The Discursive Essay

MR M. ACKERMAN
The Discursive Essay

THE PURPOSE
Purpose

DISCURSIVE ESSAY

It presents a balanced and objective examination of a subject.

The topic may be controversial, but the discursive essay attempts to present a much more balanced discussion of the issue.

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

It presents the advantages and disadvantages of a certain subject.

Its purpose is to both educate and persuade the reader on a particular point of view.
The Discursive Essay

THE STYLE
Style

DISCURSIVE ESSAY

They are written in a more formal and impersonal style than other essays.

Each issue should be discussed in a separate paragraph and each paragraph should begin with a strong topic sentence.

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

They follow a general format. The writer states an initial thesis that contains the point of view for which the author is arguing.

The body generally presents both sides of the argument.
The Discursive Essay

THE PLAN
Plan

DISCURSIVE ESSAY

Introduction
1st Issue, situation or problem
2nd Issue, situation or problem
Conclusion

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

Introduction
Arguments for / against
Arguments against / for
Conclusion
The Discursive Essay

WHAT A GOOD DISCURSIVE ESSAY HAS
A Good Discursive Essay Has

An introductory paragraph (you clearly state the topic to be discussed),

A main body (points are clearly stated in separate paragraphs (2 - 3) and exemplified or justified),

A closing paragraph summarising the main points of the essay (you restate your opinion, and/or give a balanced consideration of the topic).
The Discursive Essay
Formal Style of The Discursive Essay- This means you should do the following:

- Passive voice, impersonal constructions (e.g. It is argued that...; It is a common belief that...),
- A range of advanced vocabulary (verbs, adjectives, abstract nouns, etc) (e.g. heated debate concerning the controversial issue...),
- Formal linking words/phrases (e.g. furthermore, however, nonetheless),
- Complex sentences with a variety of links, dependent clauses (e.g. Furthermore, a tendency to self-concentration and egoism might rise when one start measuring everything from a profitmaking perspective.),
- Inversion, especially in conditionals (e.g. Never has this been more obvious...).
You Should NOT Use:

- Short forms (e.g. I'm; It's) except when these are part of a quotation,

- Colloquial expressions, phrasal verbs, idioms (e.g. lots of, put up with, be over the moon about...),

- Simplistic vocabulary (e.g. Experts say they think this is bad...),

- A series of short sentences (e.g. Many people think so. They are wrong.),

- Simple linking words (e.g. and, but, so).
In Simple Terms It Means The Following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓ Do</th>
<th>✗ Do not use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write in proper, complete sentences</td>
<td>Abbreviations (i.e./e.g./etc./UK/&amp;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use complete words and expressions</td>
<td>Contractions (isn't/don't/won't)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use proper, standard English</td>
<td>Slang (e.g. bloke/geezer etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colloquial language (mate/bolshy etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Discursive Essay

LINKING WORDS
Linking Words: To Provide An Illustration/To Give an Example:

for example
that is
that is to say
for instance
in other words
namely
such as
as follows
a typical/particular/key example
typical of this
including
especially
in particular
mainly
most importantly
a good illustration of this is
it is interesting to note
Linking Words: To Extend a Point/ To Add:

- similarly
- equally
- likewise
- also
- furthermore
- indeed
- in the same way
- besides
- above all
- as well
- in addition
- moreover
Linking Words: To Show The Next Step

first(ly)
second(ly)
third(ly)
finally
to begin/start with
in the first/second place
first and foremost
first and most
importantly
another
then
after
next
afterwards
ultimately
Linking Words: To Indicate or Contrast

however
on the other hand
alternatively
in contrast
instead (of)
conversely
on the contrary
in fact
in comparison
another possibility
while

whereas
but
better/worst
despite this
in spite of
although
nevertheless
notwithstanding
for all that
yet
in opposition to this
Linking Words: To Show Cause and Effect

so
therefore
accordingly
hence
as a result/consequence
resulting from
in consequence of this
consequently

because of this/that
for this reason
owing to/due to the fact
this demonstrates
it follows that
this suggests that
accepting/assuming
this
Linking Words: To Conclude

- in conclusion
- it can be concluded
- this implies
- in short
- to conclude
- to sum up
- all in all
- in brief
- all things
- considered
- taking everything into account
The Discursive Essay

AN EXAMPLE
The Role Of Marriage In Today’s Society

If there is one thing that virtually all the world’s cultures have in common, it is marriage. Beliefs, diet and languages vary greatly, but the desire people have to share their lives with another seems universal. Why, then, is marriage so popular? Psychologists have said that people have a deep need for the emotional security which marriage provide. Knowing that one has a partner in life makes it easier to cope with the problems of daily life. On the other hand, the fact that many single people are content to live alone suggests that the “emotional need” theory is incomplete.

British novelist Fay Weldon once stated, “Marriage has nothing to do with emotion and everything to do with property.” According to the supporters of this view, people marry in order to increase their wealth, either by marrying a rich partner or because, as the saying goes, “two can live cheaply as one.” It is true that financial considerations are often the primary reason that people marry. However, there are countless examples of people “marrying for love”, regardless of their mate’s lack of money.

All in all, marriage continues to be extremely popular in many societies. Most of us have a need for love and support and want to have children at some point in our lives. Fully understanding the reason why people marry, though, may be as difficult as understanding the human mind itself.
The Discursive Essay

THE PARAGRAPH PLAN
Paragraph Plan

Paragraph 1: state topic (why is marriage so popular?)

Paragraph 2: ‘emotional’ need for a partner; comparison between single/married people

Paragraph 3: why people marry – for love/money

Paragraph 4: make general comments (difficult to fully understand reason why people marry)
The Discursive Essay

The Layout and Structure
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Discursive Essay</th>
<th>Persuasive Essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Register of language</td>
<td>A mix of formal and informal languages with occasional colloquialisms</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style and tone</td>
<td>Aim for an educated audience, but the tone and style can be friendly and more openly subjective</td>
<td>Academic, objective, and intellectual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of first-person pronouns</td>
<td>First-person pronouns are fine</td>
<td>First person pronouns should be used cautiously and judiciously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of figurative devices</td>
<td>Should be used throughout</td>
<td>Not recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of evidence and examples</td>
<td>Yes, but not in a T.E.E.L or P.E.E.L format</td>
<td>Yes, consistently and in a particular format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Requires an introduction, conclusion, and paragraphing.</td>
<td>Introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paragraph length can vary. There is no definitive scaffold.</td>
<td>Formal structure appropriate to the Module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consistent paragraph length throughout.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Discursive Essay Structure

### INTRO
- general statement / hook
- elaboration > scope (can include a definition)
- thesis statement stating that essay will consider **both sides** of the topic

### BODY

#### ARGUMENT 1
- **FOR**
  - topic sentence
  - + support

#### ARGUMENT 2
- **FOR**
  - topic sentence
  - + support

#### TRANSITION
- single sentence paragraph OR sentence/discourse marker at beginning of next paragraph

#### ARGUMENT 1
- **AGAINST**
  - topic sentence
  - + support

#### ARGUMENT 2
- **AGAINST**
  - topic sentence
  - + support

### CONCLUSION
- restate thesis statement
- summarise ideas
- opinion
- closing comments/final thoughts