

Writing

Argumentative - Expressing Opinion

- 1 Look at the picture. Do you think it is necessary for children to attend kindergarten? Give your opinions and justify them.

- 2 Listen to the tape and fill in the table below.

argument	supporting reason
1 Children learn social	1 It shapes children's
2 Children are prepared for school.	2 Children are taught pre-reading and pre-writing as well as basic mathematics.
3 Children are taught	3 Children learn to follow a and there are classroom

- Compositions expressing opinions are formal in style. Unlike for/against argumentative essays, this type of topic asks for your own opinion, which should be clearly stated and supported by reasons. A good argumentative composition expressing opinion should consist of:
 - a) an **introduction** in which your opinion is clearly stated,
 - b) a **main body** which can consist of two or more paragraphs. Each viewpoint, supported by a logical reason, should be presented in a separate paragraph. The opposing viewpoint is mentioned in a new paragraph. In the same paragraph you might include a lead-in opinion to your conclusion.
 - c) a **conclusion** in which you sum up your viewpoints and re-state your opinion.

Points to remember

- Never start writing your composition before making a plan.
- Each paragraph should start with a topic sentence which summarises the paragraph.
- Each viewpoint should be joined to the others with linking or sequence words e.g. in the first place, to start with, what is more, also, furthermore, besides, apart from this, it is argued that, etc.

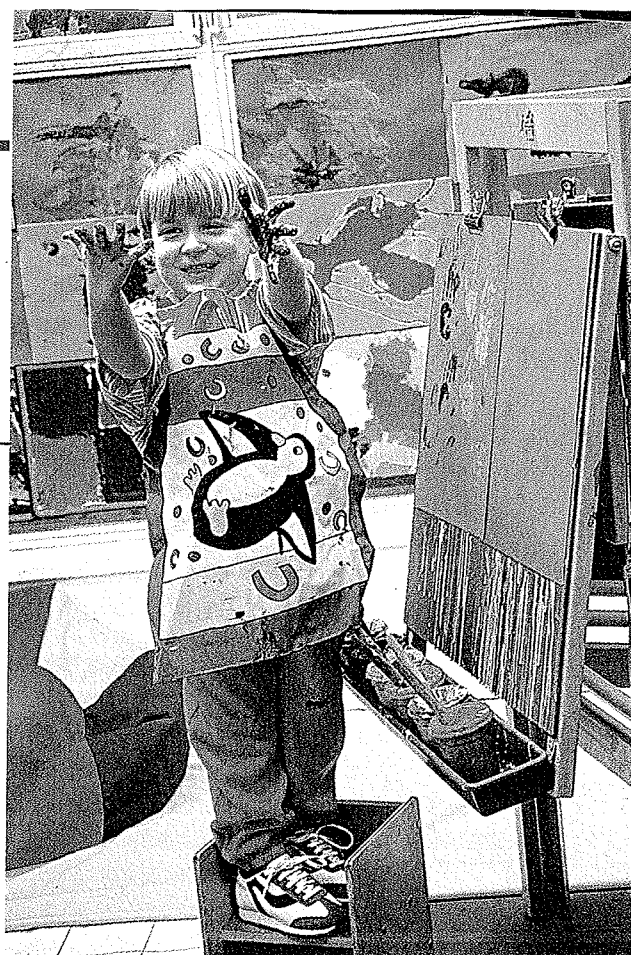
Useful Words and Phrases

To list viewpoints: Firstly, In the first place, To begin with, Secondly, Thirdly, Finally, etc.

To add viewpoints: both...and, What is more, not only...but also, In addition, Furthermore, Besides, not to mention the fact that, etc.

To present the other side of the argument: Contrary to what most people believe, As opposed to the above ideas, Some people argue that ... etc.

To express opinion: I believe, In my opinion, I think, In my view. I strongly believe, I feel that, It seems to me that, etc.



Introduction

Paragraph 1

state topic and your opinion clearly

Main Body

Paragraph 2

viewpoint 1 and reason

Paragraph 3 *

viewpoint 2 and reason

Paragraph 4

give the opposing viewpoint and reasons

Conclusion

Final Paragraph

restate your opinion, using different words

** you may include more viewpoints, and therefore more paragraphs in the main body*

3 Read the following model about recycling and fill in the topic sentences given below.

- Many people argue that the actual process of collecting and recycling materials is expensive and unnecessary.*
- To start with, it is very important for people to realise the damage that our rubbish is doing to the environment.*
- Another important reason is that many forests are being destroyed due to paper being wasted.*

Recycling - How Important Is It Really?

Saving certain recyclable materials and taking them to recycling centres has become part of the daily routine in many homes. In my opinion, this should be encouraged for a number of reasons.

1 Our towns, rivers and seas are becoming more and more polluted with household waste. This could easily be prevented if people took the time to sort, save and recycle their rubbish.

2 Hundreds of thousands of trees are unnecessarily cut down to make paper products. Again, by recycling the paper that we would otherwise throw away we could reduce this wastage.

3 They say that special machinery is required and that many people have to be employed to operate it, thus making recycling more expensive than simple waste disposal. They forget, however, that recycling both creates jobs and is beneficial to the environment.

All points considered, I strongly believe that people should be made aware of the benefits recycling can bring, and should be encouraged to participate in programmes that will help create a cleaner world for everyone in the future.

4 Read the following model and list the viewpoints and supporting reasons mentioned. What other words could you use in place of the words in bold? Then, give the paragraph outline.

Physical Education should be taught in schools

Physical Education has been a part of the school curriculum for years, and I believe that it should remain so for a variety of reasons.

In the first place, offering Physical Education in schools is vital for children who have neither the time, nor the opportunity to do sport elsewhere. Physical Education is especially beneficial for children living in crowded cities who do not have space to play. Doing sport at school gives them the opportunity to exercise and get rid of their excess energy.

In addition, team sports develop children's social skills, encouraging them to work as part of a team and to cooperate with others.

On the other hand, some parents feel that Physical Education should not be a compulsory subject as not all children enjoy or are good at sport. These parents forget, however, that all children can benefit from physical activity, and doing sport will give them the chance to improve their skills and their health.

In conclusion, I believe that Physical Education is an important part of every school curriculum since physical activity helps children to keep fit, and stay energetic and alert.

5 Read the following beginnings and endings and match them. Which belong to an argumentative composition expressing opinion?

BEGINNINGS ...

- Spending one's summer holiday climbing in the mountains of Tibet or white-water rafting may not be everyone's idea of fun, but adventure holidays are becoming extremely popular. They have both their good and bad points.
- Becoming a vegetarian is a choice that many people are making after recent health scares. The question is, does being a vegetarian have a positive or negative effect on one's health? I believe that it can do more harm than good.
- A scene unfolds before one's eyes of yet another miracle of nature: a baby elephant being born. If it were not for television, this is something we might never see and for this reason I feel that TV plays an important role in education.

... ENDINGS

- To sum up, I believe that television should continue to play a role in education. Well-made programmes can give us a broader view of the world and can teach us about things which are outside our everyday experience.
- All in all, whether you will enjoy an adventure holiday or not depends on the type of person you are. Taking holidays of this kind should be carefully considered, because they are not for the faint-hearted!
- In conclusion, I feel that vegetarians could suffer from health problems if they do not have a healthy, nutritious diet. However, everyone must decide for themselves which lifestyle choice suits them best.

- 6 Read the following models and answer these questions: a) Which is a "for and against" argumentative essay? b) Which are the "for and against" points mentioned? c) Which is an argumentative essay expressing opinion? d) How is each viewpoint supported? Finally, give the paragraph outline.

MODEL A

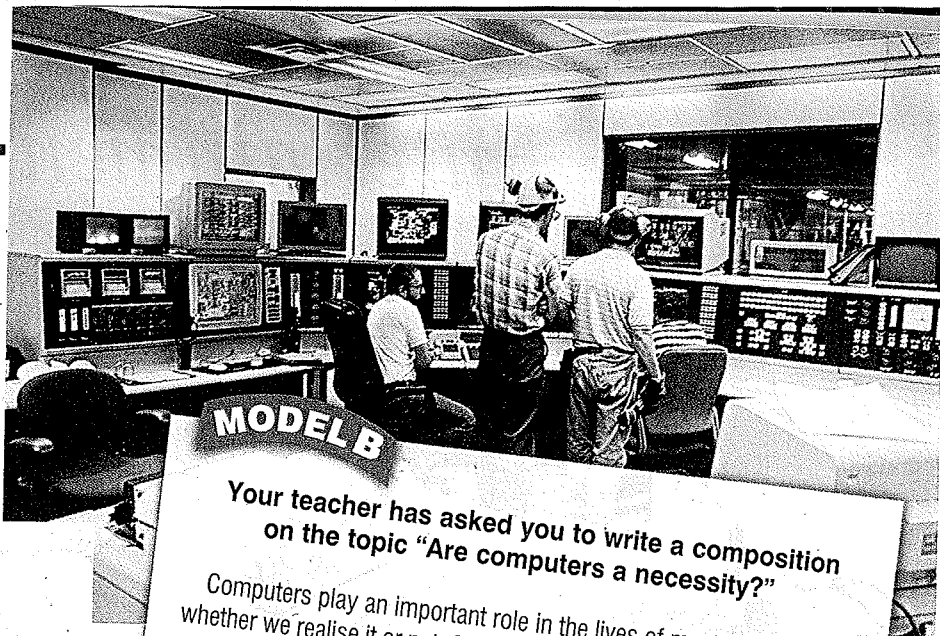
Computers: A blessing or a curse?

Almost every home, office or school has a computer of some kind these days. Many people feel that these machines are now an essential part of our lives, but how necessary are they really?

One of the main advantages is the time that can be saved by using a computer. This is especially beneficial in the workplace, where employees can do their work far faster than they could in the past. In addition to this, computers can be educational and fun. From a very young age, children can gain basic computer skills through programmes that allow them to learn, draw, paint and play. In today's technological world, this knowledge can only help them in the future.

However, there are various negative aspects to using computers. Many jobs have been lost due to the fact that computers can do a lot of tasks more efficiently than humans. This has led to high unemployment in many countries. What is more, computers can actually cause health problems. Endless hours in front of a screen can cause eye strain and headaches, which are serious side-effects.

To sum up, it seems that computers are a useful addition to our fast-moving world of high technology. However, it must be remembered that they are here to serve us — not to replace us.



MODEL B

Your teacher has asked you to write a composition on the topic "Are computers a necessity?"

Computers play an important role in the lives of most of us today, whether we realise it or not. Some people, however, are beginning to ask if we really need them. In my opinion, computers have become a necessary part of modern life.

In the first place, computers can save a lot of storage space. Storing information on computer disks is one of the most efficient ways of keeping data. One computer disk can hold the same amount of information as several books.

Furthermore, computers save everyone a lot of valuable time. Stored information can be found at the touch of a button, whereas searching for it manually takes much longer. Therefore, our everyday lives are made easier — from going to the bank to doing the shopping.

Nevertheless, there are those who claim that computers are unnecessary and make our lives more complicated. They argue that in the past we managed very well using other methods and that we have become too dependent on computers. However, they fail to consider that the time saved by using computers for repetitive tasks enables us to use our own time more creatively and productively.

All in all, I strongly believe that computers are a useful tool. They have changed our lives for the better and there is no reason why we should not make them work to our advantage.

Self Check

- 7 Answer the following T/F statements.

- 1 All viewpoints are given in one paragraph. ☐
- 2 The writer's opinion is presented in the first paragraph only. ☐
- 3 Viewpoints should be linked with sequence words. ☐
- 4 The opposing viewpoint should never be stated. ☐
- 5 Each viewpoint is supported by a reason. ☐
- 6 A topic sentence summarises each paragraph. ☐

- 8 Read the following topics and identify the type of each. Then, give the paragraph outline for each listing the arguments/viewpoints. Finally choose any two of them and write them in an appropriate style using 120-180 words.

- 1 Your teacher has asked you to write a composition on the topic: *Should everyone have a university education?*
- 2 Your teacher has asked you to write a composition giving your opinion on this question: *Family or friends - which are more important?*
- 3 Your school magazine is investigating the question: *Is school the best preparation for your working life?*
- 4 Your college newspaper needs an article which discusses the good and bad points of working and going to school at the same time.