6 Discursive essay (2): taking sides

Key success factors
- constructing an argument
- sustaining your case with examples
- showing that you have considered the opposing viewpoint

ANALYSING A MODEL TEXT

a You have been asked to write the following essay:

Tourism always brings a place more harm than good.

Discuss the question with a partner. Do you think that the effect of tourism on a country, city, or region is in general more positive or more negative? Why?

Topic sentences
In a well-written essay, the first sentence of a paragraph establishes what the paragraph is going to be about. This is sometimes called the 'topic sentence'.

b Read the topic sentences below one by one and, in pairs, imagine how the paragraph will continue. Do you think the essay will be in favour of or against tourism?

A The infrastructure of an area is also often improved as a result of tourism.

B It is often claimed that popular tourist destinations are spoilt as a result of overdevelopment.

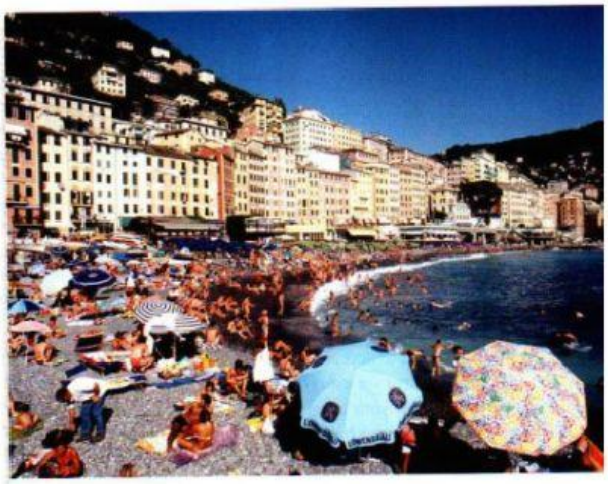
C Tourism remains one of the world's great growth industries.

D Badly behaved tourists can often be a source of annoyance for the local population.

E Another point in favour of tourism is that governments are becoming aware of the need to protect tourist areas in order to attract visitors.

F The main positive effect of tourism is on local economies and employment.

c Now read the model essay and fill the gaps with a topic sentence. There is one sentence you don't need.



Tourism always brings a place more harm than good

1 _____ People today are travelling further and further, no longer just in the summer but throughout the year. Although some people argue that mass tourism has a negative effect on destinations, in my view its influences are generally positive.

2 _____ Tourists need places to stay and things to do and this creates a wide range of skilled and unskilled jobs for local people. Holidaymakers also spend a great deal of money, which stimulates the economy of the region as well as benefiting the country as a whole.

3 _____ For example, when tourists start visiting an area, roads and public transport tend to improve, or an airport may be built, all of which benefit local people as well as tourists.

4 _____ Not only is this leading to better conservation of historic buildings and monuments in towns and cities, but also of areas of natural beauty and endangered habitats in country areas.

5 _____ For instance, many people argue that tourist development just leads to a proliferation of ugly hotels and apartment blocks. This may have been true in the past, but nowadays there are far more restrictions placed on both planners and builders to ensure that the character and architectural harmony of the place is maintained.

To sum up, I believe that tourism has, on the whole, a positive influence provided its development is properly planned and controlled. In my opinion, it is possible for both tourists and local people to benefit, and for popular tourist destinations to have a sustainable future.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

d Read each paragraph again, including the correct topic sentence. Answer the questions with a partner.

1 Where does the writer state his opinion about tourism?
2 How many arguments are given to support his view?
3 What is the purpose of paragraph 5?

Using synonyms and richer vocabulary
When you are writing an essay, remember to vary and enrich your vocabulary by using synonyms where appropriate.

e Find synonyms in the essay for the following words and expressions:

1 tourists _____ _____
2 effects _____
3 for example _____
4 to profit from _____

USEFUL LANGUAGE

f Complete the missing words in the expressions. Some (but not all) are in the model essay.

Giving personal opinions

1 I **f**_____ that...
2 I **b**_____ that...
3 In my **v**_____ the influences of tourism are generally positive.
4 In my **o**_____...
5 **P**_____, I think that...

Expressing opposite arguments

6 Some people **ar**_____...
7 It is often **cl**_____ that popular destinations are spoilt by tourism.
8 There are **th**_____ who say...

Refuting them

9 This **m**_____ **h**_____ been true in the past, but nowadays...
10 There are a number of **fl**_____ in this argument.
11 This is simply not the **c**_____.

PLANNING WHAT TO WRITE

Brainstorm the content

a Read the essay titles below. For each one, decide which side of the argument you are going to take, and think of three or four reasons.

Drivers should be charged for using motorways and roads linking major towns and cities.

Marrying someone from a different country will always be more problematic than marrying someone from your own country.

b Compare with a partner. Decide which you think are the three most important reasons. Decide if there are any typical opposing arguments which you could refute.

c Choose which of the essays you are going to write. Write topic sentences for the main paragraphs. Show your topic sentences to a partner and see if you can improve each other's sentences.

TIPS for writing a discursive essay where you take one side of an argument

- Organize your essay into paragraphs, with a clear introduction and conclusion (see page 64).
- Begin each paragraph with a clear topic sentence and then develop the idea.
- Use synonyms to avoid repeating yourself.
- Use a variety of phrases for giving your opinion, or introducing an opposing argument and refuting it.

WRITING

You are going to write one of the essays above. It should be approximately 250 words.

DRAFT your essay in four paragraphs:

- an introductory paragraph where you introduce the topic and state your opinion.
- three or four paragraphs giving your reasons.
- if relevant, a paragraph stating a common counter argument(s), and refuting it (them).
- a conclusion, stating what your arguments have shown.

EDIT the essay, making sure your arguments link together and making sure it is the right length

CHECK the essay for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation and register.

LIVEWORKSHEETS