

Progression in Discussion texts

Purpose

- To present a reasoned and balanced overview of an issue or controversy.

Discussion texts (both oral and written) usually involve carefully and strategically selecting and organising information - often as two or more different 'views' or 'arguments' on an issue, each of which may require elaboration (explanation, evidence and/or examples) – with the specific intention of providing the reader with a reasoned overview. The writer may conclude by presenting his/her own view, or a more objective conclusion, but this will be reasoned on the basis of the balance of available evidence. In this, discussion contrasts with persuasion, which develops only one viewpoint (usually the writer's own) and may or may not be based on genuinely reasoned judgements. Discussion texts generally make use of formal and impersonal language to demonstrate objectivity.

Text structure:

- a statement of the issues plus a preview of the main arguments
- arguments for, plus supporting evidence
- arguments against (or alternative views), plus supporting evidence
- recommendation - summary and conclusion

Language features:

- written in simple present tense, for example: *many people argue that; most adults believe that*
- focused mainly on generic participants using uncountable nouns (some say that; many believe that; others argue that)
- constructed using logical connectives, for example: *therefore, however, furthermore,*
- some movement from the generic to the specific: *Conservationists agree: David Attenborough, who has observed these changes over many years, argues that...*

Discussion texts frequently open with an introduction which acknowledges that there are two sides to the issue which is to be discussed. They may begin with a title which the writer has formed as a question in order to engage the reader effectively ('Is it now time for zoos to be banned?') In order to make views seem reasonable, evidence should be given and conditional verbs can be used (should, might, could). In the final concluding paragraph, the writer has the opportunity to summarise the main opposing points and then to give their personal view of the issue. At this point, the writing may switch from an impersonal register to a more personal tone.

Writing discussion texts is best tackled in UKS2 where it can provide a purposeful opportunity for pupils to focus on the use of conditional language and the use of the subjunctive (If it were...), learn how to link points effectively using more sophisticated language and punctuation (such as colons or semi-colons) and to apply their knowledge of how to write in an impersonal style using the passive voice (for example, 'it could be argued that'). Discussion texts build on the language of persuasion which pupils will have developed in LKS2.

	Progression in discussion texts	Writing targets (related to key learning from English PoS)
FS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and recognise that others sometimes think, feel and react differently from themselves. • Talk about how they and others might respond differently to the same thing (e.g. like a particular picture or story when someone else doesn't) • Give oral explanations e.g. their or another's preferences, e.g. what they like to eat and why. 	<p>I attempt to write captions or short sentences in meaningful context.</p> <p>Express opinions about their preferences orally and as a caption for a drawing or photograph.</p> <p>(I like apples best.)</p>
Y1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through talk and role play explore how others might think, feel and react differently from themselves and from each other. 	<p>Write key words and sentences to accompany pictures which illustrate characters' reactions within a known story.</p> <p>(The family ran away. They were scared of the big brown bear. The bear was very sad. He wanted a friend)</p>

	In reading explore how different characters might think, feel and react differently from themselves and from each other.	<p>I can put words together to make a sentence.</p> <p>I can join 2 sentences using 'and'.</p> <p>I can separate the words in my sentences using finger spaces.</p> <p>I can use a capital letter to start a sentence.</p> <p>I can use a full stop to end a sentence.</p>
Y2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through reading and in life situations, recognise, that different people (characters) have different thoughts/feelings about, views on and responses to particular scenarios (e.g. that the wolf would see the story of the Red Riding Hood differently to the girl herself.) Explore different views and viewpoints. 	<p>I can write for different purposes.</p> <p>I can use expanded noun phrases to add detail.</p> <p>I can use different sentence types correctly - statement, exclamation, question (How did the giant feel when Jim gave him his new glasses? Wow! What an amazing gift they were.).</p> <p>I can almost always use capital letters and full stops correctly.</p> <p>I can use question marks correctly where they are needed in my writing.</p> <p>I can use expanded noun phrases to add detail. (The giant was so pleased with his enormous, round, gold glasses.)</p> <p>I can use coordinating conjunctions (and, or) to link ideas in my writing.</p> <p>I sometimes use subordinating conjunctions (when, because, if) to connect ideas in my writing. (The giant shed a huge tear when he read Jim's letter. The giant was so happy because he had found a friend at last.)</p>
Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through reading, explore how different views might be expressed/explained/justified (e.g. the different view of characters in a 	<p>Y3:</p> <p>I can compose sentences which develop ideas in a logical sequence.</p>

	<p>particular book, the different view of people writing to a newspaper.)</p> <p>Through role play and drama explore how different views might be expressed/explained/justified (e.g. the different view of characters in a particular book, the different view of people in a simulated 'real life' scenario.)</p> <p>Y4:</p> <p>In exploring persuasive texts, and those presenting a particular argument (see Progression in Persuasion), begin to recognise which present a single (biased) viewpoint and which try to be more objective and balanced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to explore the expression of different views through discussion, role play and drama. 	<p>I can use a variety of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of subordinating conjunctions.</p> <p>I can identify the main clause and the subordinate clause in the sentences I write.</p> <p>(Their hearts sank when they arrived at the busy port. If they wanted to leave and find safety, they would need to wait for the boat.)</p> <p>Y4:</p> <p>I can orally rehearse my sentence or sequences of sentences to make sure I link my ideas logically in my writing.</p> <p>I can use a range of sentences with more than one clause to add interest and variety.</p> <p>I can use subordinate clauses to begin sentences for effect.</p> <p>(When <u>the family</u> finally arrived at the bustling port, <u>their</u> hearts sank. Although it was frightening to think about starting life in a new country, it was even more scary to stay.)</p> <p>I choose <u>pronouns and nouns</u> carefully to make meaning clear and avoid repetition.</p> <p>I can use expanded noun phrases and precise adjective choices and powerful verbs to add impact.</p> <p>(e.g. Makes choices to describe feelings and avoid repetition of 'scared' when describing how a character reacted to a situation.</p>
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Y5/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In exploring persuasive texts, and those presenting a particular argument (see Progression in Persuasion), distinguish and discuss any texts which seems to be trying to present a more balanced or reasoned view, or which explore more than one possible perspective on an issue. • Experiment with the presentation of various views (own and others, biased and balanced) though discussion, debate and drama (conscience alley technique). • Plan a discussion text using a 'balance' skeleton to practise making a point using formal language and linking the point to supporting evidence to elaborate. 	<p>Y5:</p> <p>I can adapt my writing to suit the audience and the purpose of the text.</p> <p>I can start sentences in different ways, using subordinate clauses, rhetorical questions and fronted adverbials to...engage the reader (or listener).</p> <p>I organise my writing into well-structured, cohesive paragraphs which create 'flow'.</p> <p>I can build cohesion in and between paragraphs by using pronouns correctly.</p> <p>I can use more sophisticated conjunctions to build cohesion across a text e.g. furthermore, however.</p> <p>I can use modal verbs or adverbs to indicate degrees of possibility e.g. should, must, perhaps, surely.</p> <p>(Surely, it should be considered cruel to deny these animals their freedom to roam in the wild as nature intended?)</p> <p>I can edit my writing to maintain a formal voice where required.</p> <p>I can use complex sentence structures accurately e.g. edit to ensure clarity, main clause, comma.</p> <p>(Although most people agree with the fact that keeping animals in cramped conditions is wrong, many conservationists accept that sometimes the only way to save a species is to develop breeding programmes within zoos.)</p>

<p>Y6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through reading, identify the language, grammar, organisational and stylistic features of balanced written discussions which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summarise different sides of an argument - clarify the strengths and weaknesses of different positions - signal personal opinion clearly - draw reasoned conclusions based on available evidence • Recognise and understand the distinction between the persuasive presentation of a particular view and the discursive presentation of a balanced argument. • First explore orally and then write a balanced report of a controversial issue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summarising fairly the competing views - analysing strengths and weaknesses of different positions - drawing reasoned conclusions where appropriate - using formal language and presentation as appropriate. • Use reading to: 	<p>Y6:</p> <p>I use grammatical structures and choose vocabulary appropriate to the audience, purpose and degree of formality to make meaning clear.</p> <p>I can choose the appropriate form and register for the audience and purpose of the writing.</p> <p>I sustain and develop ideas logically... using a wide range of devices to build cohesion within and across paragraphs.</p> <p>I can maintain an impersonal voice in order to convey information using a formal register.</p> <p>(It is argued that zoos can have an important educational role in that they allow people to observe and learn more about a whole host of animals which they might otherwise never hope to see.)</p> <p>I can convey complicated information concisely using expanded noun phrases.</p> <p>I can use connecting adverbials or pronouns to link ideas, guide the reader and improve cohesion within or between paragraphs.</p> <p>I can use semi-colons, colons or dashes to mark the boundaries between independent clauses.</p> <p>I can use hyphens to avoid ambiguity.</p> <p>I use a variety of <u>relative pronouns</u> or <u>implied pronouns</u> to write relative clauses which convey information clearly.</p> <p>(Many people believe that theme-park rides provide thrill-seekers with harmless fun however it cannot be argued that this is always the case: 'The Smiler', <u>a ride located within Alton Towers</u>, is renowned for its unreliability and serious safety issues.)</p>
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- investigate conditionals, e.g. using if...then, might, could, would, and their persuasive uses, e.g. in deduction, speculation, supposition

- build a bank of useful terms and phrases to link connecting points within arguments e.g. *similarly... whereas... it could be claimed that... on the other hand... it is possible that... many people believe that... indeed, it is often said that...*