

# 7 The art of persuasion

Using reporting verbs to present points of view | Recognizing synonyms

## Vocabulary

### Reporting verbs:

- **advocate (advocates, advocating, advocated)**  
VERB If you **advocate** a particular action or plan, you recommend it publicly. [FORMAL] ■ *a conservative who advocates fewer government controls on business* ■ *the tax policy advocated by the Opposition*
- **acknowledge (acknowledges, acknowledging, acknowledged)**  
VERB If you **acknowledge** a fact or a situation, you accept or admit that it is true or that it exists. [FORMAL] ■ [+ that] *It is widely acknowledged that transferring knowledge in a classroom environment is very inefficient.* ■ *Belatedly, the government has acknowledged the problem.*
- **assert (asserts, asserting, asserted)**  
VERB If someone **asserts** a fact or belief, they state it firmly. [FORMAL] ■ *The senator plans to assert that the bill violates the First Amendment.* ■ *The defendants continue to assert their innocence.*
- **dispute (disputes, disputing, disputed)**  
VERB If you **dispute** a fact, statement, or theory, you say that it is incorrect or untrue. ■ *He disputed the allegations.* ■ [+ that] *No one disputes that vitamin C is of great value in the treatment of scurvy.*
- **imply (implies, implying, implied)**  
VERB If you **imply** that something is the case, you say something which indicates that it is the case in an indirect way. ■ *'Are you implying that I had something to do with those attacks?'* ■ *She was upset by the implied criticism.*
- **justify (justifies, justifying, justified)**  
VERB To **justify** a decision, action, or idea

means to show or prove that it is reasonable or necessary. ■ *No argument can justify a war.*

■ *Ministers agreed that this decision was fully justified by economic conditions.*

- **object (objects, objecting, objected)**  
VERB If you **object** to something, you express your dislike or disapproval of it. ■ [+ to] *A lot of people will object to the book.* ■ [+ that] *Cullen objected that his small staff would be unable to handle the added work.* ■ *We objected strongly but were outvoted.*
- **outline (outlines, outlining, outlined)**  
VERB If you **outline** an idea or a plan, you explain it in a general way. ■ *The mayor outlined his plan to clean up the town's image.*
- **question (questions, questioning, questioned)**  
VERB If you **question** something, you have or express doubts about whether it is true, reasonable, or worthwhile. ■ *Scientists began questioning the validity of the research because they could not reproduce the experiments.* ■ *It never occurs to them to question the doctor's decisions.*

### Nouns associated with persuasion:

- **benefit (benefits)**  
NOUN The **benefit of** something is the help that you get from it or the advantage that results from it. ■ [+ of] *the benefits of this form of therapy* ■ *For maximum benefit, use your treatment every day.* ■ [+ to] *I hope what I have written will be of benefit to someone else.*
- **debate (debates)**  
NOUN A **debate** is a discussion about a subject on which people have different views. ■ *An intense debate is going on within*

the Israeli government. ▫ [+ about] There has been a lot of debate among scholars about this.

- **discussion (discussions)**

NOUN If there is **discussion** about something, people talk about it, often in order to reach a decision. ▫ [+ about] There was a lot of discussion about the wording of the report. ▫ Council members are due to have informal discussions later on today.

- **drawback (drawbacks)**

NOUN A **drawback** is an aspect of something or someone that makes them less acceptable than they would otherwise be. ▫ He felt the apartment's only drawback was that it was too small.

- **evidence**

UNCOUNTABLE NOUN **Evidence** is anything that you see, experience, read, or are told that causes you to believe that something is true or has really happened. ▫ [+ of/for] the scientific evidence for global warming ▫ [+ that] There is a lot of evidence that stress is partly responsible for disease. ▫ [+ to-inf] To date there is no evidence to support this theory.

- **proof (proofs)**

NOUN **Proof** is a fact, argument, or piece of evidence which shows that something is definitely true or definitely exists. ▫ [+ of] You have to have proof of residence in the state of Texas, such as a Texas ID card. ▫ Economists have been concerned with establishing proofs for their arguments.

## Practice exercises

**Exam tip:** In the IELTS Writing exam you can demonstrate that you have a broad vocabulary by avoiding unnecessary repetition.

Many words commonly used in academic arguments have synonyms.

Example: The minister justified his position on arms control. He defended his position strongly when he gave evidence of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Learn to use synonyms when presenting your arguments.

### 1 Match each word 1–4 with its closest synonym a–d.

1 benefit	a disadvantage
2 debate	b discussion
3 drawback	c evidence
4 proof	d advantage

### 2 Find words in the text below which mean:

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1 recommend publicly (verb)                        | 4 explain in a general way (verb) |
| 2 accept the existence or truth of (verb)          | 5 disapprove of (verb)            |
| 3 proven to be reasonable or necessary (adjective) |                                   |

There has been considerable debate among politicians over whether the use of force to protect human rights can ever be justified. Some advocate the use of arms as the only way of sending a clear message to oppressive regimes. Others object to the use of force on humanitarian grounds, arguing that it inevitably results in the loss of innocent lives. While it is important to acknowledge that there are compelling arguments on both sides, I would

suggest that a range of responses should be considered when there is proof that human rights are under threat. In this essay I will outline three such responses.

**Exam tip:** In the IELTS Writing exam you should make sure that you use words correctly.

Some of the words in this unit can be followed by:

a preposition, for example: *One of the benefits of the new phone is a larger screen.*

*whether + clause, for example: I doubt whether the new policy on care for the elderly can succeed.*

*that + clause, for example: We suggested that the working day should be reduced.*

a noun or noun phrase, for example: *They cannot justify their actions.*

Learn to use words correctly by studying example sentences.

### 3 Match the beginning of each sentence 1–5 with the most appropriate ending a–e.

1 There has been some debate	a to the new motorway.
2 The advertisers acknowledged	b over whether tuition fees should be increased.
3 Campaigners have objected	c of the current system is that it rewards excessive risk-taking.
4 One of the drawbacks	d whether the government's new policy on alcohol will work.
5 Opposition politicians question	e that they had misrepresented their product.

### 4 Report the statements 1–5 using the verbs a–e.

- |               |            |          |
|---------------|------------|----------|
| a acknowledge | c object   | e imply  |
| b dispute     | d question | f assert |

- 'We have some doubts about the new printer. Will it really be more reliable than previous models?'  
Consumers \_\_\_\_\_
- 'We are completely against the sale of national treasures abroad.'  
Many people \_\_\_\_\_
- 'Yes, it is true that the National Health Service has improved the nation's health.'  
Most people \_\_\_\_\_
- 'We strongly believe that new approaches to tackling youth crime should be explored.'  
Some politicians \_\_\_\_\_
- 'These figures are not correct.'  
Experts \_\_\_\_\_
- 'In the past, students who have achieved a mark of 70% or higher in the midterm test have always passed the course. Susan has achieved a mark of 75%, so...'  
The teacher \_\_\_\_\_

## Exam practice: Writing – presenting an argument

For the IELTS Writing Task 2 you are required to write a 250-word essay on a given topic using your own knowledge and experience.

First study the text from Practice Exercise 2 as an example of how you might start your essay. Then read the dialogue below about freedom of speech. Use the words and expressions that you have learned in this unit in your response to the essay question below.

### Dialogue

**Peter:** Of course there have to be limits to free speech! Even in the most democratic countries it is illegal to incite hatred – I mean to encourage people to harm others, minority groups for example.

**Felicity:** I disagree. Free speech is essential. The ability to tolerate different points of view is the hallmark of a civilized society.

**Karen:** I think you're both right to an extent. There may have to be some limits, but only in extreme circumstance. Basically, I think you have to let people speak freely because if you don't they may take to the streets and express their views in some possibly more destructive way – by rioting for example. Look at what happened in Eastern Europe in the 1980s – and in the Middle East today.

**Peter:** Well, yes, I suppose you have a point there...

**Karen:** Also, if you look at history, there are plenty of examples of people who have been silenced for ideas that are now accepted as true.

**Felicity:** That's right! Take Galileo, for example, who said that the earth revolves around the sun. He was punished by the authorities for his views.

### WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

*Is freedom of speech necessary in a free society?*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

A model answer is provided in the Answer key on page 105.