

# Writing A 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 does 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 usually establishes what the paragraph is going to be about. This is sometimes called the 'topic sentence'.

- b In pairs, read each topic sentence below and 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 spoiled as a result of over-development.

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

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

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

- c Now read the model essay and match topic sentences A–E to paragraphs 1–5.




## Tourism always does a place more harm than good

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ People today are travelling further and further, not only 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 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 \_\_\_\_\_ This is leading to better conservation not only of areas of natural beauty and endangered habitats in rural areas, but also of historic buildings and monuments in towns and cities.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ For instance, many people argue that tourist development results in ugly hotels and apartment blocks. This may have been true in the past, but nowadays developers recognize that new buildings should blend in with old ones and should not change the character of a place.
- 6 To sum up, I believe that, on the whole, tourism has a positive influence provided its development is properly planned and controlled. Tourist destinations have a lot to gain from visitors and the business they bring. In my opinion, it is possible for both tourists and local people to benefit and for popular tourist destinations to have a sustainable future.

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

- 1 Where does the writer state his overall 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 in general \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### USEFUL LANGUAGE

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

#### Giving personal opinions

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

#### Introducing opposite arguments

- 6 Some / Many people **ar** \_\_\_\_\_...
- 7 It is often **cl** \_\_\_\_\_ **that** popular destinations are spoiled by tourism.
- 8 There are **th** \_\_\_\_\_ who say...

#### Refuting them

- 9 This **m** \_\_\_\_\_ **h** \_\_\_\_\_ been true in the past, but **n** \_\_\_\_\_...
- 10 There are a number of **fl** \_\_\_\_\_ in this argument.
- 11 That is simply not the **c** \_\_\_\_\_.

## PLANNING WHAT TO WRITE

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 with examples.

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

**Our lifestyles are less healthy than our grandparents'.**

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

c Choose which of the essays you are going to write. Decide on the main paragraphs and write topic sentences for each one. 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 p.118).
- 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 and introducing an opposing argument and refuting it.

## WRITING

Write an essay of between 200 and 250 words on one of the topics above.

**DRAFT** your essay.

- Introduction: Introduce the topic and state your opinion.
- Main argument: Write two or three paragraphs giving your reasons.
- Opposing arguments: Write a paragraph stating one or more common opposing arguments and refuting each one.
- Conclusion: Sum up, stating what your arguments have shown.

**EDIT** the essay, making sure you've covered the main points, cutting any irrelevant information, and making sure it is the right length.

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

◀ p.79