

UNIT 10 "For and Against" Essays

1 Look at the pictures and think of as many advantages and disadvantages of living in the country as possible.

2 First read the table below, then listen to the cassette and tick the points mentioned. Which of these points are the advantages and which are the disadvantages of living in the country?



- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A no shops nearby | <input type="checkbox"/> | E safe place to bring up children | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B no hospitals nearby | <input type="checkbox"/> | F far away from friends | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C no noise from traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> | G long car journeys to school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D lower house prices | <input type="checkbox"/> | H healthy environment | <input type="checkbox"/> |

One type of argumentative essay is that which gives advantages and disadvantages (**For and Against**). It is a formal piece of writing in which a topic is considered from opposing points of view.

A good essay of this type should consist of:

- an introductory paragraph** in which you state the topic. This means that you talk generally about the topic without giving your opinion;
- a main body** in which the points for and the points against, along with your justification, appear in two separate paragraphs; and
- a closing paragraph** in which you give either your opinion or a balanced consideration of the topic.

Note: In this type of essay writing, you must **not** include opinion words (I believe, I think, etc.) in the introduction or the main body. Opinion words can **only** be used in the final paragraph, where you may state your opinion on the topic.

Points to consider

- Make a list of the points for and against a topic before you start writing.
- Write well-developed paragraphs in which the points you present are supported with justification, (i.e. reasons or examples). Make sure each paragraph has more than one sentence. *e.g. One advantage of using a word processor is that it saves time. It is much quicker to make corrections on one than it is to do them by hand.*
- Do not use informal style (e.g. short forms, colloquial language, etc.) or strong language (e.g. *I firmly believe*, etc.)
- Try to include a quotation relevant to the topic you are writing about. For example, if you are writing an essay on space exploration, a quotation you may include is: "*One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.*" (Neil Armstrong)
- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence which summarises what the paragraph is about.

topic sentence

However, there are disadvantages to owning a house.

point & justification

Firstly, it can be rather expensive and tiring to maintain. For example, repairs to the outside of the house can be costly, not to mention the time-consuming task of caring for a backyard or garden.

Introduction

Paragraph 1

state topic (summary of the topic without giving your opinion)

Main Body

Paragraph 2

*arguments for **

Paragraph 3

*arguments against **

Conclusion

Final Paragraph

balanced consideration/opinion
** If you feel that there are more arguments for than against a topic, give them before the final paragraph to lead the reader to this conclusion.*

Linking Words/Phrases

- To introduce points:** one major advantage/disadvantage of, a further advantage, one point of view in favour of/against
- To list points:** in the first place, first of all, to start with, secondly, thirdly, finally, last but not least
- To add more points to the same topic:** what is more, furthermore, also, in addition to this/that, besides, apart from this/that, not to mention the fact that
- To make contrasting points:** on the other hand, however, in spite of, while, nevertheless, despite, even though, although, it can be argued that
- To introduce examples:** for example, for instance, like, especially, such as, in particular
- To conclude:** to sum up, all in all, all things considered, in conclusion, on the whole, taking everything into account, as was previously stated

3 Complete the following sentences, then replace the words in bold with other similar ones.

- 1 Public transport is often more convenient than taking one's car, **and is also**
- 2 Being able to speak a foreign language is very useful when abroad. **Furthermore,**
- 3 **Although** living abroad can be an interesting experience,
- 4 Being self-employed means that you are your own boss. **However,**
- 5 Exercise can help you to lose weight. **What is more,**
- 6 Experimenting on animals is cruel, **not to mention the fact that**
- 7 Package holidays are cheap. **On the other hand,**
- 8 **While** living alone can be lonely, it
- 9 Keeping up with fashion takes a lot of effort. **In addition,**
- 10 Watching television can be educational. **Nevertheless,**

You can end a "for and against" essay by a) giving a balanced consideration of the points on the topic or b) by giving your opinion, that is, for example, by expressing whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages or vice versa.

4 Read the closing paragraphs below and say whether they express a balanced consideration or the writer's opinion.

- 1 In conclusion, getting married has, to my mind, more advantages than disadvantages. After all, what can be more fulfilling than a steady relationship with the person you love that lasts for the rest of your life?
- 2 To sum up, camping holidays do have advantages, the main one being that they are far cheaper than other holidays. In my opinion, however, there is too much hard work involved for them to ever feel like a real holiday.

- 3 To conclude, by looking after animals and helping them to breed, zoos play an important part in protecting many species from becoming extinct. Therefore, the negative aspects of keeping animals in captivity are balanced out by the positive ones.
- 4 All in all, computers have both advantages and disadvantages. They may have replaced humans in many jobs, but they have also made our lives considerably easier, and it is now difficult to imagine life without them.
- 5 On the whole, while most people go on holiday to rest, this is one thing you are unlikely to do on an adventure holiday. In my opinion, this disadvantage outweighs all the advantages associated with this kind of holiday.
- 6 Taking everything into account, there are both advantages and disadvantages in keeping pets. In the end it is up to the individual to decide whether the pleasure associated with owning a pet is worth the work that goes with it.

5 Give a one-minute talk on the topic of living in the country. Include linking words from the table above in your talk.

You can begin like this: Living in the country has always appealed to a lot of people. One advantage of

You can end like this: All things considered,
(Decide whether you want to give a balanced consideration or your opinion)

Techniques for beginnings and endings

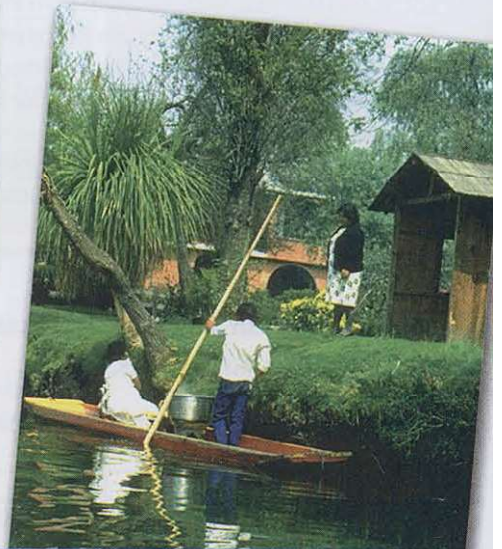
The first paragraph may:

- make reference to a strange scene or situation, e.g. *Some scientists believe that in the future everyone will be genetically perfect.*
- address the reader directly, e.g. *Are you aware of any characteristics which you may have inherited from your parents?* or ask a rhetorical question (question to which no answer is expected), e.g. *Isn't it amazing how some children look so much like their parents?*
- start with a quotation, e.g. *"Genetics holds the key to the future"*

The last paragraph may:

- state a personal opinion, e.g. *In my opinion, I believe, In my view, It seems to me, The way I see it, I think, etc.*
- give the reader something to consider, e.g. *Perhaps the world would be a safer and more efficient place if everyone was genetically perfect.*
- end with a quotation, e.g. *"Genetics holds the key to the future"*, or a rhetorical question, e.g. *What will they think of next?*

- 6 Read the main body of the argumentative essay below on the topic "Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in a foreign country". Then read the beginnings and endings and say which technique has been used in each one. Finally, replace the highlighted words or phrases in the main body with other synonymous words or phrases.



BEGINNINGS...

- a Every morning some people strap on their skis, climb into their canoes or ride a horse to get to their jobs. They are not eccentrics, though; they have simply chosen to live in a place where ways of getting to work differ from those in their own country.
- b As foreign travel becomes increasingly cheap and convenient, more and more people are discovering new places. Many prefer them to their own countries and decide to move there. But is living abroad as easy as it seems?
- c Have you ever thought of settling down in your dream country? It is undoubtedly a big decision to make, but it can often change your life for the better.

One of the main advantages of living in a foreign country is that it gives you the opportunity to experience an entirely different way of life, which can be a valuable form of education. Moreover, one is given the chance to learn and become fluent in another language through everyday use. In addition, many people become more independent and self-reliant by having to cope with difficult situations on their own. Finally, living in a country with a different climate can prove beneficial to both one's health and state of mind.

On the other hand, even if you try your hardest to adapt to your new surroundings it is likely that you will often experience moments of isolation, frustration and loneliness. This can be caused by communication problems, especially if you cannot speak the language yet. What is more, finding a job can often be a stressful experience as in some countries foreigners are not easily accepted.

...ENDINGS

- a To conclude, although living in a strange place can be stressful at first, it is something that almost everybody is capable of adjusting to. As Lydia Hearn once said, "A foreigner is only a foreigner until you've been introduced."
- b In conclusion, living abroad is a good way to learn to co-exist with others. Perhaps if everyone experienced life in a foreign country, relations between countries might improve and the world would become a more peaceful place.
- c However, in my view, living successfully in a foreign country depends on the individual. The more effort that is made to participate and become part of one's new surroundings, the more welcome and comfortable one will feel.

7 Read the compositions and the table of "Do's" and "Don'ts". Find an example of each point in the models and write "Model A" or "Model B" next to it as well as the phrase/word itself, as in the example. Finally, decide which of the two compositions is a good model, give the paragraph plan and say what a successful argumentative essay (for and against) should or should not contain.

MODEL A

"Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being your own boss."

Have you ever considered becoming your own boss? In recent years the number of people choosing to start their own business has risen significantly. Many claim that this is because more and more people are no longer content to work for someone else.

One of the main advantages of being self-employed is the fact that you are completely self-reliant and can make decisions on your own. This can give you a great sense of freedom and allows you to do exactly what you want without interference from anyone else. What is more, your working day can be planned for your convenience, allowing you to work when you want rather than when you have to. Finally, if your business is successful, people will know that you alone should be given the credit.

However, there are disadvantages to being your own boss. Many self-employed people have said that to build a successful business, you have to be prepared to work long hours and sacrifice your personal life. As B. C. Forbes once said, "If you don't drive your business, you will be driven out of business." Moreover, a 1996 government study found that over a quarter of the businesses run by newly self-employed people failed within the first two years.

All things considered, it seems to me that self-employment can be a very gratifying experience, although not one without difficulties. But when success is achieved, the greatest reward of all is the knowledge that you have done it on your own.

MODEL B

"Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being your own boss."

In my opinion, self-employment has various advantages, though there are some bad points too.

Working for yourself can be a positive experience. Everybody wants to have their own business and even my uncle has opened his own shop. Statistics show that more and more people are quitting their jobs and starting their own business. I think that the best thing about it is that you can do what you want and nobody can tell you off. But then again, you usually have to work really hard if you're on your own and everyone knows that it's a big responsibility to run your own business.

You can choose how much you want to work and you can stop if you feel like it, when you're your own boss. The only bad thing is that you may have to spend your own money to make the business work. Everyone wants to have their own business and for some people it works well. This is a good reason for them to feel proud because they've done it all by themselves.

Having your own business can be very difficult but for some people it's worth it because they don't mind the hard work and they end up making a lot of money and feel good about themselves.

DO's

- formal style - Model A, e.g. *the .. number of... has risen significantly*
- well-developed paragraphs -
- justification of arguments -
- linking words/phrases -
- quotations -
- generalisations -
- reference to specific statistics -
- opinion only in the last paragraph -

DON'Ts

- informal style (short forms) -
- one sentence paragraphs -
- overgeneralisations -
- personal examples -
- opinion in the first paragraph -
- blind use of statistics -

Unit 10 "For and Against" Essays

- 8** Read through the arguments and match each argument with its corresponding justification. Then say which are in favour of and which are against using mobile phones.

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Arguments	Justification
1 Using mobile phones can be dangerous.	a If you find yourself in a dangerous situation, you can call for help no matter where you are.
2 Mobile phones are very useful for people who are often on the move.	b Talking on a mobile phone while driving reduces concentration by up to 30% and so greatly increases the chances of causing an accident.
3 Some people claim that owning a mobile phone is a waste of money.	c They can easily be contacted no matter where they are.
4 Having a mobile phone increases your personal security.	d The basic charge for the service is much higher than for a normal telephone, and the calls are extremely expensive.

- 9** Read the quotations and the paragraphs below, then decide which quotation should be included in each paragraph and write it in the space provided.

Quotations

- a "Without the past the pursued future has no meaning."
 b "Advertising is the art of making whole lies out of half truths."
 c "Prisons as they are do not teach a person to live in society—they teach him to live in prison."
 d "The scientists split the atom; now the atom is splitting us."
- 1 One thing that counts against advertising is the fact that it plays a far larger role than it should in society today and often deliberately misinforms the public about the product being promoted. As Edgar A. Shoaff said,
- 2 Although technology has made our lives easier in many ways, it has also created new problems for mankind. As Quentin Reynolds said, But while it has created problems, we should think carefully before dismissing its many benefits.
- 3 It has been said by Loren Eiseley, an American anthropologist, that, and in today's world this is truer than ever. All too often, history seems to repeat itself, something that could be avoided if we were to pay more attention to the past.
- 4 To conclude, it is clear that a long-term solution to the problem is to discourage young people from becoming criminals rather than to punish them afterwards. As Alan Bartholemew once said,

- 10** Match the quotations with the composition topics.

Quotations

- 1 "It is only when they go wrong that machines remind you how powerful they are." (Clive James)
 2 "A man travels the world in search of what he needs and returns home to find it." (George Moore)
 3 "All men are creative, but few are artists." (Paul Goodman)
 4 "The car has become an article of dress without which we feel uncertain, unclad and incomplete." (Marshall McLuhan)

Topics

- a What are the advantages and disadvantages of owning a car?
 b "Travelling has both advantages and disadvantages." Discuss.
 c What are the advantages and disadvantages of the increasing use of technology?
 d Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being a professional artist.

- 11** Write these essays in the appropriate style using 120 - 180 words.

- 1 Your teacher has asked you to write a composition giving arguments for and against owning a mobile phone.
 2 You have been asked to write a composition on the advantages and disadvantages of living in the country.

12 Read the essay below and state the topic of each paragraph. How does it begin and end? Fill in the correct linking word or phrase. Finally, list the advantages and disadvantages mentioned.

"The advantages and disadvantages of owning a pet."



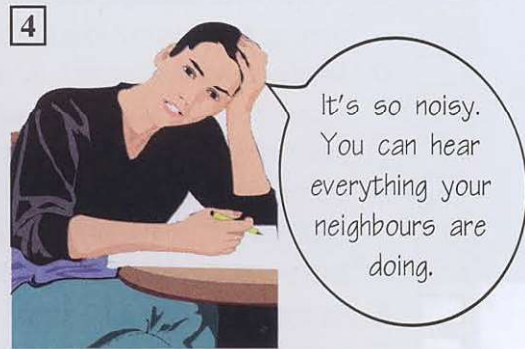
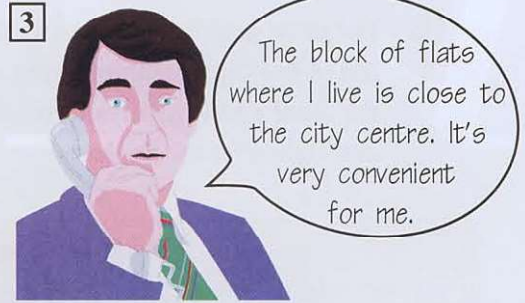
Many types of animals have gradually become domesticated and have been taken into our homes as pets. Pets are enjoyed by young and old alike, but are they really worth having or are there too many drawbacks?

1)....., pets can be great companions for those who live alone, such as the elderly. What is more, having a dog around the house can give you a greater sense of security. 2)....., young children usually love animals and giving them the opportunity to look after a pet teaches them to care for living

things and to be responsible.

3)....., bringing a pet into your home is not a decision to be taken lightly. There are some expenses involved as animals need food, special cages, equipment and occasional veterinary treatment which can be costly. They 4)....., need care and attention on a daily basis, which can be time-consuming. 5)....., a pet ties you down to a certain extent. You cannot just get up and go away for the weekend or for a holiday without first taking your pet's needs into consideration. This is not always easy and can be expensive if you have to pay for professional care.

6)....., buying a pet should be a carefully planned decision. If you are fully aware of your pet's needs and all the responsibilities involved in owning one, then having a pet can be a very rewarding experience.



13 Read what the people in the pictures say about living in a block of flats. Who speaks in favour of it and who is against? Can you think of any other advantages and disadvantages? Finally, write a composition of 120 - 180 words on this topic. Use linking words/phrases.



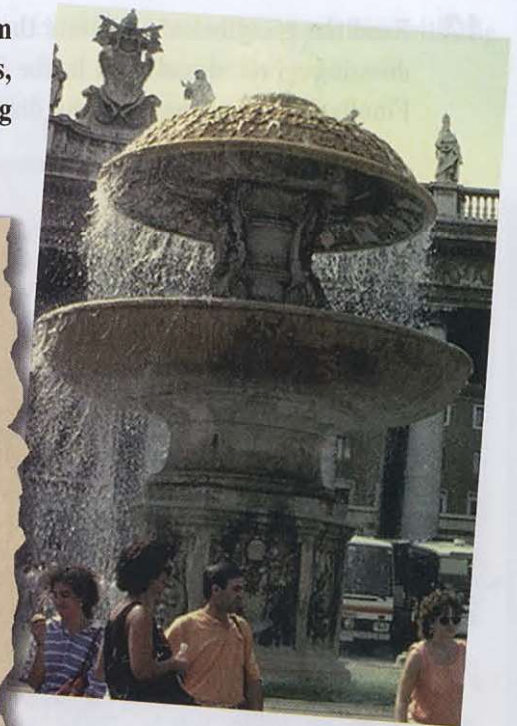
14 "The advantages and disadvantages of watching TV."

Think of as many points for and against watching TV as possible. Then, write an essay on this topic using 120 - 180 words. Remember to use appropriate linking words or phrases.

- 15** Put these jumbled sentences in the correct order. Then write them out in two separate paragraphs, one including all the advantages, the other all the disadvantages. Finally, write a suitable beginning and ending for this topic.

Package holidays: Good or Bad?

- A However, there are disadvantages to going on a package holiday.
- B To start with, package holidays are cheaper than travelling on your own, as the price includes the air fare and hotel accommodation.
- C Another negative aspect is that as you have paid for your accommodation in advance, you often feel obliged to stay in that place rather than move around and explore.
- D Furthermore, the brochures from which most people select a package holiday usually give you a good idea of what the resort offers, therefore reducing the chances of disappointment.
- E Package holidays have several advantages.
- F In the first place, as package holidays are less expensive, the hotel is unlikely to be top-class.
- G Last but not least, when visiting a new place it is often much easier to have all the details arranged in advance as it can be rather confusing to plan everything by yourself.
- H Also package holiday destinations are usually popular tourist resorts, thus there is little opportunity to experience the true culture of the country you are visiting.



- 17** "The advantages and disadvantages of going to work by car."

First, think of as many points for and against going to work by car as possible. Then, listen to the cassette to find out whether you have thought of the same points. You may take notes while listening. Finally, write an essay on this topic using 120 - 180 words.

Remember to use appropriate linking words or phrases.

- 16** Rewrite the following text by linking the sentences in each paragraph. Use appropriate linking words or phrases.

"The advantages and disadvantages of being famous."

People who are famous are usually financially secure. They are often given free designer clothes, cars and jewellery by manufacturers who receive free advertising when these items are worn or used. They receive first-class service wherever they go. They have the power to influence other people and are even role models to many. They have domestic help and employ staff to take care of their business. They are confident and secure as they are successful professionals.

They seldom have privacy and often have to go out in public wearing a disguise so that they will not be recognised. Many people take advantage of them and they often lead lonely lives as they never know who their real friends are. Many end up having nervous breakdowns because of stress. Some live in fear of being or having members of their family kidnapped. People expect them to look glamorous and happy at all times, which is hard for celebrities to do.