

'For and Against' Essay



advantages

to be for/in favour for

pros

to support



disadvantages

to be against

cons

to refute

If you could have fewer or more brothers or sisters, how many would you have? Why?



I'd like to have
more brothers
or sisters
because...

Idea 1

Idea 2



Idea 3

Idea 4

Idea 5

Idea 6

Idea 1

Idea 2

Idea 3

Idea 4



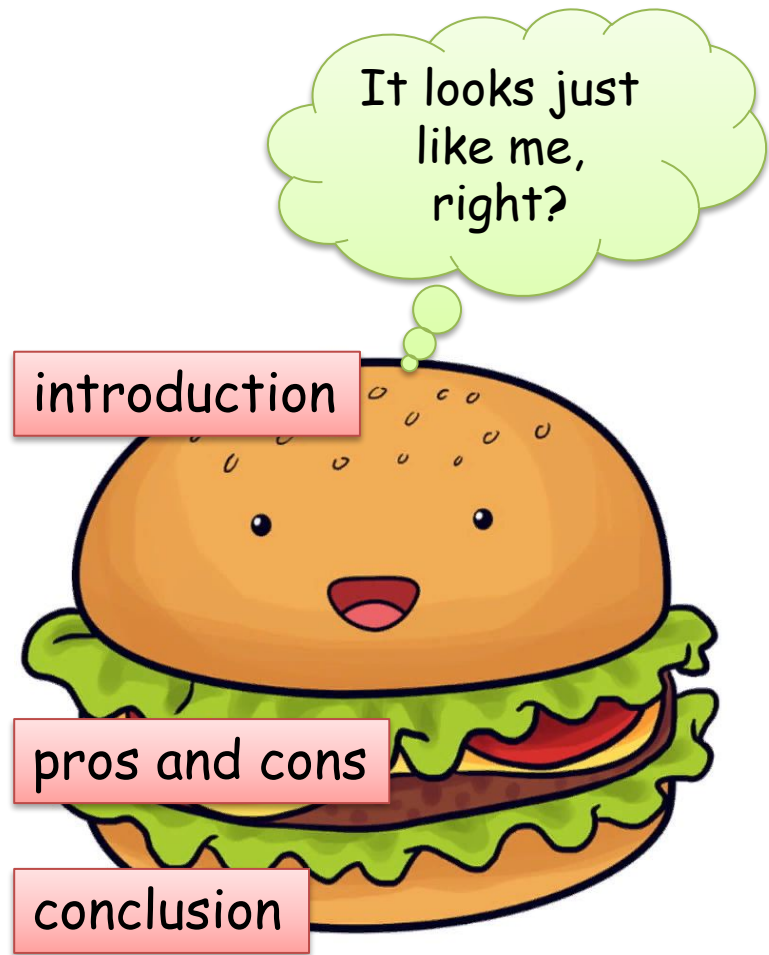
I'd like to have
fewer brothers
or sisters
because...

Idea 5

Idea 6

A **for-and-against essay** is a discursive essay in which you consider the advantages and disadvantages of a special topic. It should consist of:

- **an introduction** in which you present the topic without giving your opinion.
- **two main body paragraphs**. In one paragraph you present arguments for the statement in the title, in other paragraph you present arguments against.
- **a conclusion** in which you summarise the topic and express your own opinion.



Read the exam strategy and the introduction to the essay.
Which two of the techniques (a–c) does the writer use?

EXAM STRATEGY

In the introduction to the essay, you should show that you understand the title of the essay, and what the essay needs to cover. You can do one or more of these things:

- a make one or two general statements which relate to the topic and / or give some background information.
- b rephrase the statement to show that you understand the main issue.
- c give a brief introduction to both sides of the argument.

**It's better to be an only child than to come from a large family.
Discuss.**

In the past it was common for married couples to have a lot of children. Nowadays, couple are increasingly choosing not to have children at all, or to have just one child. The question we need to answer is: is life better for children who grow up without brothers and sisters?

.....

Read the essay. Which paragraph puts forward arguments
(a) for the statement in the title? (b) against the statement?

It's better to be an only child than to come from a large family.

Discuss.

In the past it was common for married couples to have a lot of children. Nowadays, couples are increasingly choosing not to have children at all, or to have just one child. The question we need to answer is: is life better for children who grow up without brothers and sisters?

It is hard to deny that children with no brothers or sisters get more attention from their parents than children in large families. This can make them feel more confident and secure. It is also true that brothers and sisters in large families often argue a lot. They have to share possessions and living space, a bedroom for example, and thus can lead to conflict. An only child does not face this problem.

On the other hand, children with no brothers or sisters may sometimes feel lonely, as they have no one at home to play with. They have to find friends to play with in their free time, and this may be difficult if they do not live in a large community. It can also be argued that they are often 'spoilt'. Their parents give them whatever they want, and so they don't learn to share or to co-operate with other people.

To sum up, there are clearly some advantages to being an only child, but also some disadvantages. It depends on personal experience and individual circumstances. In my view, It's better to have brothers and sisters, but I'm from a large family!

Read the Learn this! box. Find four of the phrases in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the essay.

LEARN THIS!

Presenting an argument

It is true / clear that ... It is hard to deny that ...

It can be argued that ... Some people argue that ...

Presenting an opposing argument

On the other hand, ...

However, some people argue that ...

Other people take the opposite view and claim that ...

.....

It is hard to deny that children with no brothers or sisters get more attention from their parents than children in large families. This can make them feel more confident and secure. It is also true that brothers and sisters in large families often argue a lot. They have to share possessions and living space, a bedroom for example, and thus can lead to conflict. An only child does not face this problem.

On the other hand, children with no brothers or sisters may sometimes feel lonely, as they have no one at home to play with. They have to find friends to play with in their free time, and this may be difficult if they do not live in a large community.

It can also be argued that they are often 'spoilt'. Their parents give them whatever they want, and so they don't learn to share or to co-operate with other people.

.....

- 5 Read the exam strategy. Identify an example or a supporting statement for each argument in the essay.

EXAM STRATEGY

Follow each argument in your essay with an example or a supporting statement.

- 1 Argument followed by example:

Only children get more privacy. For example, they don't have to share a bedroom.

- 2 Argument followed by supporting statement:

Children from large families are rarely lonely. There's always someone to talk to.

.....
It is hard to deny that children with no brothers or sisters get more attention from their parents than children in large families. This can make them feel more confident and secure. It is also true that brothers and sisters in large families often argue a lot. They have to share possessions and living space, a bedroom for example, and thus can lead to conflict. An only child does not face this problem.

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.....

- 6 Read the *Learn this!* box and the conclusion of the essay. What is the writer's opinion? Do you agree with him / her? Why? / Why not?

LEARN THIS!

For and against essay conclusion

- 1 You can begin the conclusion with:
To sum up / In summary, I would say that ...
- 2 You should give your opinion. This could be a balanced view, or you may agree with the statement in the title, or you may disagree with it.

.....

To sum up, there are clearly some advantages to being an only child, but also some disadvantages. It depends on personal experience and individual circumstances. In my view, It's better to have brothers and sisters, but I'm from a large family!

- 7** You are going to write an essay entitled *Friends have more influence than family on teenagers*.
- 1 Plan the second and third paragraphs. Think of two arguments for the statement and two against.
 - 2 Think of an example or a supporting statement for each of the arguments.
 - 3 Read the exam strategy in exercise 2 and plan the introduction.
 - 4 Read the second *Learn this!* box again. Decide what *your* opinion is and plan the conclusion.
- 8** Write the essay (200–250 words).

CHECK YOUR WORK

Have you:

- followed all the instructions in exercise 7?
- checked your spelling and grammar?

Friends have more influence than family on teenagers.

Get Ideas

- What do you already know about the statement or topic?
- List as many arguments as you can **for** and **against**.

For	Against
Friends share similar experience.	Everyone spends a significant part of their life with family members whether they like it or not.
They don't bother about the so-called generation gap.	Teenagers are under great influence of their families because they communicate on daily basis.
...	...

- Now choose your two strongest arguments in each category.
- Decide what your own opinion is.

Tips for 'for and against' essays

- ✓ Do not give your opinion in the first paragraph, just give a general introduction to the topic.
- ✓ Do not mix up for and against arguments in the same paragraph.
- ✓ Try to write a similar amount for both your for and against paragraphs to show you are giving a balanced view.
- ✓ Support your arguments by giving evidence or thinking about the possible consequences of any changes.
- ✓ Only give your own opinion in the final paragraph.

Introducing the topic

Some / Many people think / believe / consider (*that*) However, others ...

There are (*strong*) arguments for and against this idea.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to this idea.

Adding ideas

Furthermore, / Moreover, / What is more, / In addition (*to this*), ...

Giving reasons and results

... , because / as ...

Because of / As a result of this, ...

One (*result / effect*) of this is that ...

Useful language

Introducing contrasting ideas

On the one hand, On the other hand ...

However, / Nevertheless, it can also be argued that ...

One (*dis*)advantage of ... is ...

An(*other*) argument for / against ... is ...

A(n)(*other*) (*dis*)advantage is (*that*) ...

Giving evidence

According to ...

It is clear that ...

It has been proven that ...

We do not have any evidence that ...
(*Research*) has shown that ...

Expressing your own opinion

(*Personally*), I think / believe / feel / am of the opinion (*that*) ...

I (*strongly*) agree / disagree that ... / with the statement that ...

In my opinion / view, ...

Although I partly agree that ... , overall, I think ...