

8.1 Discursive and argumentative essays

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 18 marks**

KEY WORDS essay 议论文 • conclusion 结论 • discursive 论述的 • argumentative 议论的
• introduction 引言

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **discursive and argumentative essays** 论述文与议论文 — knowing which one the task wants, and writing it.

You must be able to:

- tell a discursive task from an argumentative one
- plan the right number of paragraphs for each
- take a position without ignoring the other side

1 Worked examples

■ Two kinds of essay

	Discursive	Argumentative
The task says	<i>Discuss both sides / What are your views?</i>	<i>Argue that... / Do you agree?</i>
Your job	present both sides fairly, then judge	make a case, answering objections
Balance	roughly equal	weighted to your side
Conclusion	a judgement that follows from both sides	a restated position, now supported

Both require you to deal with the opposing view. The difference is how much space it gets.

■ Reading the task

“Every student should learn a second language, even if they do not want to.” Write an essay giving your views.

Giving your views means a position is required. A pure list of arguments with no view at the end will not reach the top band.

■ The plan that fits both

1. Introduction: the issue in one sentence, then your position
2. Argument for, developed
3. Second argument for, developed
4. The strongest counter-argument, stated fairly, then answered
5. Conclusion: your position, with the condition it depends on

Five paragraphs. Write the plan in two minutes before starting.

■ Taking a position without overstating

The strongest conclusions name a condition:

A second language should stay compulsory, because students cannot predict what they will need — but schools should answer the objection by changing how the lessons work, not by dropping the requirement.

2 Practice

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.”

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

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

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]

3 Exam-style questions

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]