

Presenting an argument

A Developing an argument: what it is about

Read these extracts from the opening paragraphs of student essays. Note the prepositions.

This essay is based on findings from recent research into cold fusion.

The arguments I shall put forward are relevant to our understanding of Newton's laws.

For the purposes of this essay, two opposing theories will be scrutinised. I shall refer to Ashbach's and Linn's work, respectively.

Many articles have been published on the subject of genetic modification of crops.

The political arguments concerning population control are beyond the scope of this essay.

The first section reviews recent literature, with reference to the arguments concerning economic policy.

B Adding points to an argument

Bad diet and high stress levels, as well as lack of exercise, are key factors in causing heart disease; on top of which there is smoking, which is one of the most damaging factors.

In addition to the questionnaire, we also conducted interviews with some of the subjects.

A further argument in support of raising the retirement age is that life expectancy is increasing. Moreover/Furthermore¹, many people enjoy working; for example / for instance², in a recent survey, 68% of people said they would like to work till they were at least 70.

¹ *moreover* is much more frequently used in academic style than *furthermore* ² *for example* is much more frequently used in academic style than *for instance*

C Qualifying: limiting and specifying an argument

Dr O'Malley is leading a class discussion on human rights.

O'Malley: OK. 'Human rights are rights which you possess simply because you are human.' To what extent can we say that? What are the pros and cons¹ of this view?

Anna: Well, I think it's too simplistic, in the sense that² it ignores the rights of victims and everyone else's right to life. So, provided that we remember this, then we can give people basic rights, albeit³ with limitations.

Kirsten: Mm, that's all very well, but⁴ if you say human rights depend on, say, government decisions about national security, then they're no longer rights, are they? They become privileges. Having said that⁵, it's a complex issue with no simple answer. Even so, I still think we must be careful not to give our rights away.

O'Malley: OK. Fine. Apart from victim's rights, are there other arguments for restricting rights? I mean we could look at protecting property, ending a chronically sick person's life, and so on / and so forth⁶. Let's talk about the degree/extent to which these are relevant.

Ricardo: Every sick person has the right to life, but at the same time we should be free to decide when we want to die.

O'Malley: Well, a lot of sick people can't make that decision for themselves, despite the fact that we may respect their right to a dignified death.

Ricardo: Hmm. Nevertheless/Nonetheless⁷, I think it's a key issue.

¹ (slightly informal) advantages and disadvantages ² used to explain precisely what has just been said ³ (formal) although ⁴ (informal, typical of spoken contexts) indicates a partial agreement, followed by a disagreement ⁵ (typical of spoken contexts) said when you wish to add a point which

contrasts with what has just been said ⁶ (typical of spoken contexts) can be used separately or together (*and so on and so forth*); can also be *et cetera* (more common in writing – *etc.*) ⁷ however; *nevertheless* is more frequent in academic style than *nonetheless*

Exercises

38.1 Fill in the prepositions in this text about the first wife of Henry VIII of England (1491–1547).

This essay examines the early life of Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536), focusing particularly the period of her brief marriage to Prince Arthur, his death at the age of 15 and her subsequent marriage his brother Prince Henry, later to become King Henry VIII of England. the purposes this essay, I shall pay little attention either the earlier or the later periods of her life. Her eventual divorce from King Henry is, thus, the scope this essay. Much more has already been written the subject this later period of her life. The literature reference the period is extensive but my essay is largely based a couple of key sources, which are particularly relevant any discussion of this period, and I shall refer these throughout.

38.2 Which word comes next in these phrases?

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 the pros and | 5 that's all very well |
| 2 at the same | 6 the extent to |
| 3 and so on and so | 7 in addition |
| 4 having said | 8 as well |

38.3 Use phrases from the box to replace phrases from the paragraph with the same meaning.

nevertheless	the degree	as well as	provided that
advantages and disadvantages	for instance	furthermore	

There are a number of pros and cons to take into account when considering the purchase of a hybrid (gasoline-electric) car. Such cars are, for example, undoubtedly better for the environment in the sense that they cause less air pollution. Moreover, the extent to which they rely on oil, a natural resource which is rapidly becoming depleted, is much less than is the case with conventional cars. Nonetheless, hybrid cars are not without their problems. Cost may be an issue and also the technical complexity of this relatively new type of engine. As long as you take these factors into account, there is no reason not to buy a hybrid car.

38.4 Choose the correct word or phrase to complete each sentence.

- She wrote an excellent essay with a certain amount of help.
A even so B albeit C despite the fact
- A point must also now be made against a change in the law.
A furthermore B respective C further
- He is a great poet his work has had a great influence on other writers.
A in the sense that B on top of which C provided that
- Let us now discuss the influence of the revolution on the rich and the poor
A say B respectively C moreover
- The riots resulted in much damage., we should not ignore the fact that the disorder brought benefits to some.
A As well as B With reference to C Having said that
- But there is a negative side to new technology. the advantages we also need to consider a number of disadvantages.
A Be that as it may B Apart from C That's all very well but