

<i>900 exercises for Vocational Communication</i>	<b>Notes for teachers</b>	<b>E3 / 11</b>
<i>General aim</i>	<b>E: Evaluate a message</b>	
<i>Level of difficulty</i>	<b>3</b>	
<i>Intermediate aim</i>	<b>1: Give meaning to your own message</b>	
<i>Operational aim</i>	<b>1: Choose a plan of argumentation for your own message</b>	
<i>Pre-requirements</i>		
<i>Number of exercises</i>	<b>6</b>	
<i>Summing-up exercise</i>	<b>E3 / 11 – 1.6</b>	
<i>Applications (examples)</i>		
<i>Comments</i>		

To be convincing, an argument has to be well constructed. It has to include certain elements. The arguments must be relevant. And there have to be examples to support the arguments.

Let's look at each of these points in turn.

**1. The argument must be well constructed.**

There are two possible ways to construct a plan of argumentation:

- what you want to prove is given at the beginning
- what you want to prove is given at the end.

If what you want to prove is given at the beginning:

- the advantage is that the listener is prepared to follow the argumentation step by step.
- the danger is that the listener is ready to criticise the argumentation step by step if he does not agree.

**Example:**

(What you want to prove is given at the beginning.)

*The amount of alcohol in the blood decreases by about 15 mg per hour. So if you have drunk two glasses of wine or one whisky, you have to wait at least an hour before driving.*

**THIS PART OF THE TEXT CORRESPONDS TO WHAT WE WANT TO PROVE.**  
*Alcohol reduces our ability to judge distances and speed and makes us more reckless.*

*It inhibits our reflexes and lessens our reactions to a danger or an obstacle.*

*Alcohol reduces our vision and our physical coordination.*

*Drivers with an excess of alcohol in their blood misjudge situations and cannot concentrate. They get tired more easily, which can make them take unnecessary risks.*

*Finally, alcohol is the direct cause of the 500 or so deaths on the roads each year, and about half of these are due to drivers with a blood alcohol concentration of over 80 mg (or 8 %).*

**THIS PART CORRESPONDS TO THE ARGUMENTATION, BUILT ON A SERIES OF ARGUMENTS.**

**GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

If what you want to prove is given at the end:

- One advantage is that the listener is carried away by the arguments without knowing exactly where they are going to lead. He has to follow the argumentation to the end to find out what was being demonstrated.
- Another advantage is that when the argumentation leads to a conclusion, i.e. what you wanted to prove, it is this conclusion which remains in the mind of the listener, and has therefore a greater influence.

Example:

(What you want to prove is given at the beginning.)

*Alcohol reduces our ability to judge distances and speed and makes us more reckless.*

*It inhibits our reflexes and lessens our reactions to a danger or an obstacle.*

*Alcohol reduces our vision and our physical coordination.*

*Drivers with an excess of alcohol in their blood misjudge situations and cannot concentrate. They get tired more easily, which can make them take unnecessary risks.*

*Finally, alcohol is the direct cause of the 500 or so deaths on the roads each year, and about half of these are due to drivers with a blood alcohol concentration of over 80 mg (or 8 %).*

**THIS PART IS THE ARGUMENTATION**

*The amount of alcohol in the blood decreases by about 15 mg per hour. So if you have drunk two glasses of wine or one whisky, you have to wait at least an hour before driving.*

**THIS PART IS THE CONCLUSION: WHAT YOU WANTED TO PROVE**

Go to the next page.

## 2. What does the argumentation include?

You have to distinguish between ARGUMENTS and EXAMPLES, if there are any.

Don't confuse the two!

An **argument** very often has a general meaning.

An **example** usually describes a particular case or situation.

However, some examples can be used as arguments.

To practise making the distinction, read the following text and try to find the paragraph corresponding to:

- a) the conclusion (what you want to prove)
- b) the argumentation
- c) the example

### **Paragraph 1:**

If you have drunk two glasses of wine, wait at least an hour before driving.

### **Paragraph 2:**

Alcohol inhibits our reflexes and lessens our reactions to a danger or an obstacle. The amount of alcohol in the blood decreases by about 15 mg per hour

### **Paragraph 3:**

Mr. Aldridge was killed in a road accident last week. He had drunk a glass of whisky before leaving for home in his Mercedes. Too late, he saw that he was approaching a sharp bend too fast. He didn't have the reflex to straighten up while he still could, and his car hit a tree.

Go to the next page.

To practise making the distinction, read the following text and try to find the paragraph corresponding to:

- d) the conclusion (what you want to prove)
- e) the argumentation
- f) the example

**Paragraph 1:**

If you have drunk two glasses of wine, wait at least an hour before driving.

**Paragraph 2:**

Alcohol inhibits our reflexes and lessens our reactions to a danger or an obstacle. The amount of alcohol in the blood decreases by about 15 mg per hour

**Paragraph 3:**

Mr. Aldridge was killed in a road accident last week. He had drunk a glass of whisky before leaving for home in his Mercedes. Too late, he saw that he was approaching a sharp bend too fast. He didn't have the reflex to straighten up while he still could, and his car hit a tree.

Answer:

**Paragraph 1:** conclusion (what you want to prove)

**Paragraph 2:** argumentation

**Paragraph 3:** example

Go to the next page

**3. Are the arguments used relevant?**

Are the arguments logical and are they presented in a logical sequence?

Are they presented objectively, so that they are not easily contested?

Or are they, on the contrary, presented subjectively, and therefore easily contested (for example, the person argues for himself)?

Are the arguments taken from facts that everyone knows about?

Or are they taken from little-known facts and therefore easily questioned?

**4. Are there examples to support the arguments?**

If so, are your examples relevant to the arguments that they claim to illustrate or support?

If so, are they about recent events or events that everyone knows of?

Or are they from your private life (for instance talking of personal experience). If they are, then they can be questioned.

If taken from your own experience, are these examples credible?

Are there enough examples, or are there too many?

If a lot of examples are given, are they all relevant to the argument?

If there are no examples, does it not spoil the effect of the argumentation?

The exercises on the next few pages will help you to see if you have understood all this advice!

Here is a series of unconnected sentences. Each one contains:

- either the conclusion to a demonstration
- or an argument
- or an example

Indicate which one of these three each sentence corresponds to.

1. Therefore, the entrance to the football grounds should be better supervised when there are important matches going on.

2. In 1976 there was a huge heat wave that everyone remembers simply for the wonderful wines from that year.

3. My friend Mr Sunderland won more than three million on the lottery, which just goes to show that it can happen to anyone.

4. Now we are going to show how, whichever way you look at it, the country is going to the dogs.

5. In announcing the new plan to mobilise the brainpower of the company, a new idea has been highlighted: what matters in today's strategic enterprises is grey matter.

The exercise continues on the next page.

6. If you make a credit purchase in our store, you will get free credit on all items of more than €1,500 until the end of December.

7. And even then we have to agree on the definition of the words. Here is the definition of the term “health physics”: the branch of physics concerned with the health and safety of people in medical, scientific and industrial work, especially with protection from the biological effects of ionizing radiation.

8. My great grandfather learnt to read and write by himself, which means that it is possible to do.

9. Does one wait until a child can swim before giving him a rubber ring? The pupil who uses a dictionary will not only consolidate his previous knowledge but also discover new words, an image (in the dictionary), or an association of ideas, etc.

10. One word leads to another. I am convinced of that.

Look at the answers on the next page.



Compare these answers with the ones you gave on the previous pages.

At the same time, answer the questions asked.

1. Sentence 1 corresponds to a **conclusion**.

In your opinion, does this conclusion come before or after the demonstration?

2. Sentence 2 corresponds to an **example**.

Does this example come from a well-known fact or from personal experience?

3. Sentence 3 corresponds to an **example**.

Is this example personal or well-known to the public at large?

4. Sentence 4 corresponds to a **conclusion**.

In your opinion, is this conclusion before the argumentation or after it?

5. Sentence 5 corresponds to a **conclusion**.

Quote the part in the sentence which corresponds exactly to the aim of the demonstration.

Go on to the next page.

6. Sentence 6 corresponds to an **argument**.

Is this argument subjective or objective?

7. Sentence 7 corresponds to an **example**.

It is indeed an example of a definition.

Is this example likely to convince the ordinary reader? Say why.

8. Sentence 8 corresponds to an **example**.

Does this example belong to the public or private domain?

9. Sentence 9 corresponds to an **argument**.

Would you say this argument is objective or subjective?

10. Sentence 10 corresponds to an **argument**.

Would you say this argument is presented subjectively or objectively?

Look at the answers on the next page.

1. Sentence 1 corresponds to a **conclusion**.

In your opinion, does this conclusion come before or after the demonstration?

**After the demonstration, because of the word ‘therefore’.**

2. Sentence 2 corresponds to an **example**.

Does this example come from a well-known fact or from personal experience?

**A well-known fact.**

3. Sentence 3 corresponds to an **example**.

Is this example personal or well known to the public at large?

**Personal.**

4. Sentence 4 corresponds to a **conclusion**.

In your opinion, is this conclusion before the argumentation or after it?

**Before, because the author is going to “show how”.**

5. Sentence 5 corresponds to a **conclusion**.

Quote the part in the sentence which corresponds exactly to the aim of the demonstration.

**“What matters in today’s strategic enterprises is grey matter.”**

The answers continue on the next page.

6. Sentence 6 corresponds to an **argument**.

Is this argument subjective or objective?

**Objective: the information is real and can be checked.**

7. Sentence 7 corresponds to an **example**.

It is indeed an example of a definition.

This example is not likely to convince the ordinary reader. Say why.

**The terms used are too specialised.**

8. Sentence 8 corresponds to an **example**.

Does this example belong to the public or private domain?

**Private.**

9. Sentence 9 corresponds to an **argument**.

Would you say this argument is objective or subjective?

**Objective.**

10. Sentence 10 corresponds to an **argument**.

Would you say this argument is presented subjectively or objectively?

**Subjectively (use of the pronoun “I”, it is the person speaking who is “convinced”).**

Mr Martin is for forbidding traffic in certain parts of London. He gives his reasons to justify his point of view. Read each of his reasons and note down the number of the sentences that don't seem to be relevant to the demonstration of Mr Martin's point of view.

Here are the reasons that Mr Martin gives:

1. Cars are a hazard for children as they come out of school.
2. Broken-down cars in the middle of the road are dangerous for pedestrians.
3. Exhaust fumes from the cars pollute the city and its inhabitants, especially in the traffic jams in crowded districts.
4. Cars going into car-parks get in the way of the buses trying to circulate.
5. Car drivers don't always wear their safety belts.
6. Car horns bother people, especially at night.
7. Drivers get parking fines if they park their cars in the wrong places.
8. Parking metres make the streets ugly and can trip up old people and blind people.
9. When there are cars on the roads, cyclists have to ride on the pavements, which is dangerous for pedestrians.
10. During rush-hour, the buses drive slowly, which makes the passengers late.
11. With car tax, insurance and the price of petrol, cars are very expensive to own.
12. Cars are noisy for people living in streets with a lot of traffic.

Numbers of the sentences which are not relevant to the demonstration:

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Look at the answers on the next page.

The numbers of the sentences which do not correspond to the demonstration of Mr Martin's point of view are as follows:

Sentences	<b>2</b>
	<b>4</b>
	<b>5</b>
	<b>7</b>
	<b>9 (arguable)</b>
	<b>11</b>

These sentences do not correspond to the demonstration of Mr Martin's point of view because they concern the drivers and not the inhabitants of the city. We can't take them into account in the defence of Mr Martin's opinion.

When you state your opinion or defend your point of view, if you want to convince the listener or reader of the validity of the opinion, you have to construct a good argumentation.

Constructing an argumentation means preparing a demonstration, a reasoning which will justify or prove your point.

Of course, it is much easier to affirm than to argue a point. If you affirm something, you will be asked what you are basing your position on, what the justifications are for what you are stating.

To argue a point, you must give justifications for what you put forward and develop your reasoning so that it is infallible, that no fault can be found with it.

If you want to argue well:

1. Do not affirm anything that you cannot also justify or prove
2. Do not say anything that cannot be demonstrated

Go to the next page.

Illustrate using examples:

Write 3 examples of your choice to illustrate the following sentences. The first one is done as an example.

Sentence 1: Large vehicles can hinder the visibility of car drivers.

Examples: - lorries  
- buses  
- coaches

Sentence 2: Bad weather conditions can cause traffic accidents.

Examples: - .....  
- .....  
- .....

Sentence 3: Owning a car can be expensive.

Examples: - .....  
- .....  
- .....

Sentence 4: Cars cause noise pollution.

Examples: - .....  
- .....  
- .....

Continue on the next page.



Sentence 5: Owning a car is often a source of stress for the driver.

Examples: - .....  
- .....  
- .....

Sentence 6: It is easy to get a fine or to have your driving licence taken away.

Examples: - .....  
- .....  
- .....

Sentence 7: It's very practical to have a car.

Examples: - .....  
- .....  
- .....

Sentence 8: Cars can be dangerous for pedestrians.

Examples: - .....  
- .....  
- .....

Look at the suggested answers on the next page.

These answers are only suggestions. There may be many more examples.

Sentence 1: Large vehicles can hinder the visibility of car drivers.

Examples: - lorries  
- buses  
- coaches

Sentence 2: Bad weather conditions can cause traffic accidents.

Examples: - ...rain.....  
- ...frost.....  
- ...snow.....  
- ...fog.....  
- ...strong wind.....  
- ...storms.....

Sentence 3: Owning a car can be expensive.

Examples: - ...the purchase price.....  
- ...insurance.....  
- ...car tax.....  
- ...the price of petrol.....  
- ...the cost of repairs.....  
- ...the loss in value of a new car after only a few months....

Sentence 4: Cars cause noise pollution.

- Examples:
- ...horns.....
  - ...engine noise.....
  - ...exhaust pipes in need of repair....
  - ...screeching brakes.....
  - ...screeching tyres.....

Sentence 5: Owning a car is often a source of stress for the driver.

- Examples:
- ...traffic jams.....
  - ...prangs or accidents.....
  - ...the car won't start.....
  - ...the car breaks down.....
  - ...when the weather is bad.....
  - ...diversions.....
  - ...when you get lost in one-way traffic.....
  - ...when you can't find a parking space.....

Sentence 6: It is easy to get a fine or to have your driving licence taken away.

- Examples:
- ...speeding.....
  - ...parking on a double yellow line.....
  - ...not putting money in the parking metre.....
  - ...driving the wrong way down a one-way street...
  - ...drink driving.....

Sentence 7: It's very practical to have a car.

- Examples:
- ...it's more comfortable than in public transport during rush hour
  - ...you don't need to worry about train or bus timetables.....
  - ...alone in your car, you can do what you want (eat, listen to music, etc).....
  - ...you can take passengers or luggage.....

Sentence 8: Cars can be dangerous for pedestrians.

- Examples:
- ...if people drive too fast or badly.....
  - ...when drivers go through a red light.....
  - ...if a car is parked on a crossing, pedestrians have to cross elsewhere.....

Read this text, then answer the question on the next page.

*Risk of deafness to staff because of 24-hour licensing laws*

*Over half a million people risk serious hearing damage by working in very noisy conditions. When changes to the licensing laws come into force, to allow 24-hour opening for pubs, staff in pubs, bars and clubs will suffer from longer exposure to very loud noise. Music can be so loud that these people could lose their hearing or have it seriously and permanently damaged.*

*This will concern about 580,000 people. Already, over 500,000 people have become deaf or hard of hearing through over exposure to loud noise in the workplace. These are mostly in industries such as manufacturing and construction. But now, with licensed premises opening for longer, and playing loud music, this could affect pub staff too. People working in pubs and bars do not always realise that they are at risk. Noise-induced hearing loss is not always taken seriously as it is not immediately obvious.*

*Trade unions and a national charity for the deaf and hard of hearing are urging employers to protect their workers' hearing.*

From the Independent

Go to the next page.

Answer this question in at least 30 lines:

**Do you think that it is a good idea for pubs to stay open for 24 hours a day? What other dangers, in addition to the one spoken about in the text, might there be? Or, on the other hand, what might be the advantages?**

Your opinion must be arranged in a clear, well-organised plan, and be supported by several examples from everyday life.

Show your work to your teacher.