
Discussion Texts — Introductory Sequence

Activity 1: Compare and Contrast Text Types

Objective

To help students recognise the difference between **Information Reports** (objective, factual) and **Discussion Texts** (balanced, evaluative).

Step 1: Read the Two Texts

Text A — Information Report: “Zoos Around the World”

Zoos are found in many countries around the world. They provide safe environments for animals that may be endangered or injured in the wild. In zoos, trained staff care for animals and ensure their basic needs are met. Zoos also give scientists the opportunity to research animal behaviour and help protect species from extinction. In addition, visitors can learn about wildlife, which can encourage people to care more about the environment.

Text B — Discussion Text: “Should Zoos Exist?”

Zoos have existed for hundreds of years, and many people enjoy visiting them. Some people believe that zoos play an important role in protecting endangered species and teaching the public about wildlife. They argue that without zoos, many animals might disappear forever. However, others believe zoos are cruel because they take animals away from their natural habitats and force them to live in small spaces. Critics also say that animals can become depressed or unhealthy in captivity. While zoos can help save certain species, they can also cause harm. Therefore, people must consider whether education and protection justify keeping animals behind bars.

Step 2: Discuss

Ask:

- Which text simply **informs** the reader?
-
-
-

- Which text **presents different opinions**?
-
-
-

- Which one sounds more emotional?

- What kind of language is used in each?

Step 3: Compare Using a Table

Feature	Information Report	Discussion Text
Purpose	To inform the reader with facts	To explore two or more viewpoints
Tone	Objective, neutral	Balanced, reasoned, sometimes persuasive
Structure	Classification → Description	Introduction → Arguments For → Arguments Against → Conclusion
Language	Technical nouns, factual verbs, present tense	Modal verbs, connectives, opinion markers
Examples	“Zoos provide safe environments for animals.”	“Some people believe zoos protect animals, while others say captivity harms them.”

Model Response

Both texts are about zoos, but they have very different purposes. The information report explains factual details about how zoos work and what they do, while the discussion text explores whether zoos are good or bad. The discussion is more interesting because it encourages readers to think about both sides and make up their own minds.

Reflection Questions

1. How can you tell when a text is trying to inform you versus trying to make you think?

2. Why is it important for a discussion text to sound balanced and fair?

3. Which text do you prefer reading and why?

 **Activity 2: The Power of Opinions**

Objective

To recognise that strong opinions must be supported with **reasons and evidence**.

Step 1: Opinion Corners

Read each statement aloud. Students decide whether they:

- **Strongly Agree,**
- **Agree,**
- **Disagree,** or
- **Strongly Disagree.**

Example statements:

1. Homework should be banned.
 2. Students should wear school uniforms.
 3. Technology makes people smarter.
 4. Every home should have a pet.
 5. Fast food should be banned in schools.
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Step 2: Justify

Ask: “Why do you think that?”

Encourage them to give a reason — and if possible, an example.

Example Student Responses:

- *“I agree that homework should be banned because many students already spend long hours at school. They need time to rest, help at home, or play sports after school.”*

Reflection

What makes an opinion sound believable?

Which words make your opinion sound polite but confident?

Activity 3: Transform the Report

Objective

To transform a **neutral information report** paragraph into a **balanced discussion** paragraph.

Step 1: Start with an Old Report

Example from a previous topic (*Recycling*):

Recycling is an important process that helps reduce waste. It saves energy, decreases pollution, and protects the environment. Many households recycle paper, plastic, and metal items to help reduce landfill waste.

Step 2: Transform It into a Discussion

Add opinion markers, connectives, and balance.

Many people believe that recycling is one of the best ways to protect the environment because it reduces waste and saves energy. They argue that recycling helps prevent pollution and keeps cities cleaner. However, others believe recycling is not always effective. They say that recycling facilities use large amounts of electricity and water, which can still harm the environment. In addition, some people find recycling confusing and time-consuming. While both sides have valid points, recycling remains an important habit that encourages people to think carefully about their waste.

Model Notes

Technique	Example
Opinion Marker	“Many people believe that...”
Contrast Connector	“However, others believe...”
Balanced Conclusion	“While both sides have valid points...”
Tone	Reasoned, polite, formal

Reflection

What did you have to add or change to make your paragraph sound balanced?

How did your tone change when you added both sides?

Activity 4: Two Sides of the Coin

Objective

To think about an issue from **both perspectives**.

Step 1: Choose a Familiar Topic

Topic: Should students wear school uniforms?

Step 2: Brainstorm Using a T-Chart

Arguments For	Arguments Against
Creates equality among students	Limits individuality and expression
Saves time in the morning	Can be uncomfortable or expensive
Builds school identity and pride	Doesn't stop bullying completely
Prevents competition about clothes	Some uniforms are impractical for hot weather

Step 3: Write a Balanced Introduction

There are many opinions about whether students should wear school uniforms. Some people believe uniforms create equality and prevent bullying based on clothing. However, others argue that uniforms stop students from expressing their personalities and are uncomfortable in hot weather. Both sides have valid points, and schools must decide whether the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

Step 4: Model Paragraph (Extended)

Supporters of school uniforms argue that they promote equality. When all students wear the same clothing, there is less competition or judgment about appearance. Uniforms also help teachers identify students easily and create a sense of belonging. On the other hand, opponents believe uniforms limit individuality and creativity. They say that students should be able to express themselves through their clothing choices. Furthermore, some families struggle to afford expensive uniforms, which creates stress rather than equality. Therefore, while uniforms can improve school unity, it is important that schools allow some freedom of choice, such as casual days or personalised accessories.

Reflection

Which argument did you find more convincing? Why?

What makes a discussion fair?

Activity 5: Dissect a Discussion Text

Objective

To identify and label the **structure** and **language features** of a discussion.

Text Example:

Should School Canteens Sell Junk Food?

Many schools debate whether canteens should sell junk food. Some people believe that allowing junk food gives students more choice and helps canteens earn money. They argue that students can make their own decisions about what to eat and should learn responsibility. However, others believe selling junk food encourages unhealthy habits and leads to obesity. They say that schools should promote healthy lifestyles rather than profit. Although both sides have valid arguments, schools should prioritise students' health and limit junk food to special occasions.

Structure Breakdown

Section	Example	Function
Introduction	"Many schools debate whether canteens should sell junk food."	Introduces the topic and presents the issue as a question.
Arguments For	"Some people believe... They argue that..."	Presents first viewpoint with reasoning.
Arguments Against	"However, others believe..."	Presents opposing viewpoint.
Conclusion	"Although both sides... schools should prioritise..."	Offers a balanced or final stance.

Language Features

Feature	Example	Explanation
Modal Verbs	<i>should, could, might</i>	Suggests possibility or recommendation.
Connectives	<i>however, on the other hand, although</i>	Links ideas clearly.
Objective Tone	<i>Some people believe...</i>	Avoids personal language like "I think."

Feature	Example	Explanation
Abstract Nouns	<i>responsibility, freedom, health</i>	Adds sophistication.

Model Response

This discussion text is balanced because it presents both sides before reaching a fair conclusion. The writer uses connectives like “however” and modal verbs like “should” to sound polite and reasonable. The final paragraph clearly shows which side the writer supports but still acknowledges the other perspective.

Reflection

Which side do you agree with?

How does the writer show respect for both opinions?

Debrief

Discuss:

- Did the speaker give a **clear argument**?

- Was there **evidence** or **examples**?

- How could the speech become more formal in writing?

Reflection

Which connectives or phrases made your speech sound confident?

How would you change your speech to make it fit into a written discussion?




Activity 7: Anchor Chart Creation

Objective

To create a permanent visual reference for writing discussion texts.

Instructions

Students design a poster titled “**How to Write a Discussion**” and include:

Section	Content Example
Purpose	To explore both sides of an issue and reach a fair conclusion.
Structure	Introduction → Arguments for → Arguments against → Conclusion
Language Features	Modal verbs (<i>should, could, might</i>), connectives (<i>however, although</i>), formal tone, third-person voice
Sentence Starters	- “Some people believe...”- “Others argue that...”- “It could be said that...”- “In conclusion...”
Word Bank	balanced, beneficial, disadvantage, equality, freedom, valid, persuasive, reasonable, fairness
Visual Symbols	 (balance)  (discussion)  (thinking)

Mini Model

How to Write a Discussion

A discussion text presents both sides of an issue fairly. Start with an introduction that outlines the topic. Present reasons *for* and *against* the issue using facts, examples, and formal language. Conclude by stating your opinion politely, using modal verbs like *should* or *might*. Always aim for fairness and balance.

Reflection

What is one rule you’ll always remember when writing a discussion?

How can a writer show respect for both sides?
