

An Argumentative Essay: its Outline
and Types
16th Lecture

An **argumentative essay** is an essay in which you agree or disagree with an issue, using reasons to support your opinion. Your goal is to convince your reader that your opinion is right. Argumentation is a popular kind of essay question because it forces students to think on their own: They have to take a stand on an issue, support their stand with solid reasons, and support their reasons with solid evidence.

In a general writing test such as the TOEFL exam, you might encounter questions such as these:

The U.S. Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal.” Agree or disagree with this statement. Support your opinion with reasons and examples.

The most important element in a friendship is trust. Agree or disagree with this statement. Support your opinion with reasons and examples.

What is unique about an argumentative essay is that you do not just give reasons to support your point of view. You must also discuss the other side's reasons and then rebut them. (*Rebut* means to point out problems with the other side's reasons to prove that they are not good reasons.) We do this because we want readers to know that we have considered all sides of the issue. When we show that we are reasonable and open-minded, readers are more likely to listen to our point of view.

Reality TV shows are good entertainment

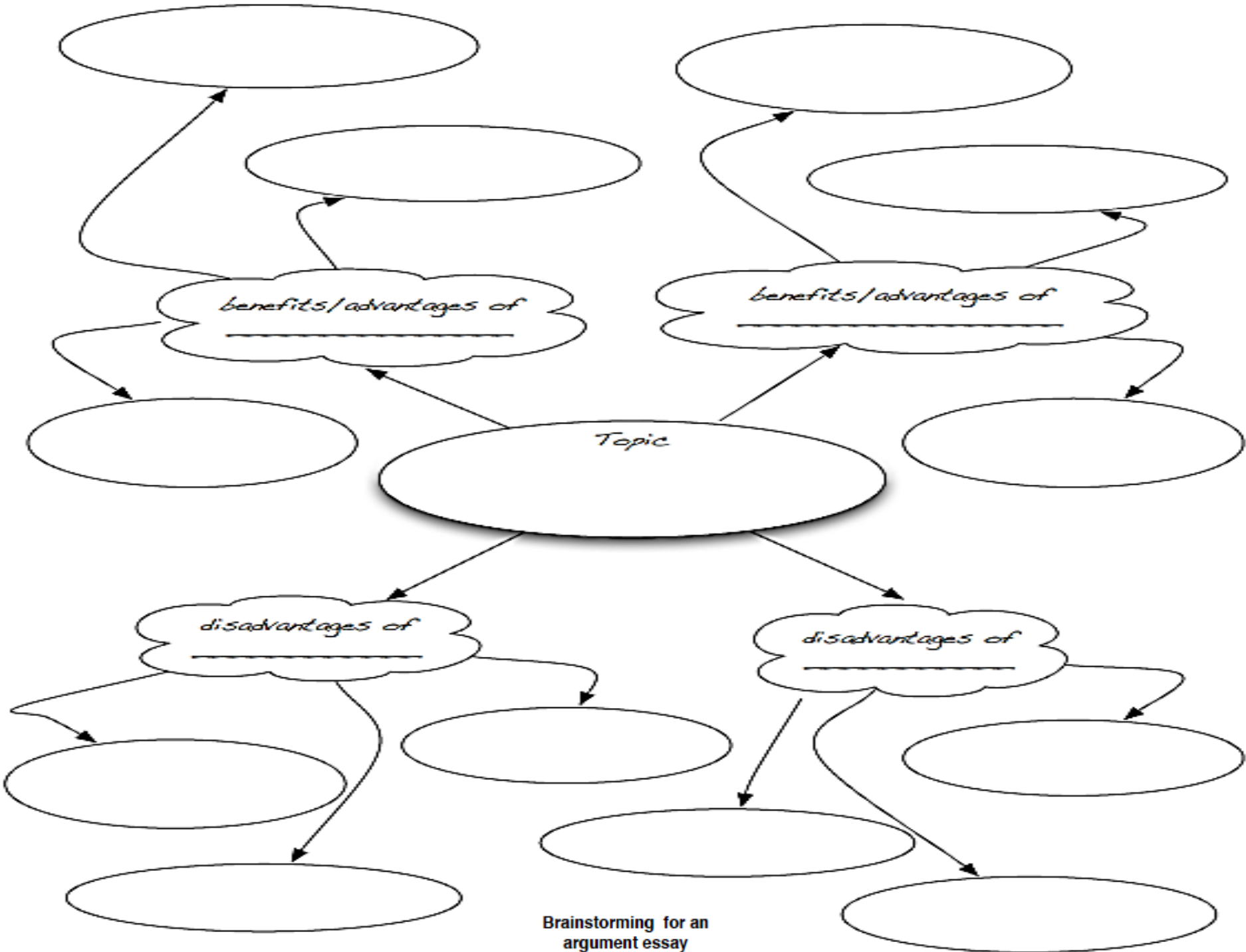
Reality shows are a very popular form of entertainment on TV nowadays. There are dozens of different types of programmes such as singing contests, cooking competitions or going to live in the jungle.

Top Tips for writing

1. Start each paragraph with a word or phrase so the reader knows what to expect, for example *Firstly*, *On the other hand* or *To sum up*.
2. Link your sentences with these words.
3. Organise your essay in paragraphs.
 - paragraph 1 – introduction
 - paragraph 2 – arguments for the subject
 - paragraph 3 – arguments against the subject
 - paragraph 4 – conclusion

there is only one winner. Another disadvantage is that some programmes always follow the same format and this can be boring to watch.

To sum up, I think that reality TV is good entertainment. There is lots of variety which means there is something for everyone and they are interesting to watch.



Brainstorming for an argument essay

Organization of Argumentative Essays

There are several ways to organize an argumentative essay. You can use a block pattern or a point-by-point pattern. The outlines in the following chart show these two possible patterns.

Block Pattern	Point-by-Point Pattern
<p>I. Introduction Explanation of the issue Thesis statement</p> <p>II. Body</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Block 1</p> <p>A. Summary of other side's arguments B. Rebuttal to the first argument C. Rebuttal to the second argument D. Rebuttal to the third argument</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Block 2</p> <p>E. Your first argument F. Your second argument G. Your third argument</p> <p>III. Conclusion</p>	<p>I. Introduction Explanation of the issue, including a summary of the other side's arguments Thesis statement</p> <p>II. Body</p> <p>A. Statement of the other side's first argument and rebuttal with your own counterargument B. Statement of the other side's second argument and rebuttal with your own counterargument C. Statement of the other side's third argument and rebuttal with your own counterargument</p> <p>III. Conclusion—may include a summary of your point of view</p>

**WRITE AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY CONCERNING
THE TOPIC BELOW:**

THE PLASTIC SURGERIES

Separating the Sexes, Just for the Tough Years

1 The middle school years (grades 7 and 8) are known to be the “tough years.” These are the years when the uneven pace of girls’ and boys’ physical, emotional, and cognitive development is most noticeable. Girls are ahead of boys on all counts, and both suffer. Educators debate whether separating boys and girls during these difficult years might improve students’ academic performance. Separate classes are now prohibited in public schools that receive federal funds, but a change in the federal law that prohibits them is under consideration. Although some parents and educators oppose same-sex classes, there is some evidence that separating boys and girls in middle school yields positive results.

2 Opponents of single-sex education claim that test scores of students in all-girl or all-boy classes are no higher than those of students in mixed classes (“Study”).¹ However, the research is inconclusive. Despite the fact that some research shows no improvement in test scores, other research shows exactly opposite results (Blum).² More important, many psychologists believe that test scores are the wrong measuring sticks. They believe that self-confidence and self-esteem issues are more important than test scores. In same-sex classes, girls report increased confidence and improved attitudes toward math and science, for example (“Study”). These are results that cannot be calculated by a test but that will help adolescents become successful adults long after the difficult years of middle school are past. New York University professor Carol Gilligan is certain that girls are more likely to be “creative thinkers and risk-takers as adults if educated apart from boys in middle school” (Gross).³ Boys, too, gain confidence when they do not have to compete with girls. Boys at this age become angry and fight back in middle school because they feel inferior when compared to girls, who literally “out-think” them. With no girls in the classroom, they are more at ease with themselves and more receptive to learning (Gross).

3 Opponents also maintain that separate classes (or separate schools) send the message that males and females cannot work together. They say that when students go into the work force, they will have to work side-by-side with the opposite sex, and attending all-girl or all-boy schools denies them the opportunity to learn how to do so (“North”).⁴ However, such an argument completely ignores the fact that children constantly interact with members of the