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## Discussion Writing Lesson

### Question:

*Should people be allowed to use plastic bags if they can recycle them?*

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### Learning Focus

Students learn to express balanced viewpoints about environmental issues, using clear reasons, examples, and connectives.

They will practise distinguishing **ideas** (the “what”) from **reasons** (the “why”) and **examples** (the “how”).

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### Activity 1: Understanding the Issue

#### Read this introduction carefully:

Plastic bags are a common part of our everyday lives. We use them for groceries, rubbish, and carrying items. However, they are also one of the main causes of pollution in oceans and rivers. Some people argue that we should completely ban plastic bags. Others believe that if people recycle them properly, they should be allowed to use them.

#### Questions:

1. What is the main issue being discussed?

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2. What are the two sides of the argument?

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3. Why is this issue important for the environment?

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## Activity 2: Vocabulary Builder

Word	Meaning	Example Sentence
<b>Recycle</b>	To process and reuse materials so they don't become waste.	We can recycle bottles and cans instead of throwing them away.
<b>Pollution</b>	Damage caused to the environment by harmful substances.	Plastic pollution harms sea animals.
<b>Environment</b>	The natural world — air, water, and land.	We must protect our environment for future generations.
<b>Ban</b>	To officially stop or forbid something.	Some countries have banned plastic straws.
<b>Sustainable</b>	Able to continue without harming the planet.	Using cloth bags is a sustainable choice.

### Extension Challenge:

Use each word in a sentence about plastic bags.

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### **Activity 3: Exploring Both Sides**

**Read the following viewpoints:**

**FOR allowing plastic bags (if recycled):**

- People can reuse or recycle them responsibly.
- Some plastic bags are made from recyclable materials.
- Banning them can hurt small businesses or increase costs.

**AGAINST allowing plastic bags:**

- Many people don't recycle correctly, leading to more pollution.
- Plastic takes hundreds of years to break down.
- There are better alternatives, like reusable fabric bags.

**Questions:**

1. Which side do you agree with more? Why?

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2. Which side has stronger reasons? Explain.

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#### Activity 4: Joint Construction – Modelled Discussion

##### Model Paragraph:

Plastic bags should not be banned if people recycle them properly. Recycling helps reduce waste and prevents plastic from ending up in the ocean. Many people reuse bags at home, which means they can be useful and not harmful. However, this only works if everyone takes recycling seriously. If people are careless, the environment will still suffer. Therefore, people should be allowed to use plastic bags, but there must be strict recycling rules.

##### Annotate:

- **Main idea:** Should not be banned if people recycle them properly.
- **Reasons:** Helps reduce waste, prevents ocean pollution.
- **Example:** People reuse bags at home.
- **Caution/Counterpoint:** Only works if everyone recycles responsibly.

##### Question:

What makes this paragraph balanced?

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#### Activity 5: Joint Construction (Class Discussion)

Use this sentence starter table to build your own ideas together:

Function	Sentence Starter
Introducing your opinion	I believe that... / In my opinion...
Giving a reason	This is because... / One reason is that...
Giving an example	For example... / This can be seen when...
Showing the other side	However... / On the other hand...
Concluding	Therefore... / As a result...

##### Task:

Write three sentences that show both sides of the argument using the sentence starters.

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## Activity 6: Independent Construction – Full Discussion

Students now write their own discussion using the **scaffold below**.

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### Discussion Writing Scaffold

**Question:** *Should people be allowed to use plastic bags if they can recycle them?*

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### Introduction

#### **Purpose:**

Introduce the issue and show that there are two sides.

#### **Sentence Starters:**

- Many people today are debating whether...
- Some people believe that... while others think that...
- This discussion will explore both sides of the issue before reaching a conclusion.

**Write your own introduction below:**

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#### **Closing Sentence:**

Overall, this issue is important because it affects both people's daily lives and the health of the environment.

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### Body Paragraph 1 – Recycling Reduces Waste

#### **Sentence Starters:**

- One reason people support using plastic bags is because...
- Recycling helps by...
- For example...
- This means that...

**Write your paragraph:**

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**Closing Sentence:**

Therefore, recycling can make plastic bag use more sustainable.

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**● Body Paragraph 2 – Plastic Bags Are Convenient and Reusable**

**Sentence Starters:**

- Another reason people think plastic bags should be allowed is because...
- Many families rely on them for...
- In addition...
- This shows that...

**Write your paragraph:**

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**Closing Sentence:**

As a result, banning them could make daily tasks harder for many people.

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**● Body Paragraph 3 – Recycling Encourages Responsibility**

**Sentence Starters:**

- A further argument for allowing plastic bags is that...
- This encourages people to...
- For example...
- This demonstrates that...

**Write your paragraph:**

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**Closing Sentence:**

Therefore, allowing plastic bags can help people become more environmentally aware.

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**● Body Paragraph 4 – Not Everyone Recycles Properly**

**Sentence Starters:**

- However, many people argue that...
- One major problem is that...
- For example...
- This suggests that...

**Write your paragraph:**

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**Closing Sentence:**

Therefore, banning plastic bags might be a more reliable solution.

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**● Body Paragraph 5 – Plastic Bags Cause Long-Term Pollution**

**Sentence Starters:**

- Another strong reason against using plastic bags is that...
- This is harmful because...
- For example...
- As a result...

**Write your paragraph:**

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**Closing Sentence:**

Therefore, banning plastic bags completely would prevent further pollution.

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**● Body Paragraph 6 – Better Alternatives Exist**

**Sentence Starters:**

- In addition, people argue that...
- We now have other options such as...
- These are better because...
- This shows that...

**Write your paragraph:**

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**Closing Sentence:**

Therefore, banning plastic bags could encourage people to use more sustainable options.

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**● Conclusion**

**Sentence Starters:**

- In conclusion, it is clear that...
- While some people believe that..., others argue that...
- I believe that... because...
- We can help the environment by...

**Write your conclusion:**

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**Closing Sentence:**

This way, we can protect our environment while still meeting people's everyday needs.

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**Activity 7: Reflection**

1. What did you learn about expressing both sides of an issue?

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2. Why is it important to think about how people's actions affect the environment?

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**Final Writing Checklist**

<b>Element</b>	<b>✓</b>
Introduction explains both sides	<input type="checkbox"/>
Six clear body paragraphs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Each paragraph has a reason and example	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses connectives (because, however, therefore, in conclusion)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balanced viewpoint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear personal opinion in the conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>

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