

WRITING

AN ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES ESSAY; LEARN TO USE DISCOURSE MARKERS

8 A What do you think are the main advantages and disadvantages of technology in everyday life? Write a list.

B Read the model essay. Does it mention any of your ideas?

The advantages and disadvantages of modern technology

- 1** It is easy to see the advantages of modern technology in our everyday lives. Technology has given us mobile phones, computers, televisions and many other useful things. However, most modern inventions come with a price – maybe social or environmental – so we need to look at both sides of the story.
- 2** One of the main advantages of modern technology can be seen in medical science. The discoveries of antibiotics and vaccinations have saved millions of lives around the world. In addition to this, modern technology has made industry more efficient.
- 3** On the other hand, modern technology is responsible for the development of weapons, which have caused a lot of destruction. Another disadvantage is that it makes us lazy. Nowadays, many people spend their lives sitting in front of computer screens. This is a development that surely has negative effects on our mental and physical health, making us more isolated and less active.
- 4** In my opinion, modern technology is a good thing. In general, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Of course there are drawbacks, but it is important to remember that technology itself is not the problem. The problem is that we use technology without always thinking about the harmful consequences.

C Match paragraphs 1–4 with descriptions a)–d).

- a) discussion of disadvantages _____
- b) conclusion _____
- c) introduction _____ 1 _____
- d) discussion of advantages _____

D Work in pairs. Complete the guidelines for writing an essay with the expressions in the box.

personal opinions examples notes beginning logical order

- 1** Sort out the facts – make _____ of all the relevant information you have on the subject.
- 2** Plan your argument – organise your notes and arrange the ideas in a _____.
- 3** Give your essay an appropriate _____. Describe what you are planning to say.
- 4** Decide how many paragraphs you need for your argument. Each paragraph should discuss one point. Use _____ to support your arguments.
- 5** Write a logical conclusion. Though the style of the essay is generally formal and impersonal, this might be the place to include some _____.

9 A Look at the underlined words and phrases in the essay. Put them in the correct place in the table.

introduce advantages	The most important advantage is ...
introduce disadvantages	The main disadvantage is ...
contrasting ideas	Although, ...
additional reasons	As well as that, ... And another thing, ...
personal opinion/conclusion	In general, ... As far as I'm concerned, ...

B Underline the correct alternatives.

Satellite TV: good or bad?

More and more people are watching satellite television.

¹*The main advantage / As well as that* is that you can choose exactly what you want to watch, and ²*in addition to this / however* you can watch programmes in other languages.

³*However, / Although* this means that whereas people used to talk about programmes with colleagues and friends, now they usually don't watch the same programmes.

⁴*On the other hand / And another thing*, there is too much choice.

There are so many programmes to choose from that people can't decide what to watch. ⁵*This means that / As far as I'm concerned*, they watch too much television.

⁶*In my opinion / The problem is that*, satellite television is a good thing, as it gives people more choice.

⁷*However, / In general*, people need to be careful that they choose their programmes carefully.

10 Choose one of the topics below and write an essay about the advantages and disadvantages of it. Look back at Exercises 8 and 9 to help you.

- modern technology in everyday life
- owning a car/bicycle
- playing computer games
- using a digital camera
- using email/text messages
- cheap flights

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6 A Look at the task below and the notes a student has made. Tick the advantages and cross the disadvantages.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of studying English online, as opposed to in a classroom.

- 1 flexibility – can study where and when you want, don't have to travel to a school
- 2 lack of interaction with your teacher or students
- 3 more choice – can choose to skip parts of the course, focus on other parts
- 4 IT problems – need to be confident with how the technology works, have good connections to the internet, etc.
- 5 discipline and time management – have to stay motivated
- 6 materials are technologically advanced – use a variety of multimedia materials

LISTENING

1 A  **5.1** Listen to Mia, Tom and Owen answering the following questions. Write M (Mia), T (Tom) or O (Owen) next to the question they answer.

- 1 How has your country changed in the last thirty years? _____
- 2 Is the world getting better or worse?

- 3 How has your life changed in the last thirty years? _____

B Circle the correct option to complete the sentences.

- 1 Mia thinks that thirty years ago _____.
 - a) life was simpler
 - b) the pace of life was faster
 - c) people were happier
- 2 Mia thinks that email puts pressure on people because _____.
 - a) people's computers crash
 - b) emails sometimes don't arrive
 - c) we are expected to give an instant response
- 3 Tom says that Beijing has grown because people _____.
 - a) don't have as much money as before
 - b) came from around the world to get rich
 - c) came from all over China to make money
- 4 Tom says that life in the countryside _____.
 - a) has changed enormously because of new technology
 - b) will never change because they do not have access to technology
 - c) has not changed that much, but people have more technology
- 5 Owen says that living conditions around the world _____.
 - a) are improving, even though many people are still living in terrible poverty
 - b) are terrible and are going in the wrong direction
 - c) are not improving, and more and more people are living in poverty
- 6 Owen thinks that there are _____.
 - a) fewer wars than before, but weapons are getting more dangerous
 - b) more wars than before, and weapons are getting more dangerous
 - c) the same number of wars as before, and weapons are getting safer

C Listen again and check.

B Look at the two plans, A and B, for the essay. Which is better? Why?

Plan A

Many people now study English online. There are lots of good materials on the internet for doing this. As the technology improves, more and more people will try online learning.

But there are some problems, too. Online learning is boring because you are on your own. It's difficult to be motivated.

My opinion – I have tried online materials and they are very good. But going to a class is a better way to improve your English.

Plan B

Introduction:

Improvement in technology means many people are now choosing to study English online, not in classrooms.

Advantages:

- increased flexibility
- increased choice of materials

Disadvantages:

- lack of interaction with teacher and students
- difficulty with motivation and discipline
- IT problems

Conclusion:

- Online courses offer students more choice and flexibility, but are more impersonal.
- Language is about communication, so face-to-face interaction with people in a classroom is a better way to learn.
- Online courses might be a good way to supplement your learning.

C Look at the essay one student wrote. They forgot to use any discourse markers to link their ideas. Rewrite the essay, including discourse markers from the box where you see an asterisk (*).

One of the main advantages is that
Another disadvantage is The problem is that
However, (x2) In my opinion, And another thing,

With the improvement in technology, many people are now choosing to study English online, rather than in the classroom. It's easy to see that there are many advantages to online courses. * There are also disadvantages.

* When you study online, you have increased flexibility to study when you want to and where you want to. You have an increased choice of the materials you want to study, because you can choose them yourself.

* When you study online, there is a lack of interaction with your teacher and students. * You might find it difficult to stay motivated and be disciplined with your studies. * You might experience computer problems, which make your study difficult.

* Online courses offer students more choice and flexibility. * They are more impersonal. As language is about communication, face-to-face interaction with people in a classroom is a better way to learn.