










## Balanced Argument ~ Writing activities

**ALL activities to be handwritten and I expect a high standard of presentation – please use a black handwriting pen.**

**Monday** – Find the shape of a Balanced Argument: Read the model text ‘Are playtimes essential to children’s wellbeing?’ This text has different ‘shapes’ that forms the overall content of the balanced argument. Your task is to create your own success criteria for the symbols in the key, using the following idea or something similar if you would like to design your own:

<b>Pictorial Symbol</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Explanation of Feature</b>
	Question	
	Heading	
	Introduction	
	Senior View	
	Community View	
	Pupil View	
	Conclusion	
	Agree	
	Disagree	

You will need to copy the ideas in the table, adding in an explanation of each feature.

# 'Are playtimes essential to children's wellbeing?'



I

Since the academisation of schools, pupils' entitlement to playtime is an issue that has polarised opinion. Many stakeholders believe it should be a ring-fenced time and protected at all costs, whilst others believe more time for lessons is required. The subject has ignited furious viewpoints, divided communities and caused conflict among professionals: social workers, child development officers and paediatricians included. Despite being a contentious issue, it is vital that a 360-degree viewpoint is taken, so we can fully understand all sides of this important debate.



The vast majority of head teachers, whose job it is to foster rounded pupils, are desperately worried that youngsters are not getting enough physical activity or fresh air. Mr Goode, head teacher of Southfield Junior School, Paddington, stressed, "Children need fresh air and to run around and let off steam. We can't expect them to concentrate on their work without regular breaks." Often, children who are denied outdoor playtimes struggle to focus, sit still and follow instructions.



In stark contrast, some head teachers argue that playtime is disrupting children's learning and causing social and friendship problems that spill over into the classroom. Researchers found that 70-90% of primary children had felt ostracised and/or bullied at breaks. Allowing pupils to stay indoors would make them feel safer, happier and more able to engage in their learning.

To play or not to play is an issue that has divided opinion in local communities, especially among parents. Cherry Blossom, a long-standing member of an inner city PTA says, "As a loving and conscientious parent, I am very alarmed by the fact that playtimes are being taken away from children." A recent Department for Education report states that some children are getting as little as 10 minutes of outdoor activity per day, which doesn't even equate to 5% of the recommended daily amount. When are we going to act on this grave risk to our children's health?



On the other hand, some parents argue their children should be prepared for the real world of work as early as possible. Ivor Genius, who hopes his sons will follow him into the world of banking, said, "Can you imagine if the world of business stopped to play tag twice a day? It's nonsense. Playtimes make children overexcited and disrupt their concentration.

"It has been argued by some teachers that children take a long time to settle back down to learning after playtimes, meaning slower progress in core subjects." In addition, playtimes can increase staff workload through: minor accidents/injuries requiring first aid; poor pupil behaviour; arguments/violence between pupils that requires teacher intervention and damage to school property.



Often, pupils' own voices are discounted on this issue, so it is essential that we listen to their personal opinions. A recent survey of thirty Year 5 pupils showed the overwhelming majority (90%) to be in favour of playtimes. Children believed it was beneficial to their wellbeing to be able to: run around and exercise; have fun with friends; breathe some fresh air and to enjoy downtime from writing/concentrating.



In stark contrast, several pupils said playtimes were stressful and upsetting – having been isolated, bullied and made to feel fearful for their safety. Business magnate Steve Jobs, co-founder of technology giant Apple, said: "Playing hide and seek didn't get me where I am today. I'll always be grateful to the primary school teachers who let me stay indoors and mess around on the computers. It's where I developed my ideas and work ethic." Indeed, it could be argued that Britons have always put work before play: it's the fighting spirit that saw us through The Great Depression of the 1930s, two world wars and a number of peacetime recessions.

The question that remains in this time of inactive infants is...should we be pummelling playtimes or encouraging exercise? This debate is a cooking pot of opinion that is likely to continue devouring the attention of those with an interest in children's activity levels. In conclusion, there are many points for and against playtimes. At the very heart of this argument is the health of future generations. As we advance into an increasingly digital age, the debate around children's right to some simple daily fresh air is likely to continue to play out.

C

Key:



Question



Heading



Introduction



Senior view



Community View



Pupil View



Conclusion



Agree











Disagree

**Tuesday** – Find the shape of a Balanced Argument: Using the muddled up text ‘Are playtimes essential to children’s wellbeing?’ below, decide where they belong on the non-fiction shape of eight parts of the balanced argument. You could print off this page, cut up the sentences and then reorder them.

<b>A</b>	The vast majority of head teachers, whose job it is to foster rounded pupils, are desperately worried that youngsters are not getting enough physical activity or fresh air. Mr Goode, head teacher of Southfield Junior School, Paddington, stressed, “Children need fresh air and to run around and let off steam. We can’t expect them to concentrate on their work without regular breaks.” Often, children who are denied outdoor playtimes struggle to focus, sit still and follow instructions.
<b>B</b>	Often, pupils’ own voices are discounted on this issue, so it is essential that we listen to their personal opinions. A recent survey of thirty Year 5 pupils showed the overwhelming majority (90%) to be in favour of playtimes. Children believed it was beneficial to their wellbeing to be able to: run around and exercise; have fun with friends; breathe some fresh air and to enjoy downtime from writing/concentrating.
<b>C</b>	In stark contrast, several pupils said playtimes were stressful and upsetting – having been isolated, bullied and made to feel fearful for their safety. Business magnate Steve Jobs, co-founder of technology giant Apple, said: “Playing hide and seek didn’t get me where I am today. I’ll always be grateful to the primary school teachers who let me stay indoors and mess around on the computers. It’s where I developed my ideas and work ethic.” Indeed, it could be argued that Britons have always put work before play: it’s the fighting spirit that saw us through The Great Depression of the 1930s, two world wars and a number of peacetime recessions.
<b>D</b>	Since the academisation of schools, pupils’ entitlement to playtime is an issue that has polarised opinion. Many stakeholders believe it should be a ring-fenced time and protected at all costs, whilst others believe more time for lessons is required. The subject has ignited furious viewpoints, divided communities and caused conflict among professionals: social workers, child development officers and paediatricians included. Despite being a contentious issue, it is vital that a 360-degree viewpoint is taken, so we can fully understand all sides of this important debate.
<b>E</b>	In stark contrast, some head teachers argue that playtime is disrupting children’s learning and causing social and friendship problems that spill over into the classroom. Researchers found that 70-90% of primary children had felt ostracised and/or bullied at breaks. Allowing pupils to stay indoors would make them feel safer, happier and more able to engage in their learning.
<b>F</b>	The question that remains in this time of inactive infants is...should we be pummelling playtimes or encouraging exercise? This debate is a cooking pot of opinion that is likely to continue devouring the attention of those with an interest in children’s activity levels. In conclusion, there are many points for and against playtimes. At the very heart of this argument is the health of future generations. As we advance into an increasingly digital age, the debate around children’s right to some simple daily fresh air is likely to continue to play out.
<b>G</b>	To play or not to play is an issue that has divided opinion in local communities, especially among parents. Cherry Blossom, a long-standing member of an inner city PTA says, “As a loving and conscientious parent, I am very alarmed by the fact that playtimes are being taken away from children.” A recent Department for Education report states that some children are getting as little as 10 minutes of outdoor activity per day, which doesn’t even equate to 5% of the recommended daily amount. When are we going to act on this grave risk to our children’s health?
<b>H</b>	On the other hand, some parents argue their children should be prepared for the real world of work as early as possible. Ivor Genius, who hopes his sons will follow him into the world of banking, said, “Can you imagine if the world of business stopped to play tag twice a day? It’s nonsense. Playtimes make children overexcited and disrupt their concentration.” “It has been argued by some teachers that children take a long time to settle back down to learning after playtimes, meaning slower progress in core subjects.” In addition, playtimes can increase staff workload through: minor accidents/injuries requiring first aid; poor pupil behaviour; arguments/violence between pupils that requires teacher intervention and damage to school property.



Copy and complete the grid below where you need to identify the order of the text and the name of each paragraph. You also need to identify important words and vocabulary that give clues to the reader of where sentences belong, e.g. ‘*The vast majority of headteachers...*’

	<b>Pictorial Symbol</b>	<b>Letter of paragraph</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Words/vocabulary that give clues to the reader</b>
1			Question, heading + introduction	
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8			Conclusion	

**Thursday** – Research into Children’s Screen Use: Download the information about children’s screen use. Make notes to gather information to include in your balanced argument about screen use. You could also use information from our own class: on today’s discussion, you will need to submit data about your own use of screens using the questions on the next page.

## Screen Use Questionnaire

Which devices do you use at home on a daily basis? Circle, tick or highlight all that apply.	Tablet/iPad	Mobile Phone
	PC	Games Console
	Laptop	TV
On average (NOT DURING LOCKDOWN), how many hours do you use devices per day at home Monday to Friday?		
On average, how many hours do you use devices per day on Saturday and Sunday?		
(NOT DURING LOCKDOWN) Monday to Friday: What time do you stop using your devices (i.e. before you go to bed)?		
Saturday and Sunday: What time do you stop using your devices (i.e. before you go to bed)?		
On average, how many hours of exercise per day do you take at home Monday to Friday?		
On average, how many hours of exercise per day do you take on Saturday and Sunday?		
During lockdown, on average, how many more hours are you using a device Monday to Friday?		
On average, what time do you go to bed Monday to Friday?		
On average, what time do you go to bed on Saturday and Sunday?		

**Friday** – Different Points of View: Look the role cards on the next page and summarise the information about their views for and against screen use. You can use the format in the table below. I have modelled the first two points of view.

<b>Arguments FOR</b>		<b>Arguments AGAINST</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
Governor	Keep up to date with news + worldwide issues; Can research anything; Schools need to use technology, need to encourage use	Local GP (doctor)	Can lead to emotional disorders; Affects good quality sleep which children really need; Violent video games can cause aggressive behaviour later in life

You will also need to summarise your own personal viewpoints in three bullet points. I would like you to upload these to today's discussion.

# Role Cards

**School governor: FOR**

**Occupation:** School governor

**Name:** Mrs Elizabeth Windsor

**Age:** 50

- It is important that children are able to keep up to date with news and worldwide matters.
- You can research anything, so children can find clues etc.
- Schools need to use technology, so we can't then discourage children.

**Doctor: AGAINST**

**Occupation:** Local GP

**Name:** Dr Ian Flexion

**Age:** Unknown

- Can lead to emotional disorders.
- A big reduction in valuable R.E.M. (the deeper, dream phase of sleep). This impacts on children's development and health.
- Lots of research indicates that playing violent video games is a significant risk factor for later physically aggressive behaviour.

**Head teacher: AGAINST**

**Occupation:** Head teacher of Spring Road Primary

**Name:** Mrs Jones

**Age:** 52

- Children becoming lazy with reading – having a negative impact on learning.
- Physical ability in decline (P.E. lessons and uptake of sports clubs). Children are not playing as much, so not building strength/stamina.
- Cyber bullying – damaging children's self-esteem (becoming inactive due to this).

**Head teacher: FOR**

**Occupation:** Head teacher of Green Oaks

**Name:** Mr Smith

**Age:** 48

- Prepares children for their futures – all jobs use some form of technology. Therefore, it is a worthwhile use of leisure time.
- Google – can find out anything at the touch of a button. More opportunities/information to get involved with activities.
- Stimulus in lessons to excite children about learning. Enthuses them to learn.

**Parent: FOR**

**Occupation:** Parent

**Name:** Mr Dyton

**Age:** 40

- We do not have enough family time.
- Lack of sleep and are tired.
- Does not go out and play with friends or get exercise.
- Unsafe.

**Head teacher: AGAINST**

**Occupation:** Parent

**Name:** Mrs Johnson

**Age:** 32

- Gives me some quiet time to get jobs done.
- Peaceful life – no arguments or tantrums.
- Enabling them to be up to date with modern technology.

**Pupil: AGAINST**

**Occupation:** Pupil

**Name:** Maurice Martin

**Age:** 10

- Prefer to meet friends at clubs in the community.
- Like being outside and exploring environment – bike rides etc.
- Reading books boosts my vocabulary and makes me a better writer across all my subjects.

**Pupil: FOR**

**Occupation:** Pupil

**Name:** Sally Cinnamon

**Age:** 11

- Helps with homework
- Brain training apps and fitness videos on YouTube (e.g. Just Dance).
- Developing friendships/keep in touch.