

Lesson Plan: Discussing advantages and disadvantages

Level	Intermediate / Advanced (B1–C1)
Time	60–90 minutes
Skills	Writing, speaking
Focus	Balanced argument structure; pros/cons vocabulary; concession; essay writing

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Structure a balanced advantages/disadvantages essay or discussion correctly
- Use a wide range of vocabulary for presenting pros and cons
- Use concession language to acknowledge opposing points
- Produce a well-organised written or spoken balanced argument

TARGET LANGUAGE & EXAMPLES

Vocabulary for advantages

- A key advantage of X is that... / One major benefit is...
- X has the added benefit of... / X makes it possible to...
- Perhaps the greatest advantage of X is... / X results in significant benefits for...

Vocabulary for disadvantages

- A significant drawback of X is... / One major downside is...
- The main disadvantage is... / X can lead to problems with...
- One concern is that... / A key limitation is... / Not everyone benefits from...

Concession and balance

- While X has clear benefits, it also has significant drawbacks.
- Although X can be effective, there are also concerns about...
- On the one hand... On the other hand...
- Despite its advantages, X is not without problems.

Essay structure

- Introduction: overview of the topic + thesis
- Body paragraph 1: Advantages with examples/evidence
- Body paragraph 2: Disadvantages with examples/evidence
- Conclusion: balanced summary + recommendation (optional)

Meaning & Nuance

Formal / neutral phrase	Informal equivalent	Example
a significant advantage	a big plus	A key advantage of electric cars is lower running costs.

a major drawback	a big problem	A major drawback is the limited battery range.
it has the potential to	it can/might	It has the potential to reduce emissions significantly.
on the other hand	but	On the other hand, the initial cost is very high.
it is worth noting that	also	It is worth noting that not all users are affected equally.

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up: Quick pros and cons (10 min)

Task: Students have 2 minutes to list pros and cons of working from home.

- Share — elicit vocabulary. Introduce formal alternatives to casual words.

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Vocabulary sets: advantages, disadvantages, concession language.

- Essay structure: useful as a framework for both speaking and writing.
- Concession: this is what separates a balanced argument from a one-sided one.

3. Balanced argument discussion (20 min)

Task: Students discuss a topic, deliberately presenting both sides.

- Each person must present one advantage AND one disadvantage before giving their view.
- Topics: social media, AI in the workplace, living in a big city.

4. Writing task (30 min)

Task: Write a 150-word balanced essay paragraph on a given topic.

- Structure: one advantage + one disadvantage + concession + stance.
- Peer review: is it truly balanced? Is the vocabulary varied?

TEACHER NOTES

- Advantages/disadvantages is the most-searched essay topic online — very high SEO value.
- The concession step is what many learners skip — it's what makes an argument credible and balanced.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one or more:

1. Write a full advantages/disadvantages essay (200–250 words) on a topic of your choice.
2. Find an advantages/disadvantages essay online and analyse its structure.
3. Prepare a 2-minute spoken balanced argument on a topic to present next class.