O'level

Foundation

Week 13

The Write Tribe

DISCURSIVE WRITING:

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What is the difference between discursive and argumentative essays?

Discursive Compositions	Argumentative Compositions
The questions end with "Discuss".	Questions end with "Do you agree?" Alternative, they might compel writers to make a stand through the use of absolute terms such as "alway", "definitely" etc.
Focus is on explaining one's perspectives and thoughts.	Focus is on making a stand on an argument and providing elaboration and examples to reinforce this stand.
Writing is often balanced, with arguments on both sides of the issue.	Writing is often inclined towards the writer's stand and often offers a counter argument, of which it is often rebutted.
Focus is more on the expression and clarity of the writers' thoughts and perspectives.	Focus is more on being persuasive, convincing the readers to the writers' point of view.

Types of Discursive essay questions?

Discursive essays:

The ideal goal.

"Life is not fair." Discuss.

"Kindness begets kindness." What are your ***views***?

What are your thoughts on introducing ebooks to the young?

What are the possible solutions to eliminate or reduce haze in Singapore?

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Types of Argumentative essay questions?

"Teachers should always trust their students." Do you agree?

"Teenagers should be closely supervised by their parents." Do you agree?

Are children from rich families ***always*** happier than those from impoverished families?

Is technology ***definitely*** beneficial to the young?

(*Note: the third and fourth questions above use "absolute terms" such as "always" and "definitely" to compel writers to write only in a specific direction reinforcing a specific stand.And because it needs to be persuasive, these are argumentative questions, and not discursive questions.*)

Up till this point, one can observe that discursive and argumentative essays can easily be differentiated with markers such as "discuss", "what are your views", "do you agree" etc.

However, sometimes, the questions cannot be differentiated into discursive and argumentative writing that easily.

For example, consider the following questions:

1. Are leaders born or nurtured?

2. Is it necessary to control the media?

3, Are experiences on a job more important than paper qualifications?

4. Is youth an advantage or disadvantage?

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5. Is it better to have one long school vacation than to have a few short ones?

For the five questions above, students have the flexibility to write a discursive essay stating both sides of the arguments, or an argumentative essay with strong emphasise on the students' stand.

As to which is a better choice, it is actually a personal choice of students, assuming that they have the ability to write both types of writing well.

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Format of Discursive Essays

The baseline difference between Argumentative and Discursive is innate to definition. As the terms imply, an argumentative essay requires you to argue towards an explicit stand. Its individual points and structure revolve around putting across and strengthening this stand to convince the reader. Discursive, on the other hand, requires you to discuss an issue as is, primarily to educate the reader. Thus, there isn't a need to take an explicit stand or frame its points towards one.
It is important to distinguish this main difference between the two early-on; missing the purpose of the text type causes our writing to go haywire and become severely penalized.

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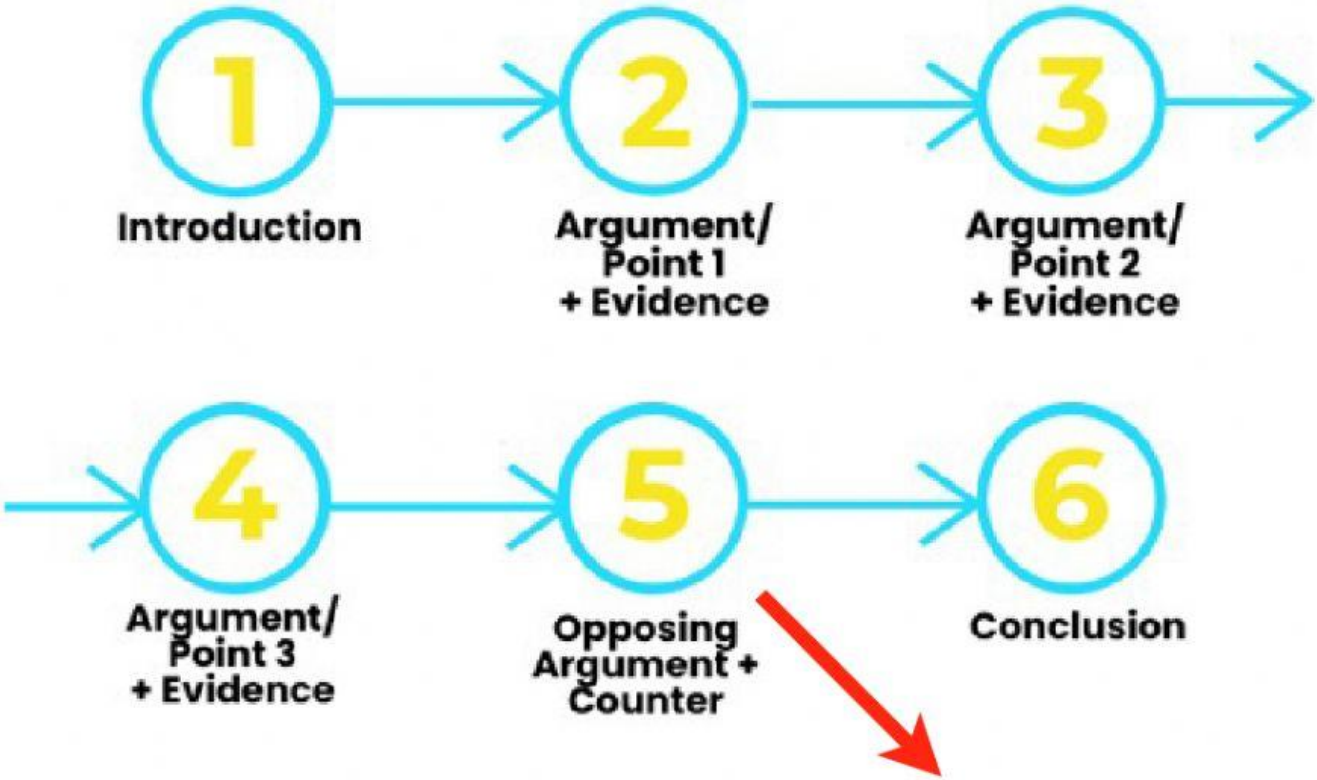
Discursive Essay Structure



Most important element of discursive is to dedicate an entire paragraph for a counter argument.

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