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# **Critical Thinking Skills**

Developing Effective Analysis and Argument

Second edition

**Stella Cottrell**

palgrave  
macmillan



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## Chapter 10

# Critical, analytical writing

## Critical thinking when writing

### Learning outcomes

This chapter offers you opportunities to:

- consider the characteristics of critical, analytical writing
- identify the appropriate language structures for indicating, or signposting, the direction of your argument
- compare pieces of writing to identify the characteristics of critical writing
- understand how critical thinking skills are applied to essay-writing

### Introduction

Critical writing draws together other aspects of critical thinking in order to present a forceful case to readers. This means that it must continue the process of selection and forming judgements about the evidence. However, the writing must be produced with its eventual readers in mind.

This chapter considers the characteristics of critical, analytical writing from the perspective of writing text, as opposed to considering written arguments from the reader's point of view. As well as looking at general characteristics, it focuses on the language used to present written arguments.

Previous chapters emphasised the importance of developing a clear line of reasoning. When speaking, it is possible to use the tone of voice, pacing and pauses, as well as body language, to help the audience to follow the argument. It is also common to repeat phrases or to raise the voice for emphasis.

These devices are not available to orientate the reader when arguments are written down, especially

in formal writings. Therefore, it is all the more important to set the scene well, to summarise key points as you go through and, in particular, to use recognisable words and phrases to signpost the different aspects of the argument.

The process of re-drafting and editing writing is particularly important to critical writing. The writer needs to ensure that the final draft has the characteristics associated with critical writing. The final piece of critical writing should be clearly written and well-structured. It should include devices, such as signal words, that lead readers through the evidence in such a way that they are clear about the conclusion even before they read it.

Finally, the chapter looks at how a range of critical thinking skills are applied to the process of producing essays – a particular kind of writing. Essay-writing is a requirement of most subjects, and the main vehicle used for demonstrating, and assessing, good critical thinking skills.

# Characteristics of critical, analytical writing (1)

## Content

In critical writing, most of the text is dedicated to presenting a case through providing reasons, using relevant evidence, comparing and evaluating alternative arguments, weighing up conflicting evidence, and forming judgements on the basis of the evidence. Background information of a general nature is used very sparingly, and only essential details are usually included. Description is kept to a minimum.

## A sense of audience

Good critical writing always keeps its future audience, or readers, in mind. The aim of an argument is to persuade others. When producing critical writing, it is important to consider how the message might be read by other people, especially people who might disagree with the evidence or the conclusions. A good critical writer knows which aspects of the argument are likely to be the most contentious, and the kind of evidence required in order to counter potential opposition within the reader.

## Clarity

Critical writing should aim to be as clear as is possible. The aim is to convince the reader, so it is important that the style of writing makes it easy for the reader to see the point. Long, complicated or poorly punctuated sentences can make it difficult for the reader to follow the argument.

The language used for critical writing is generally sparse. It usually sticks to the facts and avoids emotional content, adjectives and flowery language or jargon. The aim is to present, as far as is possible, the points in a way that an intelligent general reader can understand. Technical language can be used but should not be used simply to sound clever.

Often, an argument can sound clear in our own mind but does not come across clearly in our writing. It is not always easy to see which lines may be interpreted differently when read by someone else, or what might be confusing or ambiguous. Skilful writers check through their writing several times, often by reading aloud, looking for any phrases that may be awkward to read or which could be open to a different interpretation by others.

## Analysis

Analytical writing is writing that looks at the evidence in a detailed and critical way. In particular, it weighs up the relative strengths and weaknesses of the evidence, pointing these out to the reader, so that it is clear how the writer has arrived at judgements and conclusions.

## Selection

Presenting too much detail can mean the main argument becomes obscured. The reader may lose interest in tracking the line of reasoning and simply conclude that the argument is weak. Usually, writers cannot include detailed critical analyses of every point that supports their arguments. On the other hand, presenting too little detail can make it sound as if there is not enough concrete evidence to support the case.

Skilful writers select the most important points, often the most controversial points, to examine in detail. They may only allude briefly to other points, sometimes several together, in order to indicate that they are aware of these points. Strong critical writing uses a good balance of detailed analysis and sections that summarise arguments and evidence.

# Characteristics of critical, analytical writing (2)

## Sequence

The more complicated the argument, the more important it is that the information is sequenced in a way that helps the reader. Good critical writing is planned out well so that the most important points stand out clearly. Readers can follow an argument more easily if they can see how each point is connected with the preceding point, and how each point links to the main argument. Good signposting, as described below, helps the reader to understand the sequence used by the writer.

## Best order

It is generally more logical to present the points that support your own argument first, so that you establish your case early in the mind of the reader. This helps to align the audience to your position. Audiences are more likely to interpret subsequent reasoning from the perspective of the first argument presented, so it is better to present your own argument first.

However, if your argument aims to show why a well-established argument is wrong, it can make more sense to make a critique of the established argument first, in order to undermine this before presenting an alternative case.

Good critical writing shows an awareness of what are the most important or controversial aspects and dedicates the most space to these. If readers are persuaded on these points, they need less convincing on other points.

Skilful critical writers consider which information their audience needs to read first so as to make best sense of the argument. They ask, repeatedly, questions such as:

- Is this the best order or could it be better?
- Where does this best fit into the argument?
- Is the argument coming across clearly?
- If I moved this information somewhere else, would it be easier to follow the line of reasoning?

## Group similar points

Similar points should be located near each other in the writing. For example, the points that support one aspect of the reasoning could be grouped together, followed by the points against. Usually, you should complete your analysis of one piece of evidence before moving on to an analysis of the next. Alternatively, all the aspects of the evidence that support an argument could be grouped together, followed by an analysis of those aspects of the evidence that do not support it. In each case, it is important to consider whether similar points are grouped together in a way that makes the text easy to read. The readers should not feel they are 'hopping' back and forward between points.

## Signposting

Good critical writing leads the readers effortlessly through the argument so that they do not need to pause to consider where they are in the argument or whether the writer intends them to agree or disagree with a particular point. A skilful writer will use certain words and phrases as 'signposts' to indicate to the readers where they are in the argument, and how each point links to previous or subsequent points.

In critical writing, it is not usually acceptable to use graphical means to highlight important points. Critical writing avoids methods such as using italics, enboldening text, capital letters, larger font, colour or arrows to make important points stand out. Instead, it relies on good sequencing and use of language to signpost the reader through the line of reasoning.

### Activity: Characteristics of critical writing

Read through a recent essay that you have written. Use this to evaluate the following:

- Which of the above characteristics are already strengths in your own writing?
- Which of these characteristics could you improve upon in your writing?

# Setting the scene for the reader

When presenting an argument, the author usually has to include more than simply the reasons and conclusions. The circumstances and reasons for producing the argument will usually determine what else is considered to be relevant. When evaluating the likely effectiveness of an argument, it is important to consider:

- what background information the audience needs and expects;
- what they will already know;
- what kind of reasons and evidence are likely to convince that particular sort of audience.

## Conventions

For academic subjects, there are conventions which govern the presentation of a line of reasoning. Journal articles, for example, have different conventions from newspaper articles or everyday speech. Usually, the background information in articles is of two types:

- 1 Key details of previous research relevant to the current article
- 2 Details of the methods used to gather and analyse the evidence, especially data, for the current article.

### Activity

Browse through journal articles and identify the way background information is treated in your subject area. Note how much or how little detail is used in each section of the article. Consider what kind of background information is included, as well as what is not included.

## Background and history

In critical writing, general background details are usually kept to a minimum, as in the Feng Shui example on p. 173. The history and general background are only usually included where they form part of the argument.

For example, if the question was: *How did the fish come to take over the estuary?* the history is relevant, and provides a reason that supports the conclusion, as in the example below.

### Example

#### 'Background' as a reason

Historically, the fish were subject to many large prey and laid many eggs to increase their chances of survival. When they migrated to the estuary, there were no natural predators to restrain their numbers. They continued to lay as many eggs, and so took over the estuary.

If the question was *Account for changes in banking practices over the last ten years*, the historical background given in the example below would be unnecessary.

### Example

#### Unnecessary detail

Banking is a very old profession. Early examples include the development of the letter of exchange by the Hansa League in the fifteenth century.

## Definitions

It is typical in critical thinking to define any terms used in the line of reasoning that might be open to more than one interpretation. This enables the audience to know which interpretation the author is using and reduces misunderstandings.

### Example

There has been much debate about whether only humans have consciousness but there is a growing body of research which suggests that animals and even inanimate objects share this capacity. In considering whether animals and objects have consciousness, the first point to consider is what is meant by the term *consciousness*.

# Activity: Setting the scene for the reader

## Activity

How well do the authors of the following passages set the scene for an essay about a theory of food production?

### Passage 10.1

#### 'Is productionism dead?'

Productionism was a theory developed following the recession and famines of the 1930s. Theorists such as Orr, Stapleton and Seebohm Rowntree argued that if farming methods were adapted to include technology, more food could be produced and famines would become a thing of the past. This essay will argue that productionism has been successful to some extent, in that some areas that were formerly subject to famine are no longer prone to famine, and the proportion of starving people worldwide reduced year on year. However, it will also argue that despite the successes of technology in producing more food, other aspects of productionism have undermined its strength as a model for social reform. The essay examines some negative by-products of the productionist approach, such as the threat to biodiversity, pollution, depopulation of agricultural areas, and the power that lies in the hands of retailers at the expense of small farmers. It will argue that productionism is not dead, but that a new model of food production would now better serve consumers, food producers and the global ecology.

### Passage 10.2

#### 'Is productionism dead?'

Productionism is dead. Its main proponents, such as Orr, Stapleton, Orwin and Seebohm Rowntree, were inspired by social altruism. Not for them the traditional farming methods of the past nor the harrowing scenes of famine and collapse presented worldwide in the 1930s. For them, there was a saviour and the saviour was

technology. Today, technology has developed in ways that even a visionary could not have imagined in the 1930s. Nonetheless, it has not been the saviour that was predicted. A new model is needed, and social and ecological forces will ensure that productionism, as a theory, passes into the realms of history.

### Passage 10.3

#### 'Is productionism dead?'

The main problem with productionism is that it places too much hope in science when science cannot always deliver. One result of productionism, with its emphasis on producing more and more food, is that people in the developed world think that food supplies can be endless. Child obesity is one result of such an approach. Whilst some people have too much to eat, others do not have enough. A lot of food isn't even a good thing: much of the food we eat is 'junk' and contains little nourishment.

### Passage 10.4

#### 'Is productionism dead?'

Food production has always been an important aspect of human activity. Since time began, humans have looked for ways of increasing the amount of food available to them. Without food, we would not be able to survive so this is a critical consideration for any society. Unfortunately, for most of history, the spectre of hunger and often famine have hung over people's heads. One period when this was particularly acute was the 1930s, when even rich economies were affected. It was in the face of such crises that productionism was born.

Answers: see p. 190. ►

# Writing up the literature search

Chapter 8 described methods for conducting a literature search and for identifying reputable sources. You are likely to read many more sources than you can include within your own writing. This requires careful selection of what to include as background information.

## For essays

In essays, the focus is on the development of your own argument. It is not typical to include a summary of the literature at the beginning of an essay. Instead, you introduce sources at the relevant point in your argument. In essays, you need to refer to materials used as background reading in order to:

- illustrate a point you are making or add weight to a specific reason you are using to support your argument;
- argue against a point of view, if you wish to challenge what has been previously written;
- provide weight to your own argument by showing that it is supported by the research or arguments of other writers who are well known in the subject area.

## For reports, dissertations and projects

It is usual when writing reports, dissertations and projects to start with a relatively brief overview of the background research. This is generally about 10 per cent of the overall piece of writing. You need to identify:

- which two or three pieces, theories, perspectives or previous research articles provide the most significant background information for your own research
- how, if at all, these pieces of research are linked to each other. Usually, this will be by chronological order.

Write most about two to five pieces of research, drawing out the key points. Provide only enough information to ensure the reader understands the

significance of the research and its relevance to the rest of your report or dissertation. You may need to allude to most of the other pieces of research in passing, or very briefly.

## Accuracy

Always check the original source and/or your notes carefully before writing about the work of other people. Check:

- that you have ascribed the right theory and discoveries to the right people;
- that you give the right dates;
- that you spell their names correctly;
- that you have interpreted their meaning and significance correctly.

## Interpretation

Critical reading is an act of interpretation as well as selection. The recommendations made above on pp. 153–4 about how to combine reading with note-making make it more likely that you will produce a personal interpretation for your own assignment or report rather than simply reproducing the work of someone else. For essays, this does not mean that you must find an approach that nobody else has ever considered. Simply through the choices you make and through writing in your own words, you will be making a personal interpretation. The same applies when you are writing up the ‘literature search’ section for reports, projects and dissertations.

## Reminder about referencing

Remember that copying from the internet or a written source is not acceptable, unless it is for a brief quotation and you reference the source correctly. The basics of citing references are given in Chapter 9, pp. 162–3 and pp. 186–7.

# Words used to introduce the line of reasoning

## Words that signal the direction of an argument

At the end of Chapter 3, there was an introduction to words that indicate conclusions within an argument. Authors may use other words to point out different stages of the argument to the reader. These words signal the direction of the line of reasoning.

It can help to use these words when scanning a text to find the line of reasoning quickly. The table on p. 178 summarises the words and can be used when constructing your own arguments.

Different words have different functions within an argument. Some, for example, are used at the beginning of an argument, others reinforce a point, some signal a change of perspective, others are used for conclusions. These words are sometimes known as *connectives* – as they connect the different parts of the argument.

Note that the introduction to the argument might not be the first sentence. It may be later in the paragraph. For example, the first example above might follow an introductory sentence or passage, used to set the scene, such as that in the example below.

### Example

Feng Shui has formed part of Chinese life for over three thousand years and is increasingly gaining popularity in the West. The reasons for this new popularity are sometimes attributed to a growth in favour of simplicity and minimalism in house decoration. This is a mistake. I will start by arguing that Feng Shui is important to every aspect of our lives and is not simply a question of decorative art.

## Introducing the line of reasoning

Certain words are used to signal the opening of the argument. These include words such as *first*; *first of all*; *to begin*; *first and foremost*; *at the outset*; *initially*; *I will start by . . .*

### Examples

- I will start by arguing that Feng Shui is important to every aspect of our lives and is not simply a question of decorative art.
- First of all, studying the size of the neo-cortex in the brains of different types of animals such as monkeys or rats can tell us a great deal about their social worlds.
- In considering the role of chemistry in the commercial world, it is important, at the outset, to recognise that chemistry is a commercially viable subject.
- Initially, we will consider whether porous rocks can ever provide solid foundations for new buildings.



# Words used to reinforce the line of reasoning (2)

Certain words can be used to indicate that new information is being introduced that further reinforces the direction of the line of reasoning. These include words such as *also*; *in addition*; *besides*; *too*; *furthermore*; *moreover*.

## Adding similar reasons

When reinforcing a line of reasoning, the author may wish to add reasons similar to those already presented. This can be signalled by words such as: *similarly*; *equally*; *likewise*; *in the same way*.

### Examples

- Similarly, the Chinese martial arts are not merely about fighting, but offer tools for understanding mind and motivation.
- In the same way, when we look at the neo-cortex of humans, we learn about the evolution of our own social habits.
- Likewise, applying chemical knowledge to biological problems has opened up new avenues of business and many spin-off industries.

## Adding different reasons

At other times, the author may choose to reinforce the overall argument by adding new and different reasons. Authors often indicate that they are adding new reasons by using words such as *in addition*; *besides*; *as well as . . . ; not only . . . but also . . .*

### Examples

- Not only can Feng Shui help to guard your health, it is believed to protect and enhance your wealth and prosperity.
- The amount of time that animals such as chimpanzees spend on grooming each other is not only linked to the composition of the social group, but also to the size of that group.
- In addition to developments within chemistry, developments within information technology have opened up new possibilities for biochemical research at the molecular level.

## Strengthening the argument

At other times, authors can use words such as *furthermore*; *moreover*; *indeed*; *what is more*; *such as*; in order to indicate that they believe a reason is particularly good, or that its addition to the line of reasoning makes a more convincing case.

### Examples

- Furthermore, Feng Shui is used in business in order to help keep customers and employees happy.
- Moreover, the development of language in humans may be directly related to the size of human communities, which makes grooming impossible as a key form of communication.
- Indeed, the reorganisation of scientific departments to encourage work across disciplines such as physics and material science has led to much excitement about research on the boundaries of each discipline as well as opening up new areas of entrepreneurship.

# Signposting alternative points of view

## Introducing alternative arguments

A strong argument will usually critically evaluate alternative perspectives or points of view. By doing so, authors show readers that they have considered other possibilities and not simply presented the first argument that entered their heads. This approach usually strengthens an argument as it suggests that the author has researched the subject or has considered all angles.

Words used to signal that an alternative point of view is being considered include: *alternatively; others argue that . . . ; it might be argued that . . .*

### Examples

- It might be argued that Feng Shui has not been proved through rigorous scientific research.
- On the other hand, not everyone believes that animal behaviours have anything to tell us about human behaviours.



- Alternatively, there are those who believe that the prime role of biochemical research should be the advancement of knowledge and that this goal should not be distorted or lost through the demands of the market place.

## Rebutting alternative arguments

As we saw above, it is typical, within a line of reasoning, to introduce alternative points of view in order to disprove them or indicate their weaknesses. Normally you would expect the author to show why their own point of view is the more convincing. Words used to rebut alternative arguments are: *however; on the other hand; nonetheless; notwithstanding this*.

### Examples

- However, many practitioners of Feng Shui are also scientists.
- Nonetheless, humans are closely related to other primates such as chimpanzees and apes.
- These arguments notwithstanding, there is still much to be gained from a closer alignment between science and business.
- Notwithstanding the argument that chalk is porous and porous rocks provide riskier surfaces for building, under certain circumstances, chalk can provide a solid foundation for building.

## Contrasting and contradicting

When other arguments are being considered, authors may move back and forth between their own point of view and opposing arguments. They will normally either weigh up the evidence for one side and then the other for each reason in turn, or they will contrast all the evidence for one point of view against the evidence for their own line of reasoning. Words that indicate this process of contrasting include: *although . . . ; conversely; by contrast; on the one hand . . . ; on the other hand . . . ; in fact*.

# Signposting alternative points of view (continued)

## Examples

- On the one hand there are those who argue that Feng Shui is based on mysterious principles such as yin and yang that people in the West cannot understand. On the other hand are those who argue that Feng Shui is based on common sense and therefore suitable for everyone.
- Although humans' verbal language can be used in sophisticated ways to express abstract ideas and reasoning, it can also be very restricted in its capacity to communicate our deepest feelings and creative thoughts.



- Some researchers argue that scientists are being forced to patent their work even when they do not want to enter commercial contracts. By contrast, others complain that they do not receive enough support in patenting their discoveries.
- Houses benefit from being built on bedrock. By contrast, houses built on beaches tend to sink over time.

## Expressing results and consequences

After several reasons have been considered, the author should draw out how these should be interpreted as a whole. This would normally be found towards the end of the sequence, but the author may do this several times during the line of reasoning, to help the reader keep track of the reasoning and to reinforce the message. This was covered above (on p. 71), early under '*Intermediate conclusions*'.

Words used to express the consequences of the evidence the author has presented include: *as a result; as a consequence; hence; thus; consequently; because of this*.

## Examples

- As a result, we can see that the rules governing Feng Shui at work are similar to those that apply in the home.
- Thus, the introduction of verbal communication allowed us to communicate with more of our species but using less time.
- As a consequence of commercial backing, the infrastructure for scientific research has been improved in a number of institutions.
- Hence, as sand shifts and moves over time, a house built on sand is likely to sink.

## Activity

Browse through three or four articles for your subject. What words are used to:

- Introduce the main argument?
- Move an argument along?
- Sum up the argument?

# Words used to signpost conclusions

## Conclusions

All the reasons and evidence presented should lead towards the conclusion. Even when alternative arguments are put forward, these should be presented in a way that supports the main line of reasoning. Authors usually signal conclusions using words such as *therefore; in conclusion; thus; thus, we can see . . .*

For longer texts, the conclusion may consist of one or more paragraphs rather than just a single sentence. These would normally be placed at the end of the piece of writing. For longer texts, a good piece of writing will usually refer clearly to the overall conclusions as it unfolds, so as to help the reader to make sense of what they read.

In shorter passages, as we have seen, the conclusion may be stated near the beginning rather than the end.

## Examples

- In conclusion, Feng Shui is not a decorative art but is, rather, a sophisticated system for arranging our surroundings so that we live in greater balance and harmony with the outer world.
- Thus, we have shown that the human brain evolved as a result of our need for more effective and efficient social communication.
- Therefore, academic research can be greatly advanced by commercial partnership.
- Therefore, it is important to ensure that sufficient tests have been carried out to check the underlying rock structures, and to consider carefully the consequences of building on surfaces other than bedrock.

## Activity

Add signal words to signpost the development of the argument in the following passages.

## Passage 10.5

Deaf people have their own languages, based on signs, body position and facial expressions. As few hearing people understand these languages, communication between deaf and hearing people is not usually very effective. Deaf people often form strong social and cultural groups, they are often excluded from mainstream culture and their talents are not used effectively within the economy. Hearing people can feel excluded from deaf conversations and uncertain of how to behave around deaf people. It would be in everyone's interests if sign languages were taught in school so that deaf and hearing children grew up able to communicate effectively with each other.

## Passage 10.6

Globalisation appears to be inevitable but there is disagreement about whether this is a positive development. There are those who argue that increased contact between countries leads to better understanding and reduces the likelihood of future wars. They see benefits to democracy and human rights from information being widely available electronically, so that different nations can compare conditions in their country with those elsewhere. Some see globalisation as a destructive force. They argue that it leads to less powerful peoples losing their indigenous languages as the languages of more powerful countries are used internationally for business and politics. They argue that globalisation often means big business buying up resources and land in poorer countries, distorting local economies and draining their resources. Although there are some potential benefits to globalisation, some controls are needed to protect poorer economies from exploitation.

Answers: see p. 190. ►

# Words and phrases used to structure the line of reasoning

The signal words introduced above are summarised on the table below.

Function	Words used
<b>Introducing the line of reasoning</b>	
Opening phrases	<i>Words indicating 'first . . .' </i> first; first of all; to begin; first and foremost; at the outset; Initially, I will start by . . .
<b>Developing the line of reasoning</b>	
Reinforcing with similar reasons	<i>Words indicating 'similarly . . .' </i> similarly; equally; likewise; in the same way; indeed; correspondingly; in the same line; also; too; again; besides
Reinforcing with different reasons or evidence	<i>Words indicating 'also . . .' </i> also; in addition; besides; again; as well as; either; too; not only . . . but also . . . ; neither . . . nor . . . ; neither
Stronger reinforcement	<i>Words indicating 'furthermore' </i> furthermore; moreover; indeed; what is more
Introducing alternative arguments	<i>Words indicating 'alternatively . . .' </i> alternatively; a different perspective on this . . . ; others argue that . . . ; it might be argued that . . . (the words used in 'rebutting alternative arguments' can also be used)
Rebutting alternative arguments	<i>Words indicating 'however' </i> however; on the other hand; nonetheless; nevertheless; notwithstanding this; in any case; in spite of this; despite this; at the same time; even though . . .
Contrasting	<i>Words indicating 'by contrast . . .' </i> by contrast; although . . . ; conversely; on the one hand . . . on the other hand . . . ; in fact
<b>Concluding</b>	
Expressing results and consequences	<i>Words indicating 'therefore' </i> therefore; this suggests that . . . ; this indicates . . . ; as a result; as a consequence; hence; thus; consequently; because of this; from this we can infer that; from this we can deduce that . . .
Conclusions	<i>Words indicating 'in conclusion' </i> therefore; in conclusion; thus we can see; thus.

# Drawing tentative conclusions

Academic writing, such as that used for research projects, articles and books, tends to avoid words that suggest absolutes and, instead, uses words that express some tentativeness. The kind of alternatives used are indicated below.

## Avoids    Uses qualifiers such as:

all, every	most, many, some
always	usually, generally, often, in most cases, so far, haven't yet
never	rarely, in few cases, it is unlikely that
proves	the evidence suggests, indicates, points to, it would appear

## Example 1

During the Protestant reformation in Britain in the sixteenth century, the kings' ministers ordered that religious ornaments such as chalices and carved rood screens found in churches be destroyed. These disappeared from churches at that time. However, during the short reign of the Catholic queen, Mary Tudor, these articles reappeared. As chalices and elaborate carved rood screens appeared again so quickly during Mary's reign, this suggests that the items had not been destroyed previously. It would appear that people had simply hidden them away. This further suggests that the reformation had less popular support than had been previously believed, and that many people had been hoping for a return to the old Catholic ways.

These sound like sensible conclusions. However, the author uses tentative language in drawing these conclusions as there may be other interpretations. For example, it may be that there was a much higher level of skill in reproducing those items than was formerly believed. It is possible the items were destroyed and new items were made quickly.

Alternatively, people would have been aware that there was a possibility that the new religious ways might be overturned in the future and that they might be punished for having destroyed sacred items. They may have preferred the new religion but hidden the forbidden items away in order to protect themselves in the future.

Academic writers are always aware that there may be alternative explanations or unexpected findings that overturn even the most widely held views. In the example above, the writer used phrases such as *this suggests, it would appear, this further suggests*.

## Example 2

A small amount of hydrochloric acid was poured on each rock. The first rock then gave off the smell of hydrogen sulphide, a smell like rotten eggs, suggesting the rock was galena. The second rock fizzed, suggesting that it was giving off carbon dioxide and that the rock may be an oolitic limestone.

Example 2 is science writing. The writer is basing judgements on well-tried tests. The tests used are fairly conclusive, but the writer uses tentative language as, if the rocks did not share other known characteristics of those rocks, such as mineral content or grain size, a different judgement might be needed. It is possible, for example, that the fizzing rock was a different type of calcite rock, such as chalk or marble.

Here, the author considers that the sudden reappearance of religious items suggests the items had been hidden rather than destroyed. The author then proposes that this is evidence that the old religious customs were more popular than had been previously believed.

# Activity: Writing conclusions

## Activity

How well do these passages express their conclusions in a suitably tentative manner?

### Passage 10.7

#### Interpreting new discoveries

We have seen that when explorers found new lands, they tended to interpret what they saw as evidence of what they had intended to find. Travellers to the 'Americas' in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries sent home reports of finding giants and green men. Earlier, Marco Polo, who had hoped to find unicorns on his travels to China, believed the one-horned creature he found in Java was indeed a unicorn, despite the animal, a rhinoceros, bearing no other resemblance to the fabled beast. However, unlike those who claimed to see giants, or later explorers who really believed they had heard orang utans talking, Marco Polo appears to have described rhinoceroses exactly as he found them. This suggests that not everyone responded to new discoveries by using the same approach. Moreover, it is possible that with the number of discoveries made in recent decades, people are now more likely to take new discoveries in their stride.

### Passage 10.8

#### RNA does the hard work

Although we hear more in the press about DNA, especially after work on mapping human genes, we hear much less about the role of RNA in cell reproduction. RNA, or ribonucleic acid, is essential to the functioning of our genes. One type of RNA reads the messages encoded in the DNA. Various types of RNA are involved in making proteins and carrying these to where they are needed in

the body's cells, so that the cell can function as it should, including growing and reproducing. Although the DNA holds encoded messages which help define the nature of the next generation, these would not mean much without RNA. Therefore, it is RNA that appears to do the really hard work in reproduction.

## Commentary

Passage 10.7 examines the way people, historically, tried to make sense when they discovered things that were new to them and their cultures. It is difficult to write with absolute certainty about approaches, attitudes and beliefs, and even more so when these took place in the distant past. The writer uses the phrases 'this suggests' and 'it is possible' to indicate the tentative nature of the conclusions being drawn. It is possible, for example, that people today think that there is little more to find out, so are even more surprised by discoveries. The writer uses tentative language appropriately.

Passage 10.8 makes a judgement about the relative importance of RNA in reproduction. Scientific judgements can usually be stated with more certainty, as they can be tested, replicated and measured more exactly than matters such as attitudes and responses. However, even science mainly sets out to support hypotheses and test what appear to be laws. Science recognises that further research can overturn scientific laws, at least under specific conditions. Most of this text is written in more certain language than Passage 10.7, as befits a scientific subject, but the overall conclusion is suitably tentative as it is possible that future research will reveal hitherto unknown roles for DNA or RNA.

# Critical analysis for essays: essay titles

Essays are exercises in critical thinking. In academic contexts, they are set primarily for you to demonstrate your understanding of an issue, drawing on your critical analysis of, and engagement with, source materials and a range of theoretical perspectives.

As a rule, essays are set for students on issues where there are multiple perspectives. You are expected to:

- become aware of what those different perspectives are, through attendance at taught sessions and especially by reading around the subject;
- understand how and why the major differences in perspective have arisen;
- understand the theoretical underpinnings for each major area of difference in perspective, and how these compare and contrast with each other;
- critically evaluate the evidence base for the different perspectives and theories, and their applicability to different contexts;
- draw together your critical judgements to form a conclusion or set of conclusions that indicate your own considered position, based on the relative quality of the evidence base.

## Critical analysis of the essay title

Essays set for students are usually carefully worded so as to encourage a focus on a particular complex or controversial issue. Before launching into an essay, look carefully at the wording of the title so as to do the following:

- Tease out how many parts or subsections there are to the essay and the relative weighting of each. If there is a word limit, consider how many words you can allocate to each section. This will, in turn, give you a sense of how much time to spend on each.
- Identify the main focus of the essay: what is it that

the tutors want you to address? If this isn't clear, it may become so once you have read around the subject.

- Consider which theoretical perspective or schools of thought to call upon to explore the issues – you will be expected to engage in a 'critical dialogue' with these. Again, these may not be evident until you start reading around the subject.

## Setting your own essay title

If you are setting your own essay title, you need to ensure that you set one that encourages you to work in the same way as for an essay title set by a tutor:

- decide on the key issue that you want the essay to address;
- ensure that there are multiple perspectives on the issue, each of which presents good arguments and evidence;
- look for a topic that contains an element of controversy or other complexity;
- ensure that there is a good range of quality reading material on these different perspectives;
- beware of creating an essay title where there is good reading material or evidence for only one perspective – as this will not help you to demonstrate your own critical judgements well.

## Resource

An explanatory list of terms commonly used for essay titles is provided below (p. 182).

# Academic keywords used in titles

*These words indicate the approach or style expected for the piece of writing.*

**Account for** Give reasons for; explain why something happens.

**Analyse** Examine in very close detail; identify important points and chief features.

**Comment on** Identify and write about the main issues, giving your reactions based upon what you have read or heard in lectures. Avoid purely personal opinion.

**Compare** Show how two or more things are similar. Indicate the relevance or consequences of these similarities.

**Contrast** Set two or more items or arguments in opposition so as to draw out differences. Indicate whether the differences are significant. If appropriate, give reasons why one item or argument may be preferable (see Chapter 9).

**Critically evaluate** Weigh arguments for and against something, assessing the strength of the evidence on both sides. Use criteria to guide your assessment of which opinions, theories, models or items are preferable.

**Define** Give the exact meaning of. Where relevant, show that you understand why the definition may be problematic.

**Describe** Give the main characteristics or features of something, or outline the main events.

**Discuss** Write about the most important aspects of (probably including criticism); give arguments for and against; consider the implications of.

**Distinguish** Bring out the differences between two (possibly confusable) items.

**Evaluate** Assess the worth, importance or usefulness of something, using evidence. There will probably be cases to be made both *for* and *against*.

**Examine** Put the subject ‘under the microscope’, looking at it in detail. If appropriate, ‘Critically evaluate’ it as well.

**Explain** Make clear why something happens, or why something is the way it is.

**Illustrate** Make something clear and explicit, giving examples or evidence.

**Interpret** Give the meaning and relevance of data or other material presented.

**Justify** Give evidence which supports an argument or idea; show why decisions or conclusions were made, considering objections that others might make.

**Narrate** Concentrate on saying *what* happened, telling it as a story.

**Outline** Give only the main points, showing the main structure.

**Relate** Show similarities and connections between two or more things.

**State** Give the main features, in very clear English (almost like a simple list but written in full sentences).

**Summarise** Draw out the main points only (see ‘Outline’), omitting details or examples.

**To what extent** Consider how far something is true, or contributes to a final outcome. Consider also ways in which the proposition is not true. (The answer is usually somewhere between ‘completely’ and ‘not at all’.)

**Trace** Follow the order of different stages in an event or process.

# Critical analysis for essays: reading

## Critical analysis when reading

For a student essay, much of your time is spent reading around the subject and working with the material that you read. You would be expected to apply the critical skills that you have covered in earlier parts of this book, such as:

- making good critical decisions about the relevance of reading material, given the specific essay title and the issues relevant to it;
- making good critical decisions in what you choose to read, based on the quality of the materials and the evidence base that these draw upon (see pp. 128–32);
- the breadth of what you read and variety of perspectives considered.

## Demonstrating critical reading skills

You demonstrate your critical abilities to your tutors through the ways that you make use of reading material. They will look at:

- what you choose to refer to – and what you omit;
- how well you query the findings and opinions in what you read, especially in the light of contradictory findings and judgements;
- whether you can recognise the relative merits and flaws of different perspectives.

## Reading for balanced analysis

There is a fine balance in writing essays between ensuring that your position is clear, and not appearing to be dogmatic about it. If you have strong personal opinions or beliefs, then it can be especially difficult to maintain a balanced approach. The following guidelines can help.

## Balanced reading

- **Use quality resources** Justify the position that you believe in on reasons and arguments drawn from good quality sources; if you cannot find these, it will be difficult to present a strong academic case that gains good marks. Cite the sources that you have read that support your position (pp. 187–8 below).
- **Balance your choice of reading** Read good quality resources for all sides of the argument and select the best evidence for all viewpoints – not just for your own position. If you do this, you demonstrate that you are making a reasonable effort to make objective judgements.
- **Be even-handed** Bring a similar level of criticality when reading sources that support your own position and those that support positions you reject.
- **Acknowledge good counter arguments** Even if you are not convinced by alternative viewpoints, be fair in presenting their strengths. If your reading suggests that there are good arguments against your position, then acknowledge the strengths of these. Cite sources for these just as you would for your own position.

## What if the evidence is against you?

If the evidence appears stronger for positions that you do not believe in, your reader would then want to know why you are holding to your position against the available evidence. In such a case, it is possible to state that the evidence base, or academic argument, is currently strongest for a particular point of view without this meaning that you accept this personally or have to change your beliefs. Alternatively, you can indicate where you feel evidence may become available in the future that would support your position.

# Critical analytical essays: introductions

## Parts and components of an essay

An essay consists of three parts, known as:

- The introduction
- The body of the essay
- The conclusion.

Into these, a critical analytical essay integrates the following five components:

- 1 clarification of the issues;
- 2 a statement of your own position;
- 3 analysis of compelling arguments in support of your position;
- 4 analysis and rebuttal of counter arguments;
- 5 potential synthesis.

The weighting and sequence of these will vary depending on the issues and the material to be covered, but some guidelines follow below.

## The introduction to the essay

An essay isn't like a mystery novel where the plot gradually unfolds and the unexpected suddenly occurs. Rather, in a good essay, the scene is set for the reader through a formal introduction. This should be succinct, precise and brief; it can be as short as a single paragraph and shouldn't be longer than a tenth of your essay.

As part of your introduction, without at this point going into detail, you should make the following clear to your potential reader.

### The core issues

Refer to the main issues that will be addressed in the essay and, if this can be done succinctly, include an indication of why these are of significance.

### Key perspectives

Indicate the major differences of opinion, perspectives or schools of thought on the issues embedded within the essay title. Avoid straying into the more detailed analysis which would come later in the essay.

## Define the terms

Define what you mean by words or phrases that are potentially open to different interpretations, or which are contentious, or that could be used in different ways to produce alternative conclusions. Avoid defining obvious terms, covering every word in a title, or giving dictionary definitions.

## Your position

Ensure that your position comes across clearly and that this is consistent with what you write in your conclusion. If possible, indicate the critical perspective that you are taking, such as the school of thought that you lean towards. Your own position should either be stated explicitly or else should be easily inferred from the rest of your introduction.

## The direction of your argument

If there are twists and caveats intrinsic to your argument, then mention these succinctly, indicating how they support or modify your overall line of reasoning.

## Get to the point

- Avoid giving unnecessary background information that an interested reader can find out for themselves.
- Be specific about 'significance'. Give reasons for why an issue is important now – because of new or high-profile research findings, or recent political or social events, or the anticipated future impact in the sciences, arts, the economy, or in a region, or for a large number of people, or in an area of research where solutions have been hard to find, or where previous research findings have been overturned.
- Avoid the urge to make broad generalisations such as about 'science', 'humanity' or 'the world' as a means of getting started.

# Structured argument: the body of the essay

## Clarification of the issues

Typically, essays are set on subjects that are multi-faceted and complex – that enable the analysis of different points of view. You are not expected to cover every issue and perspective. The wording of the essay title gives clues to the expected focus for that essay; this narrows down the issues to be addressed. To orientate your reader, clarify the issues either in the introduction or in the opening paragraph of the body of the essay.

Bring out why these issues are significant, controversial or complex. If this seems difficult, it is likely that you have not read sufficiently around the subject. It may help to browse extracts of articles and book reviews for the past few years in key journals for your subject in order to gain a feel for the developing issues.

## Your position

Ensure that you provide a clear line of reasoning (pages xii and 47) such that your own position as stated in your introduction comes across clearly and coherently throughout your essay.

## Analysis of arguments

The bulk of the essay consists of examining, critically, two or more viewpoints on the issues identified. In doing so, you will identify compelling reasons for espousing some arguments and for dismissing others.

Some arguments may appear persuasive at first but less so when scrutinised further. These could be the dominant views or most interesting recent research. Opinion on these might be different in a few years time. It is worth examining them from that perspective and seeing if you can identify any weak points for yourself.

Other viewpoints may have little following or may be so new that the evidence base is still weak.

Nonetheless, in the future, these might become dominant perspectives in the discipline. It is worth considering what further research might strengthen these viewpoints or give them more credibility.

### Make critical judgements

- Make critical judgements on the relative merits of each perspective or school of thought, stating the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- Be prepared to state if there are gaps in the evidence base that make it difficult to make a definitive judgement on a particular aspect.
- Be clear about *exactly* what the evidence does support; it may be very convincing, or weak, in some conditions, but that might not be the case if the conditions were changed in specific ways. Demonstrate that you have given thought to when, where and why an argument might apply in one case but not another, and to where further research is needed to support the case.

### Make critical choices

Select only the most compelling arguments for and against. For an undergraduate essay, there is unlikely to be space within the word limit for you to go into detailed analysis of all differences and points of interest.

Your selectivity provides evidence of the strength of your critical thinking skills; your tutors will be looking to see whether you can recognise the most salient arguments and material to include.

### Reflection



### Structured argument in essays

In your own essays:

- How clearly does your own position come across? (Do you tend to 'sit on the fence'?)
- Do you engage in a critical way with different perspectives on the subject – evaluating the arguments of those who have written about the subject?

# Essays: Bringing the argument together

## Structure your argument

- Use a separate paragraph to analyse each specific point or, if these can be stated briefly, each set of related points.
- Check that paragraphs are sequenced in the best possible order for bringing out your line of reasoning to your reader.
- Use the first or last lines of your paragraphs, and ‘sign-posting’ vocabulary, to help indicate the flow of your argument to the reader (see pages 173–8).
- Sometimes, it can be difficult to maintain a sense of clear direction when there are complex issues to analyse. If so, give an interim summary of the arguments so far.

## Synthesis

It is likely that, in considering different perspectives or theories, you will find some aspects compelling and other aspects less so. You might feel, for example, that some arguments apply well to particular circumstances, but less so in others. You may feel that all arguments contribute something to the debate even if not in equal weight, but that none are entirely satisfactory in all respects.

Your ultimate position in the essay may be a combination, or synthesis, of the most compelling arguments from several different perspectives that you analysed. If so, avoid generalisations such as ‘they are all helpful’ or ‘none are perfect’. Rather, be specific about what you would take from each perspective. Make a judgement about whether your synthesis also has limitations: you should subject your own synthesis to critical scrutiny.

## Conclusions in essays

Essay conclusions shouldn’t come as a surprise to the reader. Rather, they should appear to be the inevitable end-point of your line of reasoning. The purpose of the conclusion is to stand back from the more detailed reasoning and evidence that you presented in the body of the essay, and clarify the

key messages that have emerged. This may include reasons why it is difficult to form firm conclusions, such as gaps you had identified in the evidence.

Your conclusion draws together:

- your position, which may be a synthesis of other viewpoints;
- the most compelling reasons that support that position;
- the strongest counter arguments and a summary rebuttal of these;
- if relevant, it can refer to strengths or weaknesses in the evidence;
- if relevant, what specifically needs to be researched further in order better to clarify the issues or strengthen the arguments.

## Give a sense of an ending

Make sure that your conclusion wraps up your essay neatly. It isn’t appropriate to introduce new arguments or evidence here, as any new material should be subjected to critical analysis. If you start to analyse these, then you are, in effect, continuing your argument rather than concluding.

Your conclusion does not have to refer back, point by point to all the issues you have already covered, but it should at least allude to these and serve to reinforce your overall argument. Your conclusion should link back, clearly, to the points you raised in your introduction and, especially, to the essay title. If possible, find a way of doing this in your final sentence.

## Reflection Conclusions

In your own essays:

- Do you aim at making a synthesis of the best arguments on the issue?
- Does your final position on the issue come across strongly?

# Citing and referencing your sources

It should be evident from previous sections that good written critical analysis will involve drawing on reputable sources of evidence.

It is part of the convention of good critical analysis, whether as a student, writer, artist, inventor or more generally, to acknowledge the sources that you use.

## Citations

When you draw on someone's work or ideas in your writing, you should acknowledge this straight away at that point in your writing; this is known as a citation. Typically, after making the point, you write the surname(s) and date of publication: (Bloggs, 2012).

## References

References are provided at the end of your work as a list of the full details of all those sources you cited.

## Bibliographies

Bibliographies are a list of materials that you used as background, but didn't cite in your text.

## 'Referencing' in critical writing

For all academic writing, you are required to provide details, or 'references', of all the source materials used to produce your work. For students, as much of your work is based on reading, most references will be to academic books and articles. Depending on your subject, you may use other sources in the public domain such as research papers, newspapers, government reports, parliamentary speeches, websites, television or radio programmes, museum or gallery catalogues and brochures.

## What is the purpose of referencing?

### For the author of the original source

- It is a courtesy to those whose work you have used or drawn upon to give them proper acknowledgement.

### For the reader

- It provides transparency about where your ideas and evidence were drawn from.
- It enables your reader to find the source quickly and easily.
- Readers can go to your source to check the accuracy of your use or interpretation.

### The advantages to you

- It strengthens your argument if it is well researched and draws on the authority of reputable sources.
- You will be better able to recall where your ideas came from, either if you wish to use those sources in the future, or if the integrity of your work were to be questioned.
- It is a sign of your integrity to acknowledge your debt to others.
- As a student, there is the added advantage of demonstrating to tutors that you have engaged in background reading, as expected.
- For students, it is a convention that you are required to follow or there are severe penalties.

## You don't reference . . .

- Common knowledge (names, dates and well established facts, such as a writer's date of birth or that bees make honey).
- Conversations with friends and students, unless these were formally conducted as part of an agreed research methodology.
- Other students' essays or academic work, as you should not use these for your own work. The exception would be if these had been made available through the university specifically for reference purposes.

# What do I include in a reference?

## *It depends on the source*

The detail that you need to provide varies depending on whether the source is a book, chapter in a book, journal article, newspaper article, government paper, manuscript, web-site, radio or TV programme, audio file and so on.

## *It depends on the style of referencing*

The detail that you need to include, and the precise order in which to present this, will vary depending on the referencing style used for your programme of study. Your tutors will advise you which method is used. Typical styles used for academic study are:

- Harvard (widely used)
- Vancouver (especially for science and health subjects)
- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA)
- OSCOLA (for legal sources).

## *Typical information to include*

- Authors' surnames and initials
- Date of publication
- Full title of the chapter, article or book
- Full title of the book or journal in which a chapter or article is found
- The edition of a book (if not the first)
- Place of publication and the name of the publisher, for books
- Series and volume number, for journal articles
- Location, month and year for conferences
- Digital Object Identifiers (DOI) for internet pages.

## *Examples*

See pages 162–3 on note-taking to support referencing, and examples of references.

## **How exact do I need to be?**

In academic contexts, there are specific conventions for citing sources and referencing. Each type of source, from medieval manuscripts to blogs and tweets, needs to be cited in a very particular way.

## **Follow referencing rules exactly**

You cannot normally pick and choose between referencing systems: whichever system is used on your course should be followed exactly. If in doubt, follow rigidly the examples that are provided by your institution.

'Exactly' for referencing means:

- using the correct referencing style for your programme;
- including a citation within your writing and the full reference at the end, or as a footnote, depending on the style of referencing;
- providing every detail required for the type of source and for the style of referencing;
- providing the information in the exact sequence required;
- using punctuation and abbreviations as stipulated, even down to the use of capitals, brackets, commas, etc.

## **What if I don't reference my work?**

- Weak skills in citing your sources are penalised by poor marks or possibly even a fail. Check your references carefully at least twice.
- If you do not use citations and references correctly, it may appear that you are trying to pass off other people's work or intellectual property (their research or ideas) as your own. This is plagiarism.
- Universities have software and other methods for detecting cheating and plagiarism.
- Plagiarism is treated as an offence and receives severe penalties. You may have to redo part or all of your work for a capped low mark or a zero. You could be removed permanently from your course and college or university.

## Summary

Critical writing draws on many of the skills developed earlier in the book, such as developing an argument, analysing, evaluating and selecting evidence, making judgements, and structuring reasons in a logical way towards a conclusion.

However, spoken arguments can draw on devices such as body language and voice modulations to emphasise points, and the dialogue itself can divide the argument into manageable sections. For critical writing, the writer must take care to use language and structure to organise the argument and to signal different stages within it.

In a written argument, care must be taken to set the scene so that readers know from the outset what conclusion the author wants them to draw. Writers normally present their own position, their conclusions and their own supporting reasons first, so that they orientate the reader to their own perspectives early on. It is important to provide just sufficient for the reader to understand the background. Similarly, at the end of the argument, and at points within it, the writer needs to draw out the conclusions clearly.

In other words, throughout a piece of critical writing, the writer must keep the reader in mind constantly. The aim is not to baffle readers with jargon and clever use of language or to bombard them with so much information that they lose sight of the argument. Instead, the writer must select, group, sequence and structure the best reasons, evidence and details, so that the reader can easily make sense of what is written. Once this has been planned into the writing, signal words can be used to signpost the reader to any changes of direction in the argument and to conclusions.

Critical writing usually follows certain conventions, which were outlined at the start of the chapter. For example, the final drafts of critical writing must be fine-tuned so that critical analysis takes precedence over other aspects such as description and background information. Such conventions signal to the reader that this is a piece of critical writing, which prompts a particular approach to reading.

Students are usually asked to demonstrate their understanding of an issue through essays that use critical and analytical skills whilst using particular writing conventions that support the development of an argument. These were outlined in the chapter above.

In the next chapter, you will have the opportunity to look in detail at two critical essays, so that you can see how all these different aspects are combined.

## Information on the sources

Marco Polo and unicorns: Eco, U. (1998) *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson).

Responses to discoveries of the Americas: Elliott, J. H. (1972) *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Rocks and minerals: Farndon, J. (1994) *Dictionary of the Earth* (London: Dorling Kindersley).

Productionism: Lang, T. and Heasman, M. A. (2004) *Food Wars: The Global Battle for Mouths, Minds and Markets* (Sterling, VA: Earthscan).

RNA and DNA: Postgate, J. (1994) *The Outer Reaches of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

# Answers to activities in Chapter 10

## Setting the scene for the reader (p. 171)

### 'Is productionism dead?'

**Passage 10.1** provides a good introduction to the subject that an intelligent reader without an in-depth knowledge of the subject could follow. The author defines what is meant by 'productionism' and summarises why the theory was developed. The introduction informs the reader about positive and negative aspects of productionism covered in the essay. The author's position and conclusions are presented clearly to orientate the reader.

**Passage 10.2** is written in a flowery or theatrical style, and makes grand sweeping statements. However, the style makes it difficult for a reader who does not know the subject well to work out what productionism is. The author's general position is clear, but the reader is not told how the argument will be developed.

**Passage 10.3** launches too quickly into the subject, giving little introduction to orientate the reader. The author presents examples of the effects of productionism without having explained what it is and how it led to these effects.

**Passage 10.4** makes too much use of broad generalisations about human society. Some of these may be true, but would be hard to prove and are not directly relevant to the essay. As a result, the essay starts very slowly, and uses a lot of words to say very little of relevance.

## Words used to signpost conclusions (p. 177)

If you used different words to signpost the argument than those used in the passages opposite, check the table on p. 178 to see if you used suitable alternatives. The signal words are indicated in italic.

## Passage 10.5

Deaf people have their own languages, based on signs, body position and facial expressions. *However*, as few hearing people understand these languages, communication between deaf and hearing people is not usually very effective. *Although* deaf people often form strong social and cultural groups, they are often excluded from mainstream culture and their talents are not used effectively within the economy. *Similarly*, hearing people can feel excluded from deaf conversations and uncertain of how to behave around deaf people. *Therefore*, it would be in everyone's interests if sign languages were taught in school so that deaf and hearing children grew up able to communicate effectively with each other.

## Passage 10.6

Globalisation appears to be inevitable but there is disagreement about whether this is a positive development. *On the one hand*, there are those who argue that increased contact between countries leads to better understanding and has reduced the likelihood of future wars. *Furthermore*, they see benefits to democracy and human rights from information being widely available electronically, so that different nations can compare conditions in their country with those elsewhere. *On the other hand*, there are those who see globalisation as a destructive force. They argue that it leads to less powerful peoples losing their indigenous languages as the languages of more powerful countries are used internationally for business and politics. *Moreover*, they argue that globalisation often means big business buying up resources and land in poorer countries, thus distorting local economies and draining their resources. *Therefore*, although there are some potential benefits to globalisation, some controls are needed to protect poorer economies from exploitation.