MASTER IELTS ESSAYS

SUPER INTENSIVE COURSE

Argument & Advantages/Disadvantages Essays

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Review: Argument and Advantages/Disadvantages Essays

- Course pamphlet: pages 12-14
- IDP file on question types *(click here to download)*: page 3
- These slides and the Cambridge samples they refer to

Argument Essays

- **Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.**
- **Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?**

- **Apple and Apple:** Some people think that more money should be spent to promote the use of bicycles in cities. Others, however, believe that ***bicycle is not an appropriate means of transport for urban environments.***
  Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

- **Apple and Orange:** Some people think that more money should be spent to promote the use of bicycles in cities. Others, however, believe that ***cities should focus on investing in public transport systems.***
  Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Apple & Apple: Some people agree with A, while others disagree with A

Some people believe that it is better for students at university to live faraway from home than to live at home with their parents. Others think students should not study at universities that are far from their hometowns. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.	
Side 1: good	**Side 2: bad**
1. Independent: have to do everything on their own e.g. cook, clean, pay bills → learn to take responsibility for their own lives **2. Teamwork:** live together in dormitories → live and study together → better for their work lives and careers	**1. Depression:** far from the emotional support of their families → feel lonely → may even kill themselves **2. Higher expenses:** travel to other cities/countries, rent or dormitory costs, their own bills, food and groceries → cannot save money ***REFUTE:*** *find friends → get support from them & governments and universities usually give financial support to students*

Apple & Orange: Some people agree with A, while others agree with B

Some people believe that it is better for students at university to live far away from home than to live at home with their parents. Others think students should study at universities in or close to their hometowns. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.	
Side 1: far away from home	**Side 2: close to home**
1. Independent: have to do everything on their own e.g. cook, clean, pay bills → learn to take responsibility for their own lives **2. Teamwork:** live together in dormitories → live and study together → better for their work lives and careers ***REFUTE:*** *can become independent in other ways e.g. getting married & learn teamwork at school too → no need to learn it at university again*	**1. Better emotional support:** their families take care of them, talk all the time, see them → never feel lonely → do not suffer from depression **2. Lower expenses:** do not have to travel to other cities/countries, do not pay rent or dormitory costs, do not pay for their own bills, food and groceries → can save money & focus more on their studies rather than work

Adv./Disadv. Essays: Opinion vs. Discussion

1

Being a celebrity – such as a famous film star or sports personality – brings problems as well as benefits.

Do you think that being a celebrity brings more benefits or more problems?

Some experts believe that it is better for children to begin learning a foreign language at primary school rather than secondary school.

Do the advantages of this outweigh the disadvantages?

2

Some parents buy their children a large number of toys to play with.

What are the advantages and disadvantages for the child of having a large number of toys?

In some cultures, children are often told that they can achieve anything if they try hard enough.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of giving children this message?

Advantages/Disadvantages

1. **Always plural!**
   → minimum 2 advantages & 2 disadvantages

2. **Does it ask which side outweighs the other?**

   - **Yes:**
     refutation/discussion → take a side/define middle view

   - **No:**
     - **Approach A:** refutation or discussion → take a side/define middle view
     - **Approach B:** just sum up and leave the essay open-ended
       (e.g. Book 10, GT test B)

IDP Notes

- Make sure your response provides a clear support to each of the 2 views given in the main topic. This does not mean that you must write exactly the same amount of text about both, but the discussion should be balanced overall.
- Make sure the 2 views are discussed in separate parts of the response, i.e. that one paragraph does not mix the two views.
- Your own opinion must be stated clearly in the response. The prompt does not specify that your opinion must come at the end of the response. That can be done, but it is also possible to pre-view your own position at the beginning and then re-state it at the end.
- Notice that the prompt mentions both ‘disadvantages’ and ‘advantages’. Make sure your response also addresses both. It is understandable that if the writer has a strong opinion in one direction, a larger part of the response will discuss that view (e.g. advantages); however, some discussion of the opposite (e.g. disadvantages) should be included.
- You can present a very strong position (e.g. ‘we can say that international tourism has noticeably more benefits than disadvantages’) or a more nuanced view where you describe how the issue works in different situations. In either case, it is a good idea to express your view early on in the response as this will help the reader to follow the position through the rest of the essay.

Source: IDP Writing Task 2: Question Types (PDF) © 2008 IDP IELTS

Some experts believe that it is better for children to begin learning a foreign language at primary school rather than secondary school.
Do the advantages of this outweigh the disadvantages? (Cambridge IELTS 9, Test 1)

Traditionally, children have begun studying foreign languages at secondary school, but introducing them earlier is recommended by some educationalists. This policy has been adopted by some educational authorities or individual schools, with both positive and negative outcomes.

The obvious argument in its favour is that young children pick up languages much more easily than teenagers. Their brains are still programmed to acquire their mother tongue, which facilitates learning another language, and unlike adolescents, they are not inhibited by self-consciousness.

The greater flexibility of the primary timetable allows for more frequent, shorter sessions and for a play-centred approach, thus maintaining learners' enthusiasm and progress. Their command of the language in later life will benefit from this early exposure, while learning other languages subsequently will be easier for them. They may also gain a better understanding of other cultures.

There are, however, some disadvantages. Primary school teachers are generalists, and may not have the necessary language skills themselves. If specialists have to be brought in to deliver these sessions, the flexibility referred to above is diminished. If primary language teaching is not standardised, secondary schools could be faced with a great variety of levels in different languages within their intake, resulting in a classroom experience which undoes the earlier gains. There is no advantage if enthusiastic primary pupils become demotivated as soon as they change schools. However, these issues can be addressed strategically within the policy adopted.

Anything which encourages language learning benefits society culturally and economically, and early exposure to language learning contributes to this. Young children's innate abilities should be harnessed to make these benefits more achievable.

Some parents buy their children a large number of toys.
What are the advantages and disadvantages for the child of having a large number of toys? (Cambridge IELTS 10, Test B)

It is true that many parents purchase a multitude of playthings for their offspring. Whether or not this is a good thing for the child, is a moot point. On the face of it the advantages seem most apparent, but could there be a downside to this phenomenon of devoted parenting as well?

Most people would consider children who have many toys to be the fortunate ones. Interesting things to play with stimulate many positives in the young boy or girl, such as optimum brain development, hand-eye coordination and colour recognition, apart from the simple joy of playing. Modern toys are designed to be educational as well as fun, and concerned parents carefully select products which might speed their child's acquisition of numbers or the alphabet.

Is it possible that owning multiple toys could be in any way detrimental to a child? This is an unusual question, but there are some hidden pitfalls. For one, wealthy parents might spoil their son or daughter by showering him/her with toys, resulting in a negative effect on the child's character. For another, a growing child's concentration span may suffer if they are constantly surrounded by too many tempting objects, so that they become unable to focus on any one game for a decent length of time before being distracted. On the social side, older children may become targets of envy from classmates, if they are perceived as having far more possessions than their peers. Finally, the majority of toys today are made of plastic which commonly contains the chemical BPA, proven to be dangerous for infants to suck on or ingest.

It is clear then that this situation is not as straightforward as it first appears. It would seem that one of the many duties of parents is to make an informed choice about how many toys they buy for their young ones.

Being a celebrity – such as a film star or star sports personality- brings problems as well as benefits. Do you think being a celebrity brings more benefits or more problems? (Cambridge IELTS 9, GT Test A)

Nowadays, many people, especially the youth, wishfully seek a way of becoming famous in fields such as entertainment or sports. It is, however, important to consider the benefits and drawbacks beforehand.

Most celebrities are relatively well paid, thanks to the advertising royalties they are offered by businesses that exploit the public interest in their Instagram pages and photographs. This allows them to buy sports cars and large mansions, send their children to the best private schools, and travel frequently. Furthermore, many rules and regulations are overlooked or eased for celebrities. Many get away with speeding in highways with a simple warning and a selfie with the officer, or do not have to stand in long queues to board their flights.

There are, however, some disadvantages to fame. **In many places, celebrities are asked to meet various behavioral and social expectations** that often make their lives quite difficult. Most people seek role models in celebrities, expecting a soccer star, for instance, to be as good a father as possible for his children or a beautiful actress to have a sound and happy relationship with her partner. This judgmental outlook adds significant stress and anxiety to the lives of celebrities, sometimes pushing them to the brink of insanity. They are also constantly deprived of their privacy, as they are exposed to and scrutinised by the mass media, journalists and paparazzi who try to capture every second of their lives for the entertainment and enjoyment of the curious public.

I think luxury lifestyles and legal flexibilities are available to almost anyone who works hard to build a career and lives life as a good citizen, and the downsides of being famous outweigh those benefits. The expectations that celebrities are supposed to meet and their lack of privacy are not acceptable to me.

By Ebrahim Tahassoni (based on original ideas by one of my students whose name I have forgotten unfortunately)

Development and Position

Some people think that more money should be spent to promote the use of bicycles in cities. Others, however, believe that bicycle is not an appropriate means of transport for urban environments. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.	
Side 1: good	**Side 2: bad**
1. Eco-friendly: do not consume fuel → no emissions → less air pollution **2. Healthier:** cycling is a form of exercise: good for citizens with desk jobs and sedentary lifestyles	**1. Bad for those living far from their workplaces/schools:** cities are large→ distance can be considerable → takes too much time + sweaty and tired **2. Not appropriate for the climate and geographical conditions of many cities:** rain and snow/hot and sunny: difficult to cycle + mountainous areas→ too steep → difficult or even dangerous to cycle

Argument Essay Outlines

Approach A (Academic and GT):

Middle View: Depends on the topic of the task and your main ideas.

Strong View: See which side can be refuted. That side will be the one you disagree with.

Introduction: introduce the topic and the debate *(you may give or avoid giving your opinion here)*

Body 1: Two points for the first side

Body 2: Two points for the second side

Conclusion: *[refutation of the ideas given for one side if you disagree with it]* Your opinion + *[summary of relevant reasons]*

Argument Essay Outlines

Approach B (GT Only):

You may take one side using your personal experience *(e.g. Book 8, test B and Book 9, test B)*.

Introduction: introduce the topic and the debate (you may give or avoid giving your opinion here)

Body 1: Two points for the first side

Body 2: Two points for the second side

Conclusion: Say that both sides have merits but show how your personal experience leads you to agree more with one of the two sides (See the answers for Book 8, test B and Book 9, test B)

Argument Tasks: Brainstorming Practice

Many companies sponsor sports as a way of advertising themselves. Some people think this is good for the world of sports, while others think it is a negative.
Discuss both these views and give your own opinion. (IELTS, Aug. 2020)

Positive	Negative