

Lesson Six**Persuasion****Aims**

The aims of this lesson are to enable you to

- master skills needed to present a detailed argument
- link one idea to another
- choose between different methods of linking and select appropriate vocabulary
- distinguish between alternative forms of written English

Context

This is the first of a number of lessons which will develop your skills in construction and writing argumentative essays. This is a vital part of your English course and should prove valuable for any other study you undertake, whether arts, social studies, or sciences. If you find these lessons easy, it is an encouraging indication of how much you already know!



Oxford Open Learning

Expressing a Point of View

Writing and understanding material which expresses a point of view or opinion, or presents an argument, involves a specific series of skills. You almost certainly have a full passive knowledge of most of these skills, in particular punctuation, vocabulary and syntax (the way sentences are organised); but one purpose of these lessons is to marshal your knowledge, to enable you to use it actively and confidently in the form required by the examination.

Each written form (e.g. essays, letters, reports, articles, play scripts) in English has its own rules and accepted techniques, and your study will ensure that you use these rules and techniques appropriately.

Linking Ideas Together

In any writing that discusses or argues a case, one set of basic 'building blocks' is words that link ideas together into one sentence.

Activity 1

Read these two sentences. What is the connection between them? Can you think of any words to join them?

- (A) You can see through glass.
- (B) Glass is used for windows.



Adding Reasons

When something is written to persuade a reader, it is often supported with reasons. Sentence B is a result of sentence A, and this can be shown by joining them in one of these ways:

A ... so/therefore/hence ... B

Now try doing the same with these two sentences (they are slightly different):

- C Copper is used for electric wires.
- D Copper conducts well.

Sentence D is a reason for sentence C, and this can be shown by joining them.

C ... because/since/as ... D

Notes:

- (i) When you use 'therefore', always put a comma or a full stop before and after it.
- (ii) Repeated nouns are replaced by pronouns in linked sentences (it, they, etc.)

You can see through glass, *therefore*, it is used for windows.

Activity 2

Join the following groups of facts together into a paragraph, using relative clauses (who, which, where, that) and connecting words; each group should form *one* sentence.

1. Seawater cannot be drunk.
2. Seawater contains too much salt.
3. Seawater has to be desalinated.

4. In the Middle East there are many desalination plants.
5. In the Middle East there is a shortage of fresh water.
6. Desalination plants are factories for changing salt water into drinking water.

7. At present these plants use oil.
8. Oil is plentiful in the area.

9. In the future they may use the sun's power.
10. Solar power is equally plentiful and free.



Suggested Answers to Activity Two

- 1 - 3 Seawater cannot be drunk *because* it contains too much salt, and has to be desalinated.
- 4 - 6 *Since* there is a shortage of fresh water in the Middle East, there are many desalination plants, *which* are factories for changing salt water into drinking water.
- 7 - 8 At present these plants use oil *which* is plentiful in the area.
- 9 - 10 In the future they may use the sun's power *because* it is equally plentiful and free.

Qualification

The second main way of linking statements is by Qualification, which is something that you often do in discussion essays. You need to do this when the second statement in a sentence comes unexpectedly after the first:

e.g. 'Women are not inferior to men, **but** many men do not treat them as equals.'

'Although', 'but' and 'however' are the three connecting words to qualify a statement.

Activity 3

Link a statement in the first column with a qualification from the second column (remember to use pronouns).

1. The sea contains a lot of gold.
2. All the world's oil will soon be exhausted
3. Nuclear power can be used to make electricity
4. Where there is inflation people's wages rise

People can buy less

Many people are against using nuclear power

We are not trying hard enough to find new sources of energy

The gold is not easy to recover



Suggested Answer to Activity Three

1. The sea contains a lot of gold *but* it is not easy to recover.
2. All the world's oil will soon be exhausted; *however*, we are not trying hard enough to find new sources of energy.
3. Nuclear power can be used to make electricity, *although* many people are against using it.
4. Where there is inflation people's wages rise *but* they can buy less.

Supporting a Qualification

You have studied two ways of linking ideas, to help readers find a new way through a piece of discursive or argumentative writing, and to understand it is the intended way.

It is also important in an essay that you support a qualification with a reason, to answer the reader's question 'Why?'

e.g. 'Women are not inferior to men, but many men do not treat them as equals *because they have adopted the prejudices of their society and upbringing.*'

Activity 4

Go back to your answer for Activity Two and add a reason to each sentence that you wrote.



Suggested Answers to Activity Four

1. The sea contains a lot of gold but it is not easy to recover because there is only a minuscule amount of gold compared with the water and other chemicals.
2. All the world's oil will soon be exhausted. However, we are not trying hard enough to find new sources of energy because it is easier and cheaper to continue using oil.
3. Nuclear power can be used to make electricity, although many people are against using it because they are worried that what happened at Chernobyl could happen again.
4. Where there is inflation people's wages rise but they can buy less because prices rise faster.

Activity 5

Look at the notes below which are for a short essay discussing the good and bad sides of modern farming.

Use each numbered group of notes to make your own short paragraph about the problems of modern farming.

1. insecticides and chemicals, used to kill insects which damage crops, can also affect wild birds and animals.
2. fertilisers = chemicals added to soil for plant food, don't improve quality of soil, may kill soil-producing organisms.
3. steroids = drugs used to make animals give more meat, less fat may affect meat-eating humans.
4. mechanisation = use of more machines has led to higher output, few jobs on the land.



- | | | | |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 2. | a. Secondly | b. But | c. Although |
| 3. | a. for example | b. Such as | c. namely |
| 4. | a. because of | b. although | c. since |
| 5. | a. even | b. for instance | c. on the other hand |
| 6. | a. Secondly | b. Thirdly | c. In that case |
| 7. | a. because | b. so | c. after |
| 8. | a. Besides | b. For example | c. However |
| 9. | a. By the way | b. Lastly | c. However |
| 10. | a. though | b. since | c. after |
| 11. | a. Thirdly | b. Also | c. For instance |
| 12. | a. so | b. instead | c. even |
| 13. | a. although | b. nevertheless | c. but |
| 14. | a. although | b. though | c. even though |

The answers are to be found at the end of the lesson.



Selecting and Ordering Ideas

Activity 7

What follows are notes for a short essay on the pros and cons of a new private school opening in your neighbourhood as soon as it has been built. Your task is to select which points to include (*not* all of them); group these into paragraphs; write each paragraph using suitable linking words and phrases. Finally, write suitable introductory and concluding paragraphs.

The school will teach all the main arts and science subjects. It is planned to open three years from now.

It will be a large school.

The expected first year's intake of pupils is 180.

Pupils are expected to come from all parts of the country, mainly to board at the school.

Many local councillors are opposed to the school.

The school plans to offer places for children from local families with low incomes.

The fees for attending the school are expected to be very high.

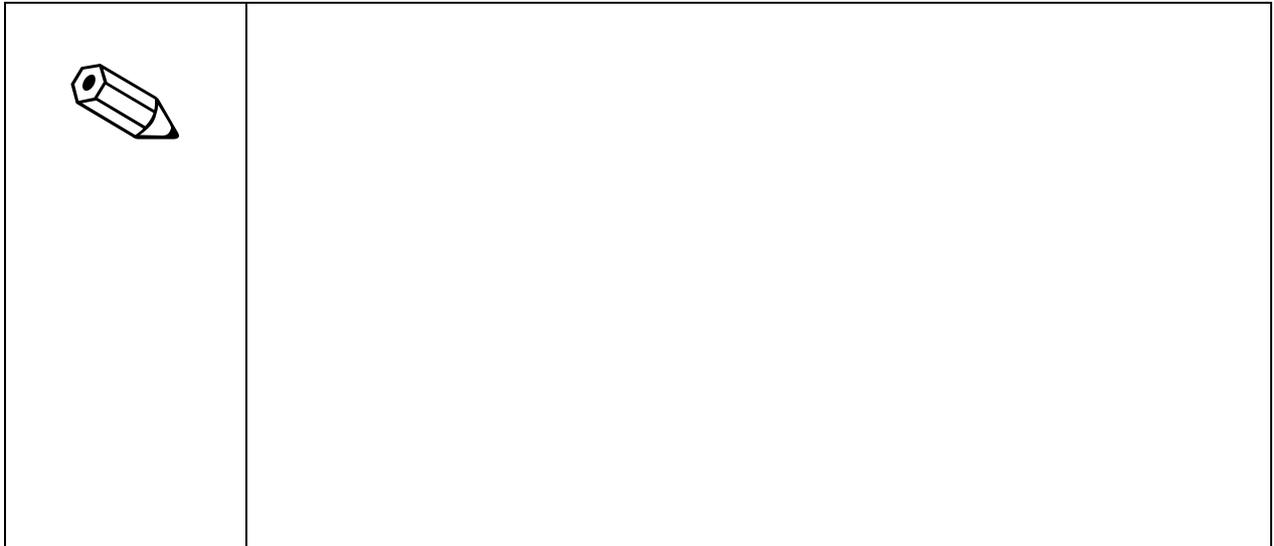
Building the school should provide many local jobs in a depressed area.

The government is strongly in favour of new private schools opening, to offer wider choice for parents.

Any jobs created to build the site will only be temporary.

Some local parents are worried that the best teachers from the state school may be attracted away to this new school.





Suggested Answers to Activity Seven

There are plans to build a large new private school in the neighbourhood. This would affect our local community in a number of ways, so it is important to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the scheme now before a final decision is made.

In the three years it is expected to take before the school is ready to open its doors to a projected first year intake of 180, there are obvious short-term advantages. Building the school should provide many local jobs in a depressed area. But it is important to note that such jobs would only be temporary.

What about the school itself? The government is strongly in favour of new private schools opening because this will create a wider choice for parents. The school plans to offer places for children from local families with low incomes, although the fees for boarding pupils arriving from other parts of the country are generally expected to be very high.

Many local councillors are opposed to the school and some local parents are worried that the best teachers from the state school may be attracted away to this new school.

If it is genuinely true that children from local low income families will be given free places, it would seem churlish to oppose the scheme. But supporters of the existing state system are bound to feel that any new private school will take away the cream and leave the remainder for a debased comprehensive school.

Vocabulary

Below are sentences containing phrases and words which are useful in discursive writing – they have been fitted into an explanation of their normal uses:

- *At first sight* (or *On the face of it*) these exercises may seem unnecessary, *but in fact* they are essential to the development of an argument in good modern English.
- They are *apparently* not needed, but are *really* (or *actually*) essential.
- You can also use *the fact is that* or *as a matter of fact* (used for a surprising idea).
- *In practice* is normally used in contrast to *in theory* (or *in principle*).
- *In effect* means almost the same as *in fact* (or *to all intents and purposes*).
- *Indeed* can be used with the meaning of *in fact*, but to continue a previous statement.
e.g. We expected bad weather, and *indeed* we were right to think so.

Summary

The ability to construct an effective argument is one of the hallmarks of a good candidate in English. While interesting ideas are important, it is the way these ideas are linked together and developed which will make all the difference. Using linking words and phrases effectively helps you become aware of how your own argument is developing. The basic linking practice in this lesson will stand you in good stead for the more complex exercises that follow.

Suggested Answers to Activity Six

The most suitable words or phrases for each space would have been as follows:

- 1.b. 2.c. 3.c. 4.c. 5.a. 6.a. 7.b. 8.b. 9.c. 10. b. 11.a. 12.a.
13. c. 14. b.