

Writing skills practice: A for and against essay – exercises

Look at the essay and do the exercises to improve your writing skills.

Preparation

Complete the tips for writing a for and against essay with a word from the box.

disagree

formal

plan

reasons

opinions

1. You should give your _____ on the topic.
2. Always give _____ for your opinions.
3. You can agree, _____ or discuss both sides of the statement.
4. The register used in an essay is usually quite _____.
5. You need to _____ your essay carefully before you start writing.

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Exam question

Your English class have been discussing the topic of young people using the internet. Your teacher has asked you to write an essay answering the following question:

Is the internet bad for young people?

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It is now easier than ever to access the internet, whether you are using a computer, phone or tablet. There is no doubt that many young people are spending more and more time online, with both positive and negative consequences.

One advantage of the internet is that young people can do research for their schoolwork and homework. This often helps teenagers to widen their knowledge and improve their grades. Another positive aspect of the internet is that people can practise foreign languages by chatting to friends in other countries. This is also a good way of keeping in touch with friends and family around the world.

On the other hand, there are also negative consequences. Some young people become addicted to online gaming and this can mean that they waste too much time playing these games. This can have a negative effect on their schoolwork, the amount of exercise they get and their social lives. In addition, excessive internet use can mean that some young people hardly talk to their families because they are always on the computer.

To sum up, spending time on the internet can have a negative impact on young people, but it also has many advantages. Personally, I think the internet is an incredible tool and the benefits of internet access outweigh the dangers. However, we should be careful not to use the internet excessively.

Top Tips for writing

1. Start by saying what the current situation is or introducing the debate.
2. In the second paragraph talk about the advantages or reasons in favour. Use expressions like *One advantage of X is ...* and *Another advantage of X is ...*
3. In the third paragraph give the disadvantages or reasons against. You can start this contrasting paragraph with *On the other hand, ...*
4. Finally, sum up the main arguments using *To sum up, ...* or *To conclude, ...* Give your opinion too, using expressions like *Personally, ...* or *In my opinion, ...*

1. Check your writing: grouping – ideas

Here are some ideas for a new essay entitled 'Is it acceptable to keep animals in zoos?' Circle whether each point answers *Yes* or *No* to the question.

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | Zoos educate the public and give children the chance to see animals they could never normally see. | Yes | No |
| 2. | Animals in zoos often suffer from stress and boredom. | Yes | No |
| 3. | Sometimes animals escape from their enclosures, which is dangerous for humans. | Yes | No |
| 4. | Zoos protect animals by bringing them into a safe environment. | Yes | No |
| 5. | Bigger zoos have lots of space and make sure the animals have everything they need to be healthy and happy. | Yes | No |
| 6. | It is not right to imprison an animal, just for the entertainment of humans. | Yes | No |
| 7. | Unwanted animals from zoos are sometimes sold to circuses, hunting parks and even for meat. | Yes | No |
| 8. | Many zoos help endangered species to find a mate and breed. They would not have this help in the wild. | Yes | No |

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2. Check your writing: gap fill – useful phrases

Fill the gaps in the essay with the correct word or phrase from the box.

Another drawback is	One advantage of	Personally	In addition
On the other hand	There is no doubt	positive aspect of	To conclude

1 _____ that the subject of keeping animals in zoos creates a lot of debate. Some people say zoos are traditional family entertainment and good for animals. Others say keeping animals in zoos is cruel and inhumane.

2 _____ zoos is that they give people the chance to see and learn about animals. This makes people more likely to want to look after animals and protect their natural habitats. Another ³ _____ zoos is that they help to protect endangered species by offering them a safe place to live.

⁴ _____, zoos help to find mates for endangered species. For example, many pandas would not find a mate to breed with if they were on their own in the wild.

⁵ _____, there are many arguments against keeping animals in zoos. Firstly, zoo animals often suffer from stress and boredom when they are not in their natural habitat. Secondly, unwanted animals are sometimes sold to circuses, hunting parks or for meat. ⁶ _____ that animals sometimes escape from their enclosures, which is dangerous for humans.

⁷ _____, there are strong arguments for and against keeping animals in zoos. ⁸ _____, I think it is acceptable to keep animals in zoos, as long as they have enough space and are properly looked after.

Discussion

What's your opinion? Do you think the internet is bad for young people?

Do you think it is acceptable to keep animals in zoos?