

Writing a one-sided argument (persuasive) essay

Topic: climate change EXAMPLE

Argument: *Climate change is a result of human activities.*

Type: General

Level: ****[B1/B2]

Lesson Aim

To develop the students' ability to generate main ideas with support and write a one-sided argument (persuasive) essay.

Lead in

- Students briefly discuss what climate change is.
- Focus students' attention to the causes & ask students to discuss who or what is responsible for climate change.
- Students make a note of arguments in support of the question (humans are responsible) & in opposition (humans are not responsible).
- Feed in / check key vocabulary (see next page).

Assumptions

- Students already know what a one-sided argument (persuasive) is. If not go here: www.academic-englishuk.com/one-sided-argument-essays
- Students already know what a block or a point-by-point essay structure is. If not, go here: <https://www.academic-englishuk.com/essay-structure>
- Students already know what a thesis statement is. If not, go here: <https://www.academic-englishuk.com/thesis-statements>

Writing

1. Distribute **essay question: Do you agree that climate change is a result of human activities?**
2. Students discuss what the essay is asking them to do.
3. Whole class feedback.
4. Students discuss & decide how they wish to structure their essay (point-by-point or block).
5. Distribute **outline#1 block** (blank) or **outline#2 point-by-point** (blank). Students decide on stance & complete outline.
6. Students write a 600-800 word essay. Allow 1.30 hours.
7. Feedback options: i. Peer feedback (**Checklist** included) ii. Distribute **outlines#3 block & 4 point-by-point** (completed) & **model essays x 2** for students to compare. iii. Take in and mark. Use marking code: www.academic-englishuk.com/error-correction

Scaffolding/Differentiation/Extra

- Students use **outlines#3 & 4** (completed) to write the essay.
- Reading activity: students read essays & complete **outline#5 & 6**.

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Climate Change

Key vocabulary

1. Climate change.
2. Atmospheric levels.
3. Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) / Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) / Methane (CH₄).
4. Sceptics.
5. Phenomenon.
6. Emissions.
7. Reliable.
8. Fluctuations.
9. Measuring temperature changes: tree rings / ice cores / corals.
10. Preceding.
11. Unprecedented.
12. Northern hemisphere.
13. Millennium.
14. Climate model.
15. Exaggeration.
16. Over/underestimate.
17. Rigorous.
18. Controversial.
19. A correlation.
20. Credible.

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Outline #1 Block

Use this outline to plan an essay on: Do you agree that climate change is a result of human activities?

Introduction	
General	
Specific	
Thesis	

Counter-arguments (opposite views to yours) - write your ideas and support	
1.Point: Support: Support:	
2.Point: Support: Support:	

Arguments (your views that support your thesis) - write your ideas and support	
1.Point: Support: Support:	
2.Point: Support: Support:	

Conclusion	
Summary	
Thesis	
Suggestion or prediction	

Outline #2 Point-by-point

Use this outline to plan an essay on: Do you agree that climate change is a result of human activities?

Introduction	
General	
Specific	
Thesis	

Counter-argument, Transition – Rebuttal Arguments.	
1. Counter-argument:	
Support:	
Support:	
However, rebuttal argument:	
Support:	
Support:	

Counter-argument, Transition -Rebuttal Arguments.	
2. Counter-argument:	
Support:	
Support:	
However, rebuttal argument:	
Support:	
Support:	

Conclusion	
Summary	
Thesis	
Suggestion or prediction	

Outline #3 Block (completed)

Use this outline to plan an essay on: *Do you agree that climate change is a result of human activities?*

Introduction	
General	Temperatures increase = 1.4°F since 20th century.
Specific	Greenhouse [redacted] increased= climate change. Scientists = human activities. Sceptics = [redacted]
Thesis	Human [redacted] international action needed.

Counter-arguments (opposite view to yours) - write your ideas and support	
1.Point: Rise in temperature = natural climate cycle.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate = [redacted] Current temperatures - within natural temperature fluctuations. • Records = 20th century [redacted] a uniquely extreme climatic period of the last millennium” (Soon and Baliunas, 2003). • High temperatures [redacted] happened [redacted] (ibid). 	
2.Point: Reliability of climate models.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison between observational data and computer [redacted] concluded that "the models are [redacted] (Lewis and Curry, 2014). • Overestimating how fast the earth will warm as CO2 levels increase (ibid). 	

Arguments (your views that support your thesis) - write your ideas and support	
1.Point: Global temperatures rising faster than natural climate change.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison - data [redacted], ice [redacted] with temp. records (Mann et al, 2008). • Arctic Sea ice - melting [redacted] per decade (Stroeve et al, 2007). 	
2.Point: Accuracy of climate models	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research - [redacted] to be accurate. • Data is compared with other data from models worldwide. • Models – rigorous [redacted] revised (Climate.gov, 2014). 	

Conclusion	
Summary	Sceptics: global warming = natural (Earth = temperature changes in past) & can't [redacted] Scientists: gases & temperature increases = human [redacted] provide reliable data.
Thesis	Global warming [redacted] = credible. True = human activities. Extra: Industry & urbanization are polluting atmosphere.
Suggestion	Need to take action now.

Outline #4 Point-by-point (completed)

Make notes using this outline to plan an essay on: *Do you agree that climate change is a result of human activities?*

Introduction	
General	Temperatures increase = 1.4°F since 20th century.
Specific	Greenhouse [redacted] increased= climate change. Scientists = human activities. Sceptics = [redacted]
Thesis	Human [redacted] international action needed.

Counter-argument. Transition – Rebuttal Argument.	
1. Counter-argument: Rise in temperature = natural climate cycle.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records = 20th century [redacted] uniquely extreme climatic period of the last millennium” (Soon and Baliunas, 2003). High [redacted] also happened around [redacted] (AD) (ibid). 	
However, rebuttal argument. Global temperatures rising faster than natural climate change.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison - data from [redacted] and corals with temp. records (Mann et al, 2008). Arctic Sea ice - melting [redacted] per decade (Stroeve et al, 2007). 	

Counter-argument. Transition -Rebuttal Argument.	
2. Counter-argument: Reliability of climate models.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison [redacted] computer [redacted] concluded that "the models are exaggerating climate sensitivity" (Lewis and Curry,2014). Overestimating how [redacted] CO2 levels increase (ibid). 	
However, rebuttal argument. Research - climate models studied proved to be accurate.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data is compared [redacted] models. [redacted] testing & equations revised (Climate.gov, 2014). 	

Conclusion	
Summary	Sceptics: global warming = natural (Earth = temperature changes in past) & can't [redacted] Scientists: gases & temperature [redacted] &models provide reliable data.
Thesis	Global warming gases & [redacted]. True = human activities. Extra: [redacted] are polluting atmosphere.
Suggestion	Need to take action now.

Do you agree that climate change is a result of human activities? (C. Wilson, 2017)

Block

Temperatures on earth have increased approximately 1.4°F since the early 20th century. Over this time period, atmospheric [redacted] carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane (CH4) have notably increased. Many scientists believe this is a direct [redacted] while [redacted] temperature increases are a natural phenomenon. This essay argues that the causes of climate change [redacted] that immediate international action is needed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

There are two arguments that climate change sceptics have put forward; firstly, the rise in temperature is [redacted] climate models do not provide reliable data. With regard to the former, it has been suggested that the [redacted] these current temperatures are within natural temperature fluctuations. It has been argued (Soon and [redacted] acknowledge that the 20th century was possibly "not the warmest nor a uniquely extreme climatic period [redacted], a later study (ibid) claimed that the high temperatures witnessed before 1990 also happened in around 1000 to [redacted]. In terms of the latter, it is argued that the climate change models research are inadequate and inaccurate. According to Lewis and Curry (2014), a comparison between observational [redacted] that "the models are exaggerating climate sensitivity" and are overestimating how fast the earth will warm as CO2 levels [redacted] have been observed, [redacted] about the reliability of climate models, there is far more evidence that global warming is caused by humans.

Firstly, it is clear that global temperatures are rising faster than natural climate change. Mann et al (2008) found [redacted] tree rings, ice cores and corals over the past millennium with recent temperature records, the rise over the preceding decade had occurred at a rate faster than any other warming period [redacted] Arctic Sea ice is melting at an unprecedented rate of 13.9% per decade with predictions that it will have melted by [redacted], research conducted by Zeke Hausfather of the University of California (Buis, 2020) found no evidence [redacted] studied overestimated or underestimated global warming, and concluded that most of the climate models [redacted] to point out that the data is constantly compared with data from other models from the around the world, and the models go through rigorous testing with equations being revised as and [redacted] reassurance of the reliability of these climate change models, it is vital to take the results seriously, and what [redacted] the observational evidence, is that the global temperature is rising, and this is caused by the decisions and [redacted] citizens.

In conclusion, the debate of whether climate change is a natural process or a result of human activities is [redacted] the Earth has been through temperature changes similar in the past and believe that the method [redacted]. However, the correlation between the increase in global warming gases and a rise in temperatures is [redacted] that climate change is caused by human activities. Even without scientific evidence, it seems obvious that [redacted] is polluting [redacted] ever. Overall, climate change is happening and societies need to take international action now. [608 words]

Reference list

Buis, A. (2020). *Study confirms climate models are getting future warming projections right*. Online Available at: <http://climate.nasa.gov/news/2943/study-confirms-climate-models-are-getting-it-right> [Accessed 20th April 2020].

Lewis, N. and Curry, J. (2014). The implications for climate sensitivity of AR5 forcing and heat uptake estimates. *Climate Dynamics*, 45(3-4), pp.1009-1023.

Mann, M., Zhang, Z., Hughes, M., Bradley, R., Miller, S., Rutherford, S. and Ni, F. (2008). Proxy-based reconstructions of hemispheric and global surface temperature variations over the past two millennia. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105(36), pp.13252-13257.

NOAA. (2013), *Climate Models* [Online] Available at: <http://www.climate.gov> [Accessed 21st April. 2020].

Soon, W. and Baliunas, S. (2003). Global warming. *Physical Geography*, 27(3), pp.448-455.

Stroeve, J., Holland, M., Meier, W., Scambos, T. and Serreze, M. (2007). Arctic sea ice decline: Faster than forecast. *Geophysics Research* 34(9).

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Do you agree that climate change is a result of human activities? (C. Wilson, 2017)

Point-by-Point

Temperatures on earth have increased approximately 1.4°F since the early 20th century. Over this time period, atmospheric [redacted] carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane (CH4) have notably increased. Many scientists believe this is a direct [redacted] while [redacted] temperature increases are a natural phenomenon. This essay argues that the causes of climate change [redacted] that immediate international action is needed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

One argument put forward by climate change sceptics is that the climate has always warmed and [redacted] temperatures are [redacted]. It has been argued (Soon and Baliunas, 2003) that a number of records acknowledge that the 20th century was [redacted] extreme climatic period of the last millennium." Furthermore, a later study (ibid) claimed that the high [redacted] also happened at around 1000 to 1100 (AD) in the Northern Hemisphere. Although it is true that [redacted], the evidence suggests that global temperatures are rising faster than natural climate change. Mann et al ([redacted] data from tree rings, ice cores and corals over the past millennium with recent temperature records, the rise over the [redacted] than any other warming period over the last 1,700 years. In addition, the Arctic Sea ice is melting at an [redacted] [redacted] melted by 2030 (Stroeve et al, 2007). Such examples demonstrate that the world is heating up and the only explanation is human activity.

Another argument put forward by opponents of climate change is that the research is often based on computerized [redacted], which [redacted]. According to Lewis and Curry (2014), a comparison between observational data and computer climate models concluded [redacted] sensitivity" and are overestimating how fast the earth will warm as CO2 levels increase. However, research conducted by Zeke Hausfather [redacted] (Buis, 2020) found [redacted] they studied overestimated or underestimated global warming, and concluded that most of the climate models have been [redacted] that the data is constantly compared with data from other models from the around the world, and the models go through rigorous testing with equations being revised as and if required [redacted] of the [redacted], it is vital to take the results seriously, and what these models tell us is that the global temperature is rising, and [redacted] behavior of the world's citizens.

In conclusion, the debate of whether climate change is a natural process or a result of human activities is [redacted] the Earth has been through temperature changes similar in the past and believe that the method [redacted]. However, the correlation between the increase in global warming gases and a rise in temperatures is [redacted] that climate change is caused by human activities. Even without scientific evidence, it seems obvious that [redacted] is polluting [redacted] ever. Overall, climate change is happening and societies need to take international action now.

[576 words]

Reference list

Buis, A. (2020). *Study confirms climate models are getting future warming projections right*. Online Available at: <http://climate.nasa.gov/news/2943/study-confirms-climate-models-are-getting-it-right> [Accessed 20th April 2020].

Lewis, N. and Curry, J. (2014). The implications for climate sensitivity of AR5 forcing and heat uptake estimates. *Climate Dynamics*, 45(3-4), pp.1009-1023.

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NOAA. (2013), *Climate Models* [Online] Available at: <http://www.climate.gov> [Accessed 21st April. 2020].

Soon, W. and Baliunas, S. (2003). Global warming. *Physical Geography*, 27(3), pp.448-455.

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Peer Feedback Checklist

One-sided argument (persuasive) essay

Rationale: Improve your own writing skills by identifying the following features in your partner's essay.

Task: Read your partner's essay and complete column three in the table below.

Introduction:	Yes/No/Not sure
What the topic is and why it is important.	
Definition (if needed).	
Specific information about the topic.	
The context (if needed).	
A thesis statement.	
Main Body:	Answer Questions
How many paragraphs are there?	
Which structure has been used?	
Are both counter-arguments & arguments included?	
Has the student used counter-argument & argument language correctly?	
Has the student linked the main body to the essay question and thesis?	
Conclusion:	Yes/No/Not Sure
Is there a summary of the key points?	
Does it answer the essay question & is the thesis restated?	
Does it end with a prediction or suggestion?	

Reading Exercise: Outline #5 Block

Fill in this outline for the essay on: *Do you agree that climate change is a result of human activities?*

Introduction	
General	
Specific	
Thesis	

Counter-arguments (opposite views)	
1.Point: Support: Support:	
2.Point: Support: Support:	

Arguments (views that support the thesis)	
1.Point: Support: Support:	
2.Point: Support: Support:	

Conclusion	
Summary	
Thesis	
Suggestion or prediction	

Reading Exercise: Outline #6 Point-by-point

Fill in this outline for the essay on: Do you agree that climate change is a result of human activities?

Introduction	
General	
Specific	
Thesis	

Counter-argument, Transition – Rebuttal Arguments.	
1. Counter-argument:	
Support:	
Support:	
However, rebuttal argument:	
Support:	
Support:	

Counter-argument, Transition -Rebuttal Arguments.	
2. Counter-argument:	
Support:	
Support:	
However, rebuttal argument:	
Support:	
Support:	

Conclusion	
Summary	
Thesis	
Suggestion or prediction	