



An argumentative essay presents a controversial topic from opposing points of view in a clear and logical way. You end with a conclusion. Therefore, your present arguments for each side by using different approaches. Typical tasks will ask you to **discuss**, **assess** or **evaluate** a topic or statement.

Difference between a comment?



In a **written discussion** (Operator: *discuss*) you give arguments for and against something and come to a justified conclusion. In a **comment** (Operator: *comment on / write a comment*) you want to convince the reader of your own opinion on an issue. You have to give arguments to support it and may even introduce counter-arguments which you refute to make your own arguments even stronger.

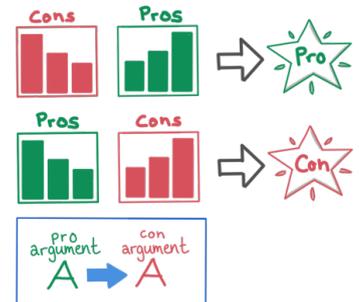
Operator	Explanation in German
assess beurteilen	zu einem Sachverhalt oder einer Aussage unter Verwendung von Fachwissen und Fachmethoden eine begründete Einschätzung geben
discuss erörtern	eine These oder Problemstellung unter Abwägen von Pro- und Kontraargumenten hinterfragen und zu einem eigenen Urteil gelangen
evaluate bewerten	wie Operator ‚beurteilen‘, aber zusätzlich die eigenen Maßstäbe begründet darlegen

Step 1: Preparation

Concept: Collect ideas and information about the topic; note arguments for and against it. Use mind maps or a pro/con-list. Make an outline of what you are going to write and in which order. For the body of your essay choose a logical structure which fits the topic/task best:

- **Dialectical approach**

- Present all of the negative points first then the positive or alternate between arguments and counter arguments for each aspect.
- Arrange points, e.g. from weakest to strongest



- **Other approaches:**

- chronological order
- comparative: deal with similarities first, then differences
- enumerative (list form): neutral sequence of paragraphs Decide if you want to persuade the reader to agree with you or if you want to remain neutral.

Step 2: Writing

Introduction

Present the issue and attract the reader's attention, for example using background facts about the problem and its relevance today; a suitable quotation or short anecdote or question(s) [hook] that you will give answers to in the essay.

Body

Based on your outline, present each point in a separate paragraph. Support your points with evidence (examples, statistics, personal experience etc.).

Conclusion

Give a short summary of what you have written, but do not introduce any new ideas here. You may: give an outlook on further consequences/future developments/possible solutions, state your own opinion/give a recommendation or appeal to the readers to reach their own conclusion.

