

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

This task tests your ability to do one or more of the following:

- **present and justify opinions**
- **argue a case**
- **evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence and argument**

You are given a discussion topic. The question will either

- **present you with an opinion or an argument**
- **You have to discuss the question with two or three main points and supporting detail for each point.**

Length & Timing

You have to follow a given word limit

ORGANIZATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Opening –general statement introducing the topic.

Background information.

Scope and thesis statement.

(Scope tells your reader the main points you will make. Your thesis statement tells the reader your opinion)

2. BODY PARAGRAPH 1 (Point of View 1)

Topic sentence/main point

Supporting sentence 1

Supporting sentence 2

Supporting sentence 3

3. BODY PARAGRAPH 1 (Point of View 2)

Topic sentence/main point

Supporting sentence 1

Supporting sentence 2

Supporting sentence 3

4. CONCLUSION

Restatement of your opinion.

Summary of your main points.

FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE ARGUMENT

1. Task Response

- **Being able to present a clear position with a logical, well supported argument.**
- **Being able to support your argument with personal experience and reasons.**
- **Being able to focus on the topic and not include anything irrelevant.**

2. Coherence and Cohesion

- **Being able to write fluently enough to make your message clear to the reader.**
- **Being able to write cohesive sentences and paragraphs.**

3. Lexical Resource

- **Being able to use a wide range of vocabulary naturally.**
- **Being able to spell accurately and using the appropriate word formation.**

4. Grammatical Range and Accuracy

- **Using the appropriate grammatical structures accurately**
- **Using a variety of sentence structures.**

STEPS TO A GOOD ARGUMENT

1. Study the question carefully

The instructions often start with the sentence

‘Write about the following topic...’and include the sentence beginning ‘Give reasons for your answer...’

2. Underline key points in the question.

Make sure you read all parts of the question, so you include everything required.

3. Quickly brainstorm the topic

Think about your point of view.

Think about any personal experience you can add.

Write all the relevant points you can think of

4. Write a plan

Decide which points are your main points or topic sentences.

You should have at least two main points.

Decide what supporting details you have for each main point.

5. Make sure you organize your points logically.

You will need an introductory statement, body and conclusion

The structure for your argument will depend on the type of question.

- Remember to link ideas within/between sentences and paragraphs.
- Use a wide range of structures and vocabulary.
- Don’t copy from the question. Use your own words.
- In the end check through what you have written.

- Practice underlining the key points and brainstorming the topics, making plans for each one.
- Gradually reduce the time you allow yourself to do this, so you can do it in under 5 minutes.
- Look at the language used for making paragraphs and sentences cohesive (linking your ideas within and between sentences and paragraphs).
 - For logical links that show addition: as well as, in addition
 - For contrast (whereas, on the other hand).
 - For expressing views: For example, ‘I believe that ...’ ‘I would argue that ...’.
 - ❖ For making contrasts and concessions. For example, ‘Despite the fact that ...’.
 - ❖ For refuting an argument. For example, ‘There is little evidence to support the ...’
 - ❖ For providing support to your main points. For example, ‘In my experience ...’ or ‘A good example of this is ...’.
 - ❖ ‘In conclusion ..’ or ‘On balance...’.

EXAMPLE 1

In most universities students focus on specialized subjects, however some people believe that universities should encourage students to study a wide spectrum of subjects. To what extent you agree or disagree? Give your opinion. (250-300 words)

1. Nowadays, many universities require students to choose specialized subjects for their studies.
 2. Some people believe that this is a faulty approach. In their opinion, educational institutes should encourage students to study a variety of subjects.
 3. I agree with this view.
 - a. Universities should promote all subjects and explain how students can improve their career prospects by learning various subjects.
 - b. Not all students are supposed to become doctors or engineers.
 - c. The society needs people possessing various skills.
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1. When several students learn a particular subject, the demand for that subject will eventually decrease.
 2. For example, if everyone opted for computer science, students completing that course will find it difficult to get jobs.
 3. In such a situation, the demand for other subjects will increase.

4. When students learn various subjects instead of focusing on one subject, they will be able to address the needs of the society. This, in turn, will help the growth of the economy.
1. On the other hand, if everyone studied the same subject, they all would find job in the same industry.
2. Any global economic crisis in that sector will ruin their future and affect the growth of the nation.
3. For example, in India most students prefer to study computer engineering. As a result, software engineers are a dime a dozen in the country.
4. Many of them are struggling to find employment because the supply exceeds the demand. Worse still, a crisis in the IT industry affects all of them and the economy of the nation.
1. To conclude, the subjects that students learn should not only support their individual growth but also help the development of the nation. Therefore, universities should promote all subjects instead of a handful of prestigious subjects.

2.

Giving lectures in auditoriums to large numbers of students is an old way of teaching. With the technology available today there is no justification for it, and everything should be done online. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give your own opinion. (300 words)

1. Technology has changed every aspect of our life including the way we learn and teach.
2. Nowadays it is possible to earn degrees online. Online forums allow you to ask questions on any topic and receive answers within a matter of minutes.
3. However, I still believe that online education cannot replace classroom based learning and teaching.
 - a. Through online learning you can learn from the comforts of your home by finding teachers from any part of the world.
 - b. The flexible learning hours help people who can't afford to spend 6 or 7 hours in the classroom.
 - c. But this has several disadvantages.
1. Since there is no one to supervise your work or evaluate your progress you need a great amount of motivation and discipline to complete your course successfully.

2. Distractions are a real problem for students doing online programs.

1. By contrast, classroom learning does not have many of these drawbacks.

2. The best thing about classroom learning is that it creates an ambiance conducive to learning.

3. In a class you are surrounded by other students who also want to score higher grades. This encourages you to work harder.

4. In addition, subjects like medicine and engineering cannot be taught online because the emphasis is on practical not theory.

1. To conclude, online learning may have its benefits, but I still feel that classroom learning is superior to online learning.

2. While the internet and information technology does have endless possibilities, students as well as teachers will benefit from them only if they take advantage of these in a judicious manner.

Example 3

Employers sometimes ask people applying for jobs for personal information, such as their hobbies and interests, and whether they are married or single. Some people say that this information may be relevant and useful, others disagree.

Discuss both these points of view and give your opinion.

INTRODUCTION

It is a practice in some organizations to keep record of personal details like hobbies and marital status of their employees. There are several merits as well as demerits to sharing personal information with one's employer. In this essay I am going to examine this question from both points of view.

BODY PARA 1

There are people who argue that the benefits of sharing personal information with one's employer considerably outweigh the disadvantages.

That is because the employer will get to know the employee through the information they shared with them. Nowadays there are software programs that can predict the character and intelligence of an employee on the basis of their interests and hobbies.

Using this information the employer can assess the amount of risk they take on by employing a particular person.

Every organization wants to hire employees who fit perfectly into their work culture. Personal information can be useful in several other ways as well.

I remember once my neighbour met with an accident while coming back from his office. An onlooker who saw his ID card called up his office and with the help of the personal information he had shared with them, the office quickly informed the neighbour's family.

BODY PARA 2

On the other hand, some people believe that sharing personal information with the employer has no use.

According to them giving personal information to the employer is a bit like giving access to your personal life. They believe that personal information is personal and should not be shared with anybody.

They have their own reasons to believe so. Recently, a female employee of my organization was stalked by a male employee who had access to her personal information. He wanted to take undue advantage of the situation.

CONCLUSION

As we can see, there is no definite answer to this question. I firmly believe that sharing personal information is not a bad idea; however, employers who request the information of their employees have a responsibility to ensure that the data is not misused or shared with a third party without the consent of the employee.

In addition, personal information of the employee should be used only for their benefits.

PRACTICE

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

1. The threat of nuclear weapons maintains world peace. Nuclear power provides cheap and clean energy. The benefits of nuclear technology far outweigh the disadvantages. To what extent do you agree or disagree?
2. In most universities students focus on specialized subjects, however some people believe that universities should encourage students to study a wide spectrum of subjects. To what extent you agree or disagree? Give your opinion.
3. “A great many countries around the world are losing their cultural identity because of the Internet.” To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

(250-300 words each)

