

Advantage and Disadvantage Questions

In these questions you are told a trend and then asked to describe the advantages and disadvantages of it. Some questions also ask you to give your opinion. Here are some examples (the parts that ask for your opinion have been underlined).

- It is becoming increasingly popular to have a year off between finishing school and going to university. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?
- Some people think that to reduce traffic and pollution, the government should increase tax on petrol (gasoline). Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

Suggested Structure

This is a planning template that you can use for these questions. Note that some parts of it should only be used for essays that ask your opinion.

Introduction: Short and simple. Just write two sentences:

Introduce the topic

Introduce the 2 points of view (only give your opinion if the question asks for it):

There are advantages and disadvantages of...

(In my opinion...)

Paragraph 1: First Point of View / Advantages

... has several benefits. **(Introduce the first point of view)**

Firstly, Secondly, Finally, **(Use this structure to organise several points)**

For example, **(Try to give an example for one of your points)**

Paragraph 2: Opposite Point of View / Disadvantages

On the other hand, some people would argue that... **(Introduce the opposite idea)**

OR: On the other hand, I would argue that... **(if the question asks for your opinion)**

First of all, furthermore **(Use this structure to organise several points)**

For example, **(Give an example)**

Conclusion: Summarise the ideas. Give your opinion if the question asks you for it:

In conclusion, **(Summarise)**

OR: For the reasons mentioned above, I believe that the (advantages/disadvantages) of... outweigh the (advantages/disadvantages) **(Your opinion if the question asks for it)**

Model Answer

The rise of convenience foods has helped people keep up with the speed of the modern lifestyle. Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?

There are advantages and disadvantages of convenience foods. In my opinion, the disadvantages outweigh the advantages.

Consuming convenience foods has several benefits. Firstly, they are easy to get hold of because they are sold in shops everywhere, and they are generally affordable. This is useful because many people lead busy lives and eating convenience foods can save time preparing meals. Secondly, convenience foods tend to last for a long time. For example, food items like ready meals can often be frozen and last for many months, while foodstuff such as tinned soup can last for years. Therefore, having these food items in your house means that you will always have something to eat.

On the other hand, I would argue that there are significant disadvantages to buying convenience foods. First of all, a lot of convenience foods are unhealthy because they are processed. For example, it is often better to eat a home cooked meal which contains fresh and healthy ingredients, instead of a ready-made meal which may not be particularly fresh or nutritious. Furthermore, convenience foods can be far more expensive than homemade food. For example, buying the ingredients and making your own cheese pasta is likely to be much cheaper per serving than buying packets of pre-made cheese pasta from stores.

For the reasons mentioned above, I believe that the disadvantages of convenience foods outweigh the advantages. This is because convenience foods are often unhealthy and can be a waste of money.