



English Curriculum Progression in Discussion

Generic text structure

The structure of a discussion text is often (but not always):

- statement of the issues plus a preview of the main arguments
- arguments for, plus supporting evidence
- arguments against [or alternative view(s)], plus supporting evidence [a variant would be arguments and counter-arguments presented alternatively, one point at a time]
- recommendation – summary and conclusion

Language features

The language features of a discussion text are often (but not always):

- written in simple present tense
- focused mainly on generic human (or non-human) participants using uncountable nouns, for example, *some*, *most*, category nouns, e.g. *vehicles*, *pollution* (nominalisation), *power* (abstract)
- constructed using logical, connectives, for example, *therefore*, *however*
- a movement usually from the generic to the specific: *hunters' agree..... Mr. Smith, who has hunted for many years.....*

Knowledge for the writer

- you can turn the title into a question: *Should we hunt whales?*
- open by introducing the reader to the discussion – you may need to add why you are debating the issue
- try to see the argument from both sides
- make views sound more reasonable through use of modal verbs and words such as *often*, *usually*
- support views with reasons and evidence
- in your conclusion you must give reasons for what you decide
- if you are trying to present a balanced viewpoint, check you have been fair to both sides
- recognise that discussion texts can be adapted or combined with other text types depending on the audience and purpose

	Progression in discussion texts
Foundation Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and recognise that others sometimes think, feel and react differently from themselves. • Talk about how they and others might respond differently to the same thing (e.g. like a particular picture or story when someone else doesn't) • Give oral explanations e.g. their or another's preferences, e.g. what they like to eat and why.
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through talk and role play explore how others might think, feel and react differently from themselves and from each other. • In reading explore how different characters might think, feel and react differently from themselves and from each other.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through reading and in life situations, recognise, that different people (characters) have different thought,/feelings about, views on and responses to particular scenarios (e.g. that the wolf would see the story of the Red Riding Hood differently to the girl herself.) • Explore different views and viewpoints.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through reading explore how different views might be expressed/explained/justified (e.g. the different view of characters in a particular book, the different view of people writing to a newspaper.) • Through role play and drama explore how different views might be expressed/explained/justified (e.g. the different view of characters in a particular book, the different view of people in a simulated 'real life' scenario.)
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In exploring persuasive texts, and those presenting a particular argument (see Progression in Persuasion), begin to recognise which present a single (biased) viewpoint and which try to be more objective and balanced. • Continue to explore the expression of different views through discussion, role play and drama.
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In exploring persuasive texts, and those presenting a particular argument (see Progression in Persuasion), distinguish and discuss any texts which seems to be trying to present a more balanced or reasoned view, or which explore more than one possible perspective on an issue. • Experiment with the presentation of various views (own and others, biased and balanced) though discussion, debate and drama.

Year 6

- Through reading, identify the language , grammar, organisational and stylistic features of balanced written discussions which:
 - summarise different sides of an argument
 - clarify the strengths and weaknesses of different positions
 - signal personal opinion clearly
 - draw reasoned conclusions based on available evidence
- Recognise and understand the distinction between the persuasive presentation of a particular view and the discursive presentation of a balanced argument.
- First explore orally and then write a balanced report of a controversial issue:
 - summarising fairly the competing views
 - analysing strengths and weaknesses of different positions
 - drawing reasoned conclusions where appropriate
 - using formal language and presentation as appropriate
- Use reading to:
 - investigate conditionals, e.g. using if...then, might, could, would, and their persuasive uses, e.g. in deduction, speculation, supposition
 - build a bank of useful terms and phrases for persuasive argument, e.g. *similarly... whereas...*
- Overall, help to build the ability to choose the appropriate style and form to suit a specific purpose and audience, drawing on knowledge of different non-fictional text types and adapting, conflating and combining these where appropriate.