writer considered the other side, so the argument cannot reach the **top content band**