

COURSE IN EXPOSITORY WRITING

Unit 4. Addressing opposing views

Lesson 4a



Imagine you are going to a meeting of your class committee. The meeting is discussing the end-of-year class party – where it will be held and whether it is to be formal or informal. You hope that the other students will listen to your suggestions, see your point of view and do some of the things you suggest. Before you go to the meeting, you would prepare yourself like this:

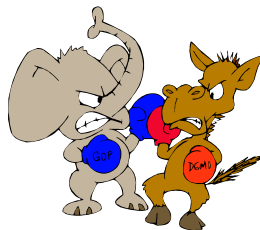
- Think ahead; **anticipate** objections, questions and opposing views (*A party in a hotel? What will it cost? / Too expensive / A party in the school hall is better because...*)
- Plan how to **address** (answer) the objections and questions (*Yes, a bit expensive, but we can raise the money by...It is not expensive if you think of the experience...*)

We do the same in essay writing. Teachers and examiners think an essay is good if the student addresses the reader's questions, objections and opposing arguments. In this unit, you will learn how to:



- Anticipate points of view that challenge your position in the essay.
- Answer the challenge without giving up your position.

First, we will study how writers do it.



Activity 4.1 Deconstruction

Social situation: Singaporeans are talking about whether a casino should be built in Singapore. The writer of Text 4A joins in the discussion by writing a letter to *The Straits Times*.

Questions 1 and 2 help you to learn from the writer of Text 4A how to deal with views opposite to your own position. Work in a group on either question 1, 2 or 3.

Read the question, then the writer's goal, and then the relevant paragraphs of Text 4A.

Questions start on the next page.

Activity 4.1 Question 1

1(a) Before we counter an opposing view, we must first tell R (the reader) what it is. In Paragraph 2, which sentences tell R the opposing view? (Hint: First, find out the Text 4A writer’s own view; read her goal statement in the box at the end of Q1.)

(b) In the sentences you found in 1(a), look for the words that mean: “*This is not my view; this is what others believe.*” Fill in this table:

| Find the words | Words |
|---|-------|
| That refer to the people who hold the opposing view | |
| That introduce/report the opposing view (verbs) | |

(c) Which sentences in Paragraphs 2 and 3 counter the opposing view? Study these sentences and do the tasks below to complete the table.

| | |
|--|--|
| Look in Paragraph 3 for present tense verbs that W (the writer) uses to say: <i>I know this is true.</i> | |
| In Paragraph 3, a modal that W uses to say: <i>This is a possible event that I feel sure about.</i> | |
| In Paragraph 2, the part of a sentence where W partly concedes the opposing view. (<i>Concede</i> means to say: <i>Okay, you’re right/maybe you’re right.</i>) | |
| The part of a sentence where W asserts (says again) her position. | |

Paragraphs 2 and 3 (The whole text is on page 6.)

2. ⁴Advocates of the casino argue that gambling is already prevalent in Singapore. ⁵They say that Singaporeans are already gambling on the internet, betting on 4-D, and going on gambling cruises to nowhere. ⁶This may be true but, surely, there is no need to add to the harmful activities.

3. ⁷Our social services are struggling to cope with the number of gambling

addicts and their suffering families. ⁸A casino will make the problem worse. ⁹More families will break up because the bread winner has gambled away the money meant for paying for food and the children’s education. ¹⁰We do not need more ruined families; we do not need a casino.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Writer’s goal in Text 4A: | To argue that a casino may bring social harm rather than economic benefit to Singapore. |
|---------------------------|---|

Activity 4.1 Question 2

2(a) Before we counter an opposing view, we must first tell R (the reader) what it is. In Paragraph 4, which sentences tell R the opposing view? (Hint: First, find out the Text 4A writer’s own view; read her goal statement in the box at the end of Q2.)

(b) In the sentences you found in 2(a), look for the words that mean: “*This is not my view; this is what others believe.*” Fill in this table:

| Find the word(s) | Words |
|---|-------|
| That refer to the people who hold the opposing view | |
| That introduce/report the opposing view (verbs) | |

(c) Which sentences in Paragraphs 4 and 5 counter the opposing view? Study these sentences and do the tasks below to complete the table.

| | |
|---|--|
| Look in Paragraph 5 for past tense verbs that W uses to say: <i>This past event is a fact that proves my point.</i> | |
| In Paragraphs 4 & 5, two modals that W uses to say: 1. <i>This is a possible event</i> and 2. <i>I feel very sure about this happening.</i> | |
| In Paragraph 4, the word telling R that W has finished stating the opposing view and is about to start disagreeing with it. | |
| The part of a sentence where W asserts (says again) her position (Para 4 & 5). | |

Paragraphs 4 and 5 (The whole text is on page 6)

4. ¹¹People who support the casino proposal also argue that a casino would bring economic benefits to Singapore. ¹²More tourists would come to Singapore and more jobs would be created. ¹³However, the experience of some American cities tells us that the economic benefits may not happen.

5. ¹⁴Some cities in the United States built casinos to ape the Las Vegas model of success. ¹⁵They found that spending

was diverted from existing places of entertainment to the casinos. ¹⁶Cinemas and restaurants earned less because people were flocking to the casinos. ¹⁷Existing entertainment and tourist attractions in Singapore may suffer the same fate if a casino is built. ¹⁸There will be no economic benefit if existing places of entertainment stop attracting people, close down, and workers lose their jobs.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Writer’s goal in Text 4A: | To argue that a casino may bring social harm rather than economic benefit to Singapore. |
|---------------------------|---|

Activity 4.1 Question 3

(a) Study Paragraphs 3 and 5. Look for words that show W doing these acts:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Para 3 Paint undesirable results of opposing position (<i>Let's have the casino; Singaporeans already gambling</i>)</p> | <p>[Write words here in the group's worksheet]</p> |
| <p>Para 5 Based on past experience, imagine or predict undesirable results of opposing position.</p> | |

(b) In Paragraphs 3 and 5, W argues against or counters the opposing view. What countering strategy is W using in each paragraph?

- A. The facts say you're wrong.
- B. If we take your position, bad things *will* happen.
- C. You can't trust the source (person/book/website that says opposing view).
- D. Imagine the bad things that could possibly happen.
- E. Yes, but it's not important/relevant in our situation.

Paragraphs 3 and 5 (The whole text is on page 6)

3. ⁷Our social services are struggling to cope with the number of gambling addicts and their suffering families. ⁸A casino will make the problem worse. ⁹More families will break up because the bread winner has gambled away the money meant for paying for food and the children's education. ¹⁰We do not need more ruined families; we do not need a casino.

(Para 4)

5. ¹⁴Some cities in the United States built casinos to ape the Las Vegas model of success. ¹⁵They found that spending was diverted from existing places of entertainment to the casinos. ¹⁶Cinemas and restaurants earned less because people were flocking to the casinos. ¹⁷Existing entertainment and tourist attractions in Singapore may suffer the same fate if a casino is built. ¹⁸There will be no economic benefit if existing places of entertainment stop attracting people, close down, and workers lose their jobs.

Writer's goal in Text 4A: To argue that a casino may bring social harm rather than economic benefit to Singapore.



Text 4A

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Writer's goal in Text 4A: | To argue that a casino may bring social harm rather than economic benefit to Singapore. |
|---------------------------|---|



A casino for Singapore?

1. ¹Many letters on the casino debate have appeared in the *Forum* in the past few weeks. ²A number have argued in support of setting up a casino in Singapore. ³I find their arguments flawed.

2. ⁴Advocates of the casino argue that gambling is already prevalent in Singapore. ⁵They say that Singaporeans are already gambling on the internet, betting on 4-D, and going on gambling cruises to nowhere. ⁶This may be true but, surely, there is no need to add to the harmful activities?

3. ⁷Our social services are struggling to cope with the number of gambling addicts and their suffering families. ⁸A casino will make the problem worse. ⁹More families will break up because the bread winner has gambled away the money meant for paying for food and the children's

education. ¹⁰We do not need more ruined families; we do not need a casino.

4. ¹¹People who support the casino proposal also argue that a casino would bring economic benefits to Singapore. ¹²More tourists would come to Singapore and more jobs would be created. ¹³However, the experience of some American cities tells us that the economic benefits may not happen.

5. ¹⁴Some cities in the United States built casinos to ape the Las Vegas model of success. ¹⁵They found that spending was diverted from existing places of entertainment to the casinos. ¹⁶Cinemas and restaurants earned less because people were flocking to the casinos. ¹⁷Existing entertainment and tourist attractions in Singapore may suffer the same fate if a casino is built. ¹⁸There will be no economic benefit if existing places of entertainment stop attracting people, close down, and workers lose their jobs.

(Adapted from various letters from *The Straits Times* Forum page.)



Activity 4.2 Anticipate, counter

Your group of 6 students will work on one of the two social situations below.

Situation 1 for Teen Inspiration

Situation: A TV station is selecting a celebrity to be Singapore’s Teen Inspiration. The person selected will be a role model for young Singaporeans 13 to 20 years of age. He/she will be given a wardrobe of designer clothes and \$100, 000 to appear in advertisements aimed at teenagers. He/she will go round schools and colleges to talk to young people. Celebrities are to apply to the Selection Committee and convince the Committee that they are the best choice for Teen Inspiration.






Your group’s role: You are the agent for (fill in your celebrity’s name here). You are writing to the Selection Committee to propose that your celebrity should be Teen Inspiration.

Group’s goal: Convince the selection committee that is the most suitable person for Teen Inspiration.

Task 1: Anticipate objection

1. As a group: Divide your group into 3 pairs of students. Choose 3 persons from the Selection Committee below. Each pair of students takes on the role of one of these persons.
2. Each pair of students: Get into role. Feel and think like this person. Anticipate how this person will object to the proposed celebrity. Note down all the objections you can think of. Choose the most important or most likely objection to present to your group.

Selection Committee members

| | |
|---|--|
|  <p>School principal</p> |  <p>Parent</p> |
|  <p>Student</p> |  <p>Sports personality</p> |
|  <p>Officer from the Ministry of Community Development</p> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> ? </div> <p>Your choice of role</p> |

Task 2: Plan counter-argument

1. Pairs of students speak in their role: Each committee member tells the group one main objection to the proposed celebrity. Explain enough; make sure the group understands.
2. The group in the role of celebrity's agent discuss: Plan how to counter each of the three objections. Pick a countering strategy. Refer to the Appendix for help. Write down what you will say in 2 or 3 sentences.



Task 3: Presentation

1. Prepare Decide: Who in the group will play these roles –
 - 1 student as each Selection Committee member
 - 2 students, taking turns, as the celebrity's agent.
 - 1 student as stage manager. His/her job: to hold up the cards showing the group's goal and identity of Selection Committee member.

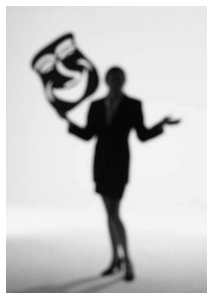
Use any props available to get into role. For example, School Principal could wear a tie.

Write the goal and roles on the cards provided (e.g. *Ronald Susilo's Agent*). Use large letters so the whole class can see. (See previous page for goal.)

2. Present Show the group's goal to the class.

Committee Member 1 says his/her objection. The celebrity's agent counters the objection. (Stage manager holds up appropriate card to tell the class who is speaking.)

Committee Member 2 presents objection. Agent counters. And so on...



Activity 4.2 Anticipate, counter

Situation 2 Girls for National Service

Situation: A woman’s organisation has proposed that Singaporean girls should do national service. The government, through its Feedback Committee, is gathering the views of citizens on the issue.







Your group’s role: You belong to GiNS (Girls for National Service), a movement of Singaporean youth, male and female, who believe that girls should do national service. You are preparing to meet the Feedback Committee.

Group’s goal: As members of the GiNS delegation, convince the government Feedback Committee why girls should be allowed to do NS.

Task 1: Anticipate objection

1. As a group: Divide your group into 3 pairs of students. Choose 3 persons from the government Feedback Committee below. Each pair of students takes on the role of one of these persons.
2. Each pair of students: Get into role. Feel and think like this person. Anticipate how this person will object to GiNS’ argument. Note down all the objections you can think of. Choose the most important or most likely objection to present to your group.

Government Feedback Committee

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>Army commander</p> |  <p>Father with daughter</p> |
|  <p>Female police officer</p> |  <p>National Service man</p> |
|  <p>19 year old girl (student)</p> |  <p>Woman doctor</p> |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> ? </div> <p>Your choice of role</p> | |

Task 2: Plan counter-argument

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Pairs of students speak in their role: | Each committee member tells the group one main objection to the position taken by GiNS. Explain enough; make sure the group understands. |
| 2. The group in the role of the GiNS delegation: | Plan how to counter each of the three objections. Pick a countering strategy. Refer to the Appendix for help. Write down what you will say in 2 or 3 sentences. |
-



Task 3: Presentation

1. Prepare Decide: Who in the group will play these roles –
- 1 student as each Feedback Committee member
 - 2 students, taking turns, as the GiNS spokesperson.
 - 1 student as stage manager. His/her job: to hold up the cards showing the group’s goal and identity of Feedback Committee member.

Use any props available to get into role. For example, NS Man could sit on an over-turned chair labelled ‘TANK’.

Write the goal and roles on the cards provided (e.g. *Doctor Emily Tan*). Use large letters so the whole class can see. (See previous page for goal.)

2. Present Show the group’s goal to the class.

Committee Member 1 says his/her objection. GiNS spokesperson counters the objection. (Stage manager holds up appropriate card to tell the class who is speaking.)

Committee Member 2 presents objection. GiNS spokesperson counters. And so on...


Lesson 4b Grammar for stating and countering opposing view

In this lesson, you will learn the grammar for:

- Bringing up an opposing view
- Saying how certain you are about something.

Activity 4.3 Bringing up the opposing view

Study these sentence patterns.

|  Who says? | Saying or thinking verb | Opposing view (summarised) |
|---|--|---|
| Name the person or group: Some people Supporters of the casino Parents who cane their children Students from poorer homes | argue/may argue that believe/think that may/will say that may worry about | a casino would bring economic benefits. caning is the quickest way to discipline children. the cost of buying a variety of clothes to wear to school every day. |
| If you don't want to or cannot name the person(s): It Although | could/may be argued that (no thinking/saying verb) | if we do not compete to win, we may always be losers. gambling is now available in Singapore, ...(continues to counter opposing view) |

Sulin, the writer of the paragraphs below, has not stated the opposing view she is countering in each paragraph. In a few cases, she has written notes in non-standard English. Working with a partner (or alone), write Sulin's missing sentences.

- Hints*
- Note Sulin's goal for the essay.
 - Read what she says and discuss with your partner what opposing view Sulin is countering.
 - Use the sentence patterns above to guide yourself.

1.[caning okay, good for children]
.....

Such parents should consider the possible damaging effects of caning on their children. A child who is caned may feel resentful of his parents for not being willing to listen to him. He may have a reason for what the parents think is 'misbehaving'. Worse, he may grow up thinking that physical force is an acceptable way of resolving problems between people.

Topic: Discipline

Goal: Argue that the best way to discipline children is through reason and example.

2.

But do they have any evidence that a casino will turn Singapore into a nation of morally decadent gamblers with family life in tatters? Malaysia and Australia have casinos. But we cannot say that their people are less moral than people in countries without casinos. Nor can we prove that the casino is the main cause of divorce and the break up of families in those countries. What we can prove is that the casino creates jobs and adds to the government's revenue.

Topic: Should Singapore have a casino?

Goal: Persuade reader to agree that a casino would bring economic effects.

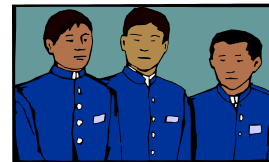


3.

People wearing the same uniform may or may not feel a sense of belonging to their organisation. McDonalds counter staff wear a common uniform but they may not all feel loyalty to McDonalds or to each other. People feel loyal to an organisation when they share its beliefs and ideas. In a school where students can choose what to wear, students might feel loyalty to the school because they are happy with their school's belief in creativity.

Topic: The school uniform should not be compulsory. Discuss.

Goal: Argue that a compulsory uniform stifles creativity.



4. [Notes: what for? already got Straits Times pocket money fund], the amount is only \$50 per month. This sum is meant to be used by poor students to buy food in the school canteen so that they do not go hungry. But sometimes students need money for other educational purposes like exam fees, books or excursions. It is sad, for example, when a few students cannot join a school excursion because their parents cannot afford the \$10 or \$20 for the bus fare. The school would pay if there is money available for helping needy students.

Topic: Write a letter appealing for funds for poor students in your school.

Goal: Convince business people and well-off parents that the poor students in the school need financial help.



5. [Notes: so convenient; can study at home; no need to go to school]..... While studying at home may appear convenient, it does not allow students to socialise with each other and with the teacher. By interacting with each other face to face in a classroom, students learn to cooperate with others. By interacting with only a computer screen, students cannot learn to get on with different types of people, which they will have to do in working life later.




Topic: Can computers replace the classroom teacher? What are your views?

Goal: Argue that computers cannot completely replace teachers because computers cannot interact with students like humans do.



Saying how certain you are about something

In argumentative essays and formal letters, we often have to say how certain we are about something. Here are some examples:

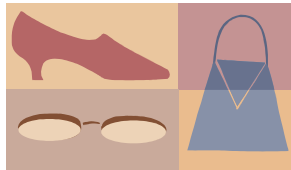
| What we wish to do in the essay | Grammar | Example |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Say to R: <i>I am very sure this is true. This is fact.</i></p> <p>We expect R to treat a statement as true.</p> <p>To use statement as fact to support a claim.</p> | <p>Simple present tense</p>  | <p>Gambling, in various forms, already exists in Singapore. [claim] Crowds flock to the horse races on race days. Queues form at betting shops...</p> |
| <p>Say to R: <i>This is very possible; I'm quite certain.</i></p> <p>To argue the benefits of our position, or the negative effect of an opposing position.</p> | <p>will, can, may</p> | <p>A casino will create jobs. More tourists will visit Singapore. Some may even return for repeat visits. With more factories shifting to China, unemployment can get worse.</p> |
| <p>Talk about hypothetical (not real) situations.</p> <p>To argue for/against a position by describing likely desirable/undesirable outcomes.</p> | <p>would</p> | <p>Imagine what it would be like for students in a school with no uniform. Rich students would show off their expensive brand name jeans, shirts and belts. Poorer students would worry about not having enough clothes of different styles and designs.</p> |
| <p>To tell R: <i>I'm not saying this is a fact but it's possible; it may be true, it may not be.</i></p> <p>To make claims to support our position and avoid being challenged (Stop R from objecting: <i>That's not true in all cases</i>).</p> <p>Or to concede that an opposing view may be partly right.</p> | <p>could, might</p>  | <p>Some people claim that traditional medicines cured them after western medicines failed. While traditional medicines could appear to work for some diseases, there is no scientific proof that they are effective and safe. The herbs from the medicine man might contain harmful substances that can damage health.</p> |

Activity 4.4 How certain am I?

Select a topic for your group. Work in pairs on each task in the topic. Write down as many sentences as you can for the task. Present the best one(s) to your group. The group representative will present sentences on the topic to the whole class.

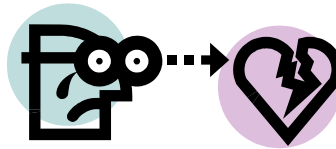
1. Topic: Branded goods (e.g. Gucci watches, Armani shirts) are better than non-branded goods. [Where you see a blank, fill it with your brand name and product (e.g. *Nike shoes*)].

| Tasks: What to do | Your intention in the social situation |
|--|--|
| (a) Make a statement about the price of branded goods. Follow this with why people buy them. | To tell others you're very sure. |
| (b) Suppose you have lots of money and you go shopping. Talk about your shopping behaviour. Start: <i>If I</i> or <i>Even if I</i> ... | You are quite certain about your shopping behaviour in this imagined situation. |
| (c) Your friend says: last longer than cheaper brands. You disagree, so you concede reluctantly and then assert your negative opinion of branded goods. Use <i>but</i> or <i>however</i> to start the sentence asserting your opinion. | 1 st sentence: Reluctantly agree that what your friend says is possible. 2 nd sentence: You believe that your opinion is right. |
| (d) Someone says: Of course,are better. They are not made in some cheap factory in Korea or Brazil. Make a statement about where branded are possibly made. | You are not one hundred per cent sure of the fact but you want to dispute your friend's claim. |



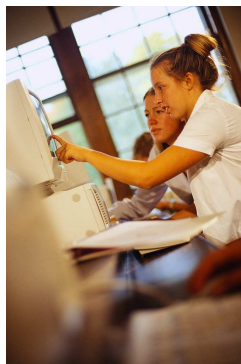
2. Situation: A girl from a prestigious school is interested in a boy from a neighbourhood school. There is a discussion on the internet on whether such a relationship would work.

| Tasks: What to do | Your intention in the social situation |
|---|--|
| (a) Make a statement about whether the relationship will work. Qualify yourself by adding a condition (<i>If they/the girl...</i>) | You're quite sure you are right. |
| (b) Imagine a situation where the boy or girl will feel uncomfortable because of their different backgrounds. Describe the possible feelings of the boy/girl. Start: <i>Imagine what would happen if... ..</i> (The next sentence is about his/her feelings.) | You are talking about a hypothetical situation for the sake of argument. You are not saying: this is fact. |
| (c) Your friend says: The girl's parents will disapprove of him. After some pressure from them, she will break off the relationship. Use <i>but</i> or <i>however</i> to start the sentence asserting your opposite opinion of the girl. | 1 st sentence: Reluctantly agree that what your friend says is possible. 2 nd sentence: You believe the opposite and you're quite sure you are right. |
| (d) Someone says: Her friends will look down on him. How can the relationship last? You disagree about what her friends will do. Provide a reason why you disagree (<i>because...</i>). | You are not one hundred per cent sure you're right but you want to dispute your friend's claim about "her friends". |



3. Situation: An uncle will pay for you to study at a pre-university college in London or in a country town in England. You are writing him a letter to say that you prefer to study in London. Your goal is to persuade him to agree with your choice.

| Tasks: What to do | Your intention in the social situation |
|--|--|
| (a) Make a statement about the reputation of the college in London (what it is well known for; give the college a name.) | You're treating the statement as fact. |
| (b) Anticipate your uncle saying: Living in London is more expensive. Concede his point; then stick to your choice by stating a possible benefit of studying in London. Start: <i>Although...</i> | When you concede your uncle's point, you half believe he is right. When you state the benefit, you are quite certain about it. |
| (c) Anticipate your parents possibly objecting: But London is not safe for a young girl/boy like you. Assure your uncle about your ability to take care of yourself. | <i>Although</i> -clause: Your parents have not objected yet. You think it is possible they will. Continue 1st sentence: You're confident about your ability to take care of yourself. |
| (d) Imagine the negative results of studying in a country town. Start: <i>In a country town, I ... There</i> | Imagine your life in the hypothetical situation (e.g. social activities, food, your feelings). |



4. Topic: Do men make better leaders than women? (This topic was much discussed on TV and in the news after the government appointed two women as ministers.)

| Tasks: What to do | Your intention in the social situation |
|---|---|
| (a) Make a statement about one strength of men or women in comparison to the other gender. (e.g. ... <i>stronger/more objective than...</i>) | You're treating the statement as fact. |
| (b) For the sake of argument, imagine a man/woman leader in a situation where people disagree with his/her decision. Describe a possible reaction from the man/woman leader. Start: <i>Faced with objections from subordinates, a woman/man.....</i> | You think this behaviour is possible in the hypothetical situation. |
| (c) Anticipate some people saying, "Women are more emotional..." Counter this to support the position: <i>Women make better leaders</i> . Counter with a fact or with a statement about men/women that you are quite sure of. | You know that "emotional" is probably true. But you have reason to think this is not a problem. |
| (d) A man argues: If the world had more woman leaders, there would be disaster. Support or reject his position by imagining a world with more women leaders. Start: <i>A world with more women leaders..../ In a world with more women leaders...</i> | You want to say that the results you picture are possible, either just possible or very possible. |



Activity 4.5 I can counter-argue

At the end of Unit 3, you wrote two paragraphs to support your position in an essay. Go back to the same essay. Now write one or two paragraphs to counter an opposing view you anticipate.

At the top of the page, give the following information:

Essay topic:

Goal:

Example:

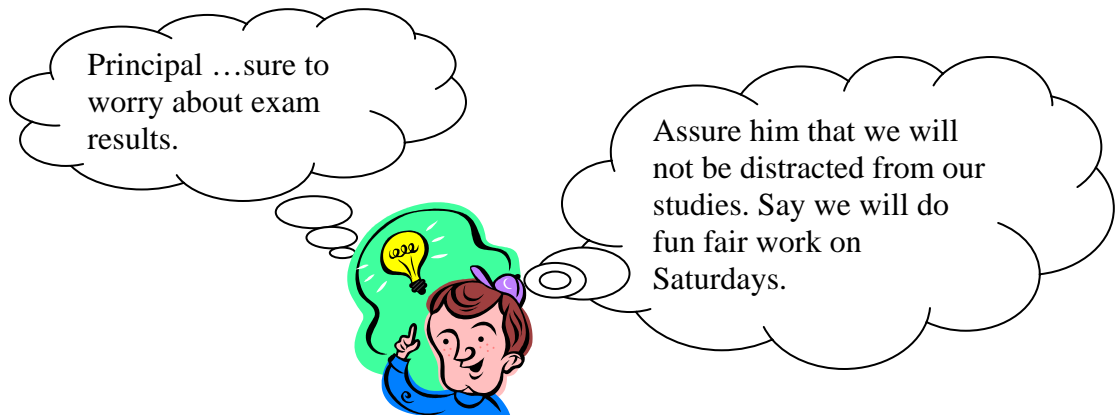
Topic: *Should weekend homework be banned?*

My goal: *To argue that weekend homework should be banned to allow students more time with their families and to pursue hobbies.*

Teachers, parents, and even some students may argue that While I do not deny that homework is....., I believe that doing homework from Monday to Friday is enough. If students spend hours doing homework on Saturday and Sunday as well, when will they have time to go visiting or to the movies with their family? If they

Advice for the examination

In the exam hall, you have limited time. You are also not expected to write more than 500 words (not a lot). You can anticipate and counter only one or at the most, two opposing views. Think; choose the opposing view that matters most to your target reader. Example: You are writing a proposal to the school principal to organise a school fun fair. You think:



Appendix


Strategies for countering an opposing view



Strategy: The fact is

State a fact to prove that the opposing view is incorrect. A fact is something that R (the reader) would accept as true.

Example

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>It has been argued that a theme park would be a healthier way to draw tourists to Singapore. However, two theme parks – Tang Dynasty City and Haw Par Villa – have closed in the last ten years after failing to attract enough tourists and local visitors.</p> | <p>W’s Goal: Argue that a casino would bring economic benefits. </p> <p>} Fact</p> |
|---|---|




Strategy: Imagine what would/could happen if

Paint a picture of the undesirable result(s) if the opposing position is accepted.

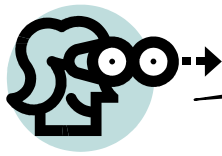


Example

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Casino supporters argue that gambling is already prevalent in Singapore and so a casino would make little difference. On the contrary, a casino would attract more people to gambling. People who already gamble will have one more avenue for losing their hard-earned money. More families will break up because the bread winner has gambled away the money meant for paying for food and the children’s education.</p> | <p>W’s Goal: Argue that a casino would be harmful to society. </p> <p>} Undesirable results of opposing position</p> |
|---|---|


 **Strategy: Yes, but look at it this way**


Show R an angle of the topic/issue that makes the opposing view less important.



You may be right. But look at it this way.... ..

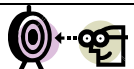
Example

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Critics have questioned the millions spent on buying and maintaining new fighter planes. Acquiring new planes is always expensive. But the maintenance costs, spread over the entire service life of the planes, are not unreasonably high. Today's fighters are built with low maintenance costs in mind. Moreover, maintaining our current fleet of old planes will actually cost more than buying new aircraft, which are more capable. (From a students' online forum discussion.)</p> | <p>W's Goal: Explain why Singapore has to spend money on national defence. </p> <p>Looking at the issue of cost from a different angle</p> |
|---|---|

 **Strategy: True, but it's not relevant**

Concede (admit) that the opposing view is true (or partly true) but it is not relevant in the situation you're discussing.

Example

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>There are students who believe that holding the graduation party at a hotel gives us students the chance to dress up in beautiful formal clothes. That may be true. But is that the aim of a graduation party? I think the party is for all of us to be together for the last time, in the place we have come to regard as our second home. School, not a hotel, is the place close to our hearts because it is the place that moulded us. ... (From students' online forum discussion)</p> | <p>W's Goal: Persuade schoolmates that the graduation party should be held in school. </p> <p>Show R why opposing view is not relevant to the situation.</p> |
|--|---|



Strategy: Can we trust the person who said this?

Ask questions: Can we believe the information/statement in the opposing view? Argue:





We cannot/should not take information/statement seriously because the writer has a hidden agenda / is not qualified / has not considered something important /(because of some other reason). For example,

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Information from a magazine/newspaper →</p> | <p>Who says so? Does he/she have all the facts? Is the writer trying to sell something? Is he/she speaking in support of some group or cause?</p> |
| <p>Information from a website →</p> | <p>Who runs the website? Do they check whether their information is accurate? Are they biased because they represent some organisation?</p> |

Example

Topic: Taking part in a competition is more important than winning. Do you agree?

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>It may be argued that if we do not consider winning important, we may always be losers. The argument goes that if winning is not uppermost in our mind, we are setting ourselves up for defeat even before the competition starts. People who think this way have overlooked one thing: focusing too much on winning can make a competitor so tense that he/she cannot perform at his/her best. He/she is then more likely to lose. But if he/she focuses on the action of taking part...</p> | <p>W's Goal: Convince examiner that taking part is more important than winning.  </p> <p>} Point out what the person with the opposing view does not know/does not consider.</p> |
|--|--|

Unit 4 Activity 4.1: Deconstruction
Question 1 (a), (b) & (c)

(a) Sentence saying opposing view:

(b) In the sentences you found in 1(a), look for the words that mean: “*This is not my view; this is what others believe.*” Fill in this table.

| Find the words | Words |
|---|-------|
| That refer to the people who hold the opposing view | |
| That introduce/report the opposing view (verbs) | |

(c) Which sentences in Paragraphs 2 and 3 counter the opposing view? Study these sentences and do the tasks below to complete the table.

| | |
|--|--|
| Look in Paragraph 3 for present tense verbs that W uses to say: <i>I know this is true.</i> | |
| In Paragraph 3, a modal that W uses to say: <i>This is a possible event that I feel sure about.</i> | |
| In Paragraph 2, the part of a sentence where W partly concedes the opposing view. (<i>Concede</i> means to say: <i>Okay, you’re right/maybe you’re right.</i>) | |
| The part of a sentence where W asserts (says again) her position. | |

Unit 4 Activity 4.1: Deconstruction
Question 2 (a), (b) & (c)

(a) Sentences saying opposing view:

(b) In the sentences you found in 2(a), look for the words that mean: “*This is not my view; this is what others believe.*” Fill in this table:

| Find the word(s) | Words |
|---|-------|
| That refer to the people who hold the opposing view | |
| That introduce/report the opposing view (verbs) | |

(c) Which sentences in Paragraphs 4 and 5 counter the opposing view? Study these sentences and do the tasks below to complete the table.

| | |
|---|--|
| Look in Paragraph 5 for past tense verbs that W uses to say: <i>This past event is a fact that proves my point.</i> | |
| In Paragraphs 4 & 5, two modals that W uses to say: 1. <i>This is a possible event</i> and 2. <i>I feel very sure about this happening.</i> | |
| In Paragraph 4, the word telling R that W has finished stating the opposing view and is about to start disagreeing with it. | |

Question continues on next page

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>The part of a sentence where W asserts (says again) her position (Para 4 & 5).</p> | |
|---|--|

Unit 4 Activity 4.1: Deconstruction
Question 3 (a) & (b)

(a) Study Paragraphs 3 and 5. Look for words that show W doing these acts:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Para 3</p> <p>Paint undesirable results of opposing position (<i>Let's have the casino; Singaporeans already gambling</i>)</p> | |
| <p>Para 5</p> <p>Based on past experience, imagine or predict undesirable results of opposing position.</p> | |

(b) In Paragraphs 3 and 5, W argues against or counters the opposing view. What countering strategy is W using in each paragraph?

- F. The facts say you're wrong.
- G. If we take your position, bad things *will* happen.
- H. You can't trust the source (person/book/website that says opposing view).
- I. Imagine the bad things that could possibly happen.
- J. Yes, but it's not important/relevant in our situation.

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Paragraph 3 | Countering strategy: |
| Paragraph 5 | Countering strategy: |

**Unit 4 Activity 4.2: Anticipate, counter
 Situation 1 for Teen Inspiration**
 (Write name of celebrity in blank)

Task 1: Anticipate objection

| Committee Member | Students taking role | Anticipated objection to as Teen Inspiration |
|------------------|----------------------|--|
| | | |

Unit 4 Activity 4.2: Anticipate, counter
Situation 2 Girls for National Service

Task 1: Anticipate objection


| Committee Member | Students taking role | Anticipated objection to NS for girls |
|------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | |

Unit 4 Activity 4.2: Anticipate, counter
Situation 1 / 2 (please circle)

Task 2: Plan counter-argument




| Main objection | Countering strategy |
|----------------|---------------------|
| | |

Unit 4 Activity 4.3. Sentence Patterns

|  Who says? | Saying or thinking verb | Opposing view (summarised) |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Name the person or group:</p> <p>Some people Supporters of the casino</p> <p>Parents who cane their children</p> <p>Students from poorer homes</p> | <p>argue/may argue that believe/think that</p> <p>may/will say that</p> <p>may worry about</p> | <p>a casino would bring economic benefits.</p> <p>caneing is the quickest way to discipline children.</p> <p>the cost of buying a variety of clothes to wear to school every day.</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>If you don't want to or cannot name the person(s):</p> <p>It</p> <p>Although</p> | <p>could/may be argued that</p> <p>(no thinking/saying verb)</p> | <p>if we do not compete to win, we may always be losers.</p> <p>gambling is now available in Singapore, ... (continues to counter opposing view)</p> |
|---|--|--|

Unit 4. Saying how certain you are about something

| What we wish to do in the essay | Grammar | Example |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Say to R: <i>I am very sure this is true. This is fact.</i></p> <p>We expect R to treat a statement as true.</p> <p>To use statement as fact to support a claim.</p> | <p>Simple present tense</p>  | <p>Gambling, in various forms, already exists in Singapore. [claim]</p> <p>Crowds flock to the horse races on race days. Queues form at betting shops...</p> |
| <p>Say to R: <i>This is very possible; I'm quite certain.</i></p> <p>To argue the benefits of our position, or the negative effect of an opposing position.</p> | <p>will, can, may</p> | <p>A casino will create jobs. More tourists will visit Singapore. Some may even return for repeat visits. With more factories shifting to China, unemployment can get worse.</p> |
| <p>Talk about hypothetical (not real) situations.</p> <p>To argue for/against a position by describing likely desirable/undesirable outcomes.</p> | <p>would</p> | <p>Imagine what it would be like for students in a school with no uniform. Rich students would show off their expensive brand name jeans, shirts and belts. Poorer students would worry about not having enough clothes of different styles and designs.</p> |
| <p>To tell R: <i>I'm not saying this is a fact but it's possible; it may be true, it may not be.</i></p> <p>To make claims to support our position and avoid being challenged (Stop R from objecting: <i>That's not true in all cases</i>).</p> <p>Or to concede that an opposing view may be partly right.</p> | <p>could, might</p>  | <p>Some people claim that traditional medicines cured them after western medicines failed. While traditional medicines could appear to work for some diseases, there is no scientific proof that they are effective and safe. The herbs from the medicine man might contain harmful substances that can damage health.</p> |

Unit 4 Activity 4.4: How certain am I?
Question 1

Topic: Branded goods (e.g. Gucci watches, Armani shirts) are better than non-branded goods.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

Unit 4 Activity 4.4: How certain am I?
Question 2

Situation: A girl from a prestigious school is interested in a boy from a neighbourhood school. There is a discussion on the internet on whether such a relationship would work.

| |
|-----|
| (a) |
| (b) |
| (c) |
| (d) |

Unit 4 Activity 4.4: How certain am I?
Question 3

Situation: An uncle will pay for you to study at a pre-university college in London or in a country town in England. You are writing him a letter to say that you prefer to study in London. Your goal is to persuade him to agree with your choice.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

Unit 4 Activity 4.4: How certain am I?
Question 4

Topic: Do men make better leaders than women? (This topic was much discussed on TV and in the news after the government appointed two women as ministers.)

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

THE COPYRIGHT OF THESE MATERIALS BELONGS TO THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE / NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION.

TEACHERS MAY COPY OR ADAPT THESE MATERIALS FOR THEIR OWN USE, PROVIDED THAT THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THE SOURCE AS FOLLOWS:

Chandrasegaran, A. (2005). Materials for intervention in the teaching of expository writing (Research Project CRP 5/04 AC). Available from *SingTeach* Web site, <http://singteach.nie.edu.sg>