

NON-FICTION TEXT – DISCUSSION TEXTS

Discussion texts involve presenting a reasoned, objective and balanced overview of an issue or controversy. Both sides of an argument are presented, weighing up evidence and points of view and coming to a reasoned conclusion.

Purpose	Common examples of text type	Generic Text Structure / Language Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To present a reasoned and balanced view of an issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-fiction book on a specific issue Write up of a debate Leaflet or article giving a balanced account of an issue e.g. <i>Should mobile phones be banned in school? Should healthy eating be compulsory?</i> Writing editorials about historical attitudes to gender, social class etc Writing letters about pollution, factory farming or smoking Writing essays, giving opinions about literature, music or works of art 	<p>Structure often includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening paragraph that introduces the reader to the issue Series of paragraphs in logical order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Either beginning with all the arguments for, followed by all the arguments against, with supporting evidence/examples Or, a series of contrasting points, with supporting evidence/examples Paragraphs usually begin with a topic sentence End with a summary and a reasoned conclusion / recommendation <p>Language features: Connectives and signposts to guide the reader through the argument:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That help to add on and order ideas and views e.g. <i>'The first reason', 'also', 'furthermore', 'moreover'...</i> That help to introduce other viewpoints, e.g. <i>'However', 'On the other hand', 'Many people believe that' ...</i> That help to conclude, e.g. <i>'In conclusion', 'Having considered all of the arguments' ...</i>

Skills Progression

EYFS	N/A	N/A
KS1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose simple dilemmas / familiar issues with clear opposing points and orally rehearse the arguments on each side e.g. <i>We should have crisps at playtime because... We should keep animals in the classroom because...</i> Discussion should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A title e.g. <i>Should we keep animals in the classroom?</i> An opening sentence to introduce the issue e.g. <i>We have been discussing whether we should...</i> List points in favour e.g. <i>Some of us think we should keep animals in the classroom. Our reasons are</i> (use numerical connectives e.g, <i>firstly, secondly</i> etc.) Then change viewpoint e.g. <i>On the other hand...</i>, and list points against An ending e.g. <i>So, we think that...etc.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use complete simple or compound sentences with correct punctuation. Focus on a few essential connectives to join ideas and structure the argument: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If... then...</i>, to show consequences e.g <i>If we keep animals in the classroom, someone will have to look after them at the weekend...</i> <i>But..., although...</i>, to mark a change of viewpoint <i>Whether (or not)...</i>, to set out alternatives

Skills Progression

LKS2

Develop the work from KS1 to create connected paragraphs in place of simple sentences and lists:

- Opening paragraph to interest the reader in the topic
- A series of points in favour in a connected paragraph
- A series of points against in a connected paragraph
- Pictures, labels or captions could be used to support the argument
- Headings and subheadings could be used to aid presentation
- A concluding paragraph to summarise the main reasons for and against with a reasoned conclusion and a personal opinion supported with evidence
- Use complex sentences to combine information, create emphasis and make the text more interesting for the reader:
 - Relative clauses e.g. *Daleks , who are fearless and hardworking, are also...*
 - Subordinate clauses e.g. *While many people think this is a good thing, other believe...,*

- Use generalised language: *some, most, everyone* and category nouns e.g. *people, animals, food, vehicles, vegetables.*
- Use a variety of connecting words and phrases to guide the reader through the argument:
 - To set out alternatives and set the scene e.g. *to decide... whether or not / if we should / where the / either... or etc.*
 - To add on and sequence ideas e.g. *The first reason..., also..., furthermore...*
 - To introduce a different viewpoint e.g. *However..., On the other hand...*
 - To conclude e.g. *In conclusion..., Looking at this from both sides...*
- Use correct punctuation for sentences, clauses, questions and exclamations.
- Present tense
- Third person
- Use present perfect form of verbs e.g. *some people have argued....some people have said*
- Use adverbials e.g. *therefore, however...*

Skills Progression

UKS2

As LKS2, with:

- Increased emphasis on applying discussion writing across the curriculum:
 - PSHE: Should bullies be punished?
 - History: Should children have been evacuated in WWII?
 - Geography: Is recycling a good idea?
 - Science: Why should we have a balanced diet? Should we turn off street lights to save electricity?
- In arguments:
 - Try to support views with evidence
 - Or, make clear that these are your opinions e.g. *I think..., In my opinion...*
- Give examples which move from the general to the specific: *Most shoppers would agree that ... One lady who has shopped in the town for many years told us...*
- Use indirect, reported speech e.g. *It has been said that..., the local policeman told us that...*
- Vary sentence structure, length and type e.g.
 - complex sentences to combine and compress information: *Although the new store will be easier to drive to, it will cause traffic congestion around the school and increase the likelihood of accidents to children.*
 - Short sentences for effect e.g. *No-one wants this.*
 - Sentence openers: *interestingly..., from our point of view..., Indeed there could even be...,*
 - Y6 - Use the passive voice to present points of view and sound more formal: *It could be said that..., Additional disturbance would be created by...*
 - Conditional and hypothetical (*if...then*) sentences using the subjunctive 'were' *If that's the best they can offer..., If it were to be approved...,*
- Use persuasive devices to press points
- Address readers directly from time to time to hold attention and draw them in to the arguments:
 - inviting them to speculate *You may be wondering why...,*
 - asking questions e.g. *How would you like to meet one of these creatures on your way home...*
- Using exclamations e.g. *...and they smell horrible!*
- Extend the range of connectives given in Y3/4 to link sentences and paragraphs interestingly, coherently and effectively. Including:
 - addition: *also, furthermore, moreover,* etc.
 - change of direction: *on the other hand, however, although, unfortunately, despite* etc.
 - cause and effect connectives: *so that..., owing to..., due to...,* etc.
 - uncertainty: *perhaps, it is possible that..., another possible reason... etc.*
 - comparison: *equally, similarly, just as..., in contrast, whereas* etc.
 - Emphasis: *most/least of all..., importantly* etc.
- Make views sound more reasonable through use of modal verbs e.g. *might/may/could be,* and words and phrases that leave room for alternative views or contrary facts e.g. *often/usually/commonly/mostly/tend to/are likely to...*
- Y6 – Create cohesion across paragraphs using a wider range of cohesive devices which can include adverbials e.g. *therefore, however.*
- Y6 - Adapt degrees of formality and informality to suit the form of the discussion. This can include vocabulary choices e.g. *habitat instead of home, indicate instead of shows.*
- Y6 - Use conditional forms such as the subjunctive form to hypothesise e.g. *If people were to stop hunting...*
- Y6 – Semi-colons, colons and dashes can be useful for developing and linking ideas in complex discussion texts.
- Use a variety of phrases for drawing conclusions e.g. *In conclusion..., to sum up..., Having considered..., In the light of..., given these arguments ..., On the whole..., By and large..., In the circumstances..., All things considered...*
- When you have finished, re-read and check you have been fair to both sides.