

Issue Task

Easy Difficulty Level

Topic 1: “Should high school students be required to learn a second language, or should it be optional? Discuss both perspectives and give your opinion.”

Sample Response: *Learning a second language can enhance cognitive abilities, cultural awareness, and future career opportunities. Many believe that high school students should be required to study a second language to gain these benefits. However, others argue that language learning should be optional, as students may have different interests and future goals. While making second language courses optional allows for personal choice, mandatory language education could offer students valuable skills and broaden their horizons. Finding a balance between these approaches might involve offering language courses as electives with a strong emphasis on their advantages.*

Topic 2: “Do you think that extracurricular activities are important for children’s development? Why or why not? Provide reasons to support your answer.”

Sample Response: *Extracurricular activities play a crucial role in children's development by fostering skills such as teamwork, leadership, and time management. Participation in activities like sports, music, or clubs can enhance social skills and provide a well-rounded education. On the other hand, some may argue that academic focus should be prioritized over extracurriculars. Balancing academic responsibilities with extracurricular involvement can help children develop diverse skills and interests, contributing to their overall growth and well-being.*

Medium Difficulty Level

Topic 1: “Some argue that online education is just as effective as traditional classroom learning, while others believe that face-to-face interactions are crucial for a quality education. Evaluate both sides and provide your opinion.”

Sample Response: *Online education offers flexibility and accessibility, allowing students to learn at their own pace and from various locations. It can be particularly advantageous for those with busy schedules or geographic constraints. However, traditional classroom learning provides valuable face-to-face interactions, immediate feedback, and a structured environment that some students find essential for effective learning. Both methods have their strengths, but a hybrid approach combining online and in-person elements could offer a more comprehensive educational experience. In my view, integrating both approaches can optimize learning outcomes and cater to diverse student needs.*

Topic 2: “Should governments provide financial support to artists and cultural institutions, or should funding be left to private patrons and businesses? Discuss both options and give your opinion.”

Sample Response: *Government funding for artists and cultural institutions can ensure that diverse forms of art and culture are accessible to the public and support the preservation of cultural heritage. Public funding can also provide financial stability for artists who might struggle to secure private sponsorship. Conversely, relying on private patrons and businesses can encourage innovation and competition in the arts, but may lead to financial instability and biased support. A balanced approach involving both public and private funding could support the arts while promoting creativity and diversity.*

Hard Difficulty Level

Topic 1: “As artificial intelligence continues to advance, some believe it will lead to significant job losses and economic disruption, while others argue that it will create new opportunities and efficiencies. Analyze both viewpoints and provide your perspective.”

Sample Response: *The advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to automate many tasks, which could lead to job losses and economic disruption in certain industries. Concerns include the displacement of workers and the need for retraining. Conversely, AI can drive innovation, create new job opportunities, and enhance efficiencies in various sectors. The debate centers on whether the positive impacts of AI outweigh the potential negative consequences. In my view, while AI presents challenges, its ability to create new opportunities and improve productivity can be harnessed with thoughtful policies and investment in workforce development to mitigate negative effects.*

Topic 2: “The rise of social media has transformed how we communicate and access information, but it has also introduced concerns about privacy and misinformation. Evaluate these concerns and offer your opinion on how they might be addressed.”

Sample Response: *Social media has revolutionized communication by providing instant access to information and enabling global connectivity. However, it has also raised significant concerns about privacy, with personal data often being exploited by various entities, and misinformation, which can spread rapidly and influence public opinion. Addressing these issues requires robust data protection regulations, transparency from social media platforms, and efforts to improve media literacy among users. In my opinion, a collaborative approach involving policymakers, tech companies, and users is essential for mitigating these concerns while preserving the benefits of social media.*

Topic 3: "Some argue that the pursuit of economic growth should take precedence over environmental concerns, while others believe that protecting the environment is more important. Analyze both perspectives and provide your viewpoint."

Sample Response: *The pursuit of economic growth is often seen as essential for improving living standards, creating jobs, and fostering innovation. Proponents argue that economic development can lead to advancements in technology and infrastructure that benefit society. However, others contend that prioritizing environmental protection is crucial for ensuring the long-term health of our planet and future generations. Environmental degradation can have severe consequences, and sustainable practices are necessary to mitigate these effects. In my view, economic growth and environmental protection should be pursued simultaneously through sustainable development practices that promote long-term prosperity and ecological balance.*

Easy Difficulty Level

Topic 1: "Some people think that children should be encouraged to participate in sports activities, while others believe that academic success is more important. Discuss both sides and give your opinion."

Sample Response: *Encouraging children to participate in sports activities offers numerous benefits, including physical fitness, improved teamwork, and enhanced social skills. Sports help children develop discipline and resilience, which are valuable traits in both academic and personal settings. Conversely, some argue that focusing on academic success is crucial for a child's future, as strong academic performance can lead to better educational and career opportunities. While academics are important, I believe that a balanced approach is best. Combining academic pursuits with sports can provide children with a well-rounded education, fostering both intellectual and physical development.*

Topic 2: "The use of technology in education is becoming increasingly common. Some people believe this is a positive development, while others worry it might have negative effects. Discuss both views and provide your opinion."

Sample Response: *Technology in education offers various advantages, such as interactive learning tools, access to a wealth of information, and personalized learning experiences. Digital platforms can make learning more engaging and accessible. However, there are concerns that excessive reliance on technology might lead to distractions, reduce face-to-face interactions, and contribute to digital divide issues. While technology can enhance learning, it is essential to use it judiciously.*

Integrating technology with traditional teaching methods can help maximize its benefits while addressing potential drawbacks.

Medium Difficulty Level

Topic 1: "The trend of working from home has become more common. Some argue that it offers a better work-life balance, while others believe it can lead to isolation and reduced productivity. Analyze both sides and provide your opinion."

Sample Response: *Working from home can provide a better work-life balance by allowing employees to manage their schedules more flexibly and reduce commute times. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and personal well-being. However, remote work can also result in isolation, as employees miss out on social interactions and collaborative opportunities found in a traditional office setting. Additionally, maintaining productivity can be challenging without the structure of an office environment. In my opinion, the benefits of remote work are significant, but it is important to implement strategies to combat isolation and ensure productivity, such as regular virtual meetings and clear communication channels.*

Topic 2: "The impact of globalisation on local cultures is a subject of debate. Some believe that globalisation leads to cultural homogenisation, while others argue it fosters cultural exchange and diversity. Discuss both perspectives and provide your viewpoint."

Sample Response: *Globalisation has led to the spread of cultural practices and products across borders, which can result in cultural homogenisation where local traditions are overshadowed by global trends. On the other hand, globalisation also promotes cultural exchange, allowing people to learn about and appreciate different cultures. This can lead to increased diversity and mutual understanding. In my view, while globalisation may pose risks to local cultures, it also provides opportunities for cultural enrichment. Striking a balance between preserving local traditions and embracing global influences can foster a more inclusive and diverse cultural landscape.*

Hard Difficulty Level

Topic 1: "The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) presents both opportunities and challenges. Some argue that AI will lead to significant advancements in various fields, while others worry about its potential risks and ethical concerns. Analyze both sides and present your opinion."

Sample Response: *Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to drive significant advancements in fields such as healthcare, finance, and transportation by automating tasks, enhancing data analysis, and improving decision-making processes. These innovations can lead to increased*

efficiency and new opportunities. However, there are concerns about AI's potential risks, including job displacement, privacy issues, and ethical dilemmas related to decision-making algorithms. While AI offers promising benefits, it is crucial to address these concerns through robust ethical guidelines and regulations. Balancing innovation with ethical considerations can help maximize the positive impact of AI while mitigating its risks.

Topic 2: "The concept of universal basic income (UBI) has gained attention as a potential solution to economic inequality and job displacement caused by automation. Some believe UBI is a necessary reform, while others view it as impractical and costly. Evaluate both viewpoints and offer your perspective."

Sample Response: *Universal Basic Income (UBI) is proposed as a solution to economic inequality and job displacement by providing a guaranteed income to all individuals, ensuring financial security regardless of employment status. Proponents argue that UBI can reduce poverty and simplify welfare systems. Conversely, critics argue that UBI may be economically unfeasible due to its high cost and could potentially disincentivize work. Additionally, there are concerns about how to fund such a program without straining government resources. In my view, UBI has potential benefits, but its implementation requires careful planning and experimentation. Exploring pilot programs and phased approaches can help assess its viability and effectiveness.*

Topic 3: "Climate change is a pressing issue that has prompted many governments to adopt environmental policies. Some believe that these policies are essential for long-term sustainability, while others argue they hinder economic growth. Discuss both sides and provide your opinion."

Sample Response: *Environmental policies aimed at combating climate change are crucial for ensuring long-term sustainability and protecting natural resources. Supporters argue that these policies are necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, preserve ecosystems, and safeguard future generations. Conversely, critics argue that such policies can impose economic burdens on businesses, potentially lead to job losses, and slow economic growth. Balancing environmental goals with economic considerations is essential. In my opinion, while addressing climate change is a priority, policies should be designed to promote sustainable practices while supporting economic adaptation. This approach can help achieve both environmental and economic objectives.*

Argument Task

Easy

1. Argument: The following is a recommendation from a marketing consultant for a local bakery chain:

“The introduction of a loyalty program at our local bakery chain will boost customer retention and increase sales. Our competitor, Sweet Treats Bakery, saw a 15% rise in repeat customers after implementing a similar program.”

Response: *To evaluate this argument, we need evidence on the effectiveness of Sweet Treats Bakery's loyalty program, such as the specific features of the program and customer feedback. Additionally, data on the current customer retention rates and preferences of the local bakery chain's customers would be useful. If evidence shows that Sweet Treats Bakery's program was well-received and that similar customer demographics exist, the argument is strengthened. Conversely, if the increase in repeat customers was due to other factors or if the local bakery chain's customers have different preferences, the argument may be weakened.*

2. Argument: The following appeared in a report from a fitness club manager:

“Offering a discount on gym memberships during the summer will attract more members. Our competitor, Fit & Fun Gym, reported a 10% increase in membership sign-ups during their summer promotion.”

Response: *Evidence needed includes data on membership trends and customer responses to Fit & Fun Gym's summer promotion, as well as information on the local market's seasonal trends. If evidence supports that the discount led to increased sign-ups and similar market conditions exist, the argument is strengthened. If other factors contributed to the increase or the local market reacts differently to promotions, the argument may be weakened.*

3. Argument: The following is from a proposal by a school principal:

“To improve student performance, our school should implement a new reading program. Our neighboring school that adopted a similar program reported a 12% increase in reading test scores.”

Response: *To evaluate this argument, evidence is needed on the specific elements of the reading program implemented by the neighboring school, as well as data on the baseline reading scores and the context of the improvement. If the neighboring school's program is directly comparable and the increase in scores can be attributed to the program, the argument is strengthened. If other factors contributed to the improvement or if the local school's context differs significantly, the argument may be weakened.*

Medium

4. Argument: The following is from a business proposal for a tech startup:

“Investing in cutting-edge software development tools will enhance our product quality and attract more clients. Our competitor, Tech Innovators Inc., reported a 25% increase in client acquisitions after upgrading their tools.”

Response: *To evaluate this argument, we need evidence on the specific software tools used by Tech Innovators Inc. and how they contributed to their increase in client acquisitions. Additionally, understanding the current toolset and product quality of the tech startup is important. If the tools led to measurable improvements and similar client needs exist, the argument is strengthened. If other factors influenced Tech Innovators Inc.’s success or if the tools do not align with the startup’s needs, the argument may be weakened.*

5. Argument: The following appeared in a memo from the director of a chain of restaurants:

“Switching to locally sourced ingredients will boost our restaurant’s reputation and increase customer satisfaction. Our competitor, Gourmet Eats, reported a 20% increase in customer satisfaction ratings after making a similar switch.”

Response: *Evidence needed includes details on how locally sourced ingredients improved customer satisfaction at Gourmet Eats and customer feedback specific to that restaurant. Additionally, information on the current supply chain and customer preferences at the chain of restaurants is important. If the benefits experienced by Gourmet Eats are applicable and local customers value the switch, the argument is strengthened. If other factors influenced the ratings or the local market has different preferences, the argument may be weakened.*

6. Argument: The following appeared in a report from a university’s research committee:

“Introducing a new online learning platform will increase student engagement and performance. Similar universities that adopted online learning platforms have seen a 15% improvement in student engagement scores.”

Response: *To evaluate this argument, evidence is needed on the specific features of the online learning platforms and their impact on student engagement at comparable universities. Additionally, information on the current engagement levels and technological infrastructure at the university is relevant. If the platform led to noticeable improvements and similar conditions exist, the argument is strengthened. If other factors contributed*

to the increase or the local context differs significantly, the argument may be weakened.

Hard

7. Argument: The following is from a strategic plan proposed by a tech company's executive team:

“Adopting a new artificial intelligence (AI) system will revolutionize our customer service operations and lead to a 30% increase in customer satisfaction. Competitors who have implemented similar AI systems have reported significant improvements.”

Response: *Evidence needed includes details on the AI systems used by competitors, how they were implemented, and the specific improvements observed in customer satisfaction. Additionally, data on the current customer service operations and potential challenges in integrating AI systems within the company would be useful. If the AI system demonstrates clear benefits and similar results are achievable, the argument is strengthened. If the improvements were due to other factors or if integration challenges are significant, the argument may be weakened.*

8. Argument: The following appeared in a policy brief from an environmental organization:

“Implementing stricter emissions regulations will significantly reduce air pollution and improve public health. Countries with stringent regulations have seen a marked decline in pollution levels and health issues.”

Response: *To evaluate this argument, evidence is needed on the specific emissions regulations, their implementation, and their impact on pollution and health in countries with stringent policies. Additionally, information on the local context, including current pollution levels and healthcare infrastructure, is crucial. If the regulations led to clear improvements and similar conditions exist, the argument is strengthened. If local factors or differences in regulation impact the outcome, the argument may be weakened.*

9. Argument: The following is from a memo by a financial analyst:

“Expanding our investment portfolio to include emerging markets will yield higher returns. Financial institutions with similar strategies have achieved impressive growth rates in these markets.”

Response: *Evidence needed includes data on the performance of emerging markets for financial institutions and the specific strategies employed. Additionally, an analysis of the potential risks and rewards of investing in emerging markets compared to current investments is essential. If the expansion shows consistent growth and aligns with the institution's risk tolerance, the argument is strengthened. If risks outweigh*

potential returns or if the growth is not replicable, the argument may be weakened.