

Legal English- Supporting your Arguments

Part One: Questions to make people support their arguments

Listen to your partner give their ideas (e.g. those they prepared for homework) and ask for more support for their arguments using questions like that below. You can then give your opinion on what they said.

Advantages

Why would... be a **good** thing?

What would be the **advantage(s)** of...?

I can't see any **merit** in...

Certainty/Strong opinions

Are you **sure** about...?

You don't **sound** very certain about...

How confident are you that...?

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends

Do you **expect**... to continue?

How might... **change**?

What are your **predictions** for the next...?

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating

Can you **explain** what you mean (by...)?

Is there another **way** to say...?

What does... **mean**?

(I understand what you are saying, but) I don't get your **point**.

So, **overall**, are you saying...?

Comparing/ Contrasting

Isn't that basically the **same** as...?

How is that **different** to...?

I can't understand the **difference** between... and...

How **similar** is... to...?

Conceding points/ Considering possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides

But isn't it also **true** that...?

But don't you **accept** that...?

But if you **look** at it another way,...

But don't **some** people also believe that...?

Consequences/ Effects/ Results

What could be the **effects** of...?

Does... **matter** (much)?

How do you think... would **affect**...?

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics

How **big** a... is that?

Can you give me a **rough** idea of...?/ Roughly,...

Can you put any **figures** on...?

How **common** is...?

Examples

Can you **give** me an example (of...)?

For **instance**?

Expert opinion/ Other people's experience/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources

What do the **experts** think about...?

Does anyone **else** think the same way?

Where did you get the **idea** that... from?

Do most **academics** agree on...?

What is your **source** for...?

Personal experiences

What is your **own** experience of...?

Have you **experienced**... yourself?

Do you generally **find** that...?

Have you personally **found** that...?

Try to remember or think of questions for each of those functions. Note that not all of them are grammatical questions, i.e. some end with a full stop.

Advantages

Certainty/Strong opinions

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating

Comparing/ Contrasting

Conceding points/ Considering possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides

Consequences/ Effects/ Results

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics

Examples

Expert opinion/ Other people's experience/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources

Personal experiences

Key words

Use these words to help you with the task above.

Advantages

good
advantage(s)
merit

Certainty/Strong opinions

sure
sound
how

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends

expect
change
predictions

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating

explain
way
mean
point
overall

Comparing/ Contrasting

same
different
difference
similar

Conceding points/ Considering possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides

true
accept
look
some

Consequences/ Effects/ Results

effects
matter
affect

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics

big
rough
figures
common

Examples

give
instance

Expert opinion/ Other people's experience/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources

experts
else
idea
academics
source

Personal experiences

own
experienced
find
found

Legal English supporting your arguments

Part two: Brainstorm phrases for supporting your arguments

What phrases can you use to support your arguments in these ways? Brainstorm at least three phrases for each. It might help to look at the questions and key words above to give you ideas.

Advantages

Certainty/ Emphasising/ Importance/ Strong opinions

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating

Comparing/ Contrasting

Conceding points/ Considering possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides

Consequences/ Effects/ Results

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics

Examples

Expert opinion/ Other people's experience/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources

Personal experiences

Use the key words on the next page to help check and expand your ideas.

Key words

Use these words to help you with the task above.

Advantages

positive
main
great

Certainty/ Emphasising/ Importance/ Strong opinions

doubt
denied
obvious
clear

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends

up
de-
pl-
out
re-
-ly

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating

another
other
brief

Comparing/ Contrasting

completely
almost
very
fairly
a little
rather
totally
a lot
much
far

Conceding points/ Destroying possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides

also
can
accept
both

Consequences/ Effects/ Results

leads
result
because
consequence

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics

adds
total
precise

Examples

best
good
illustrate
give
instance

Expert opinion/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources/ Other people's experiences

according
said

Personal experiences

limited
generally
personal

Suggested answers

Advantages

A **positive** aspect of this is...

The **main** selling point of this is...

A **great** benefit of this is...

Certainty/ Emphasising/ Importance/ Strong opinions

There is no **doubt** that...

It cannot be **denied** that...

It should be **obvious** that...

It seems **clear** to me that...

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends

go **up**/ shoot **up**/ grow/ increase/ climb/ rise

shoot **up**/ boom/ accelerate/ rocket/ explode

decline/ **decrease**/ shrink/ drop/ fall

plummet/ **plunge**/ crash/ dive

flatten **out**/ bottom **out**/ plateau/ level off

rebound/ **recover**/ bounce **back**/ pick **up**

will definitely/ will almost certainly/ will probably/ could possibly

rapidly/ dramatically/ slowly/ considerably/ slightly

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating

To put that **another** way,...

In **other** words,.../ That is to say,...

In **brief**,...

Comparing/ Contrasting

completely identical/ **almost** identical

almost the same

very similar/ **fairly** similar

a little different/ **rather** different/ **very** different/ **almost totally** different/ **completely** different

quite **a lot**/ a little ... er than...

much more... than...

far less... than...

Conceding points/ Destroying possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides

It is **also** true that... Nevertheless,...

Although you **can** argue that...

I **accept** that..., but...

While there are **both** pros and cons,...

Consequences/ Effects/ Results

...**leads** to...

As a **result** of,...

Because of...,...

A **consequence** of... is...

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics

which **adds** up to...

In **total**,...

To

be

precise,...

Examples

The **best** example of this is...

A **good** illustration of this is...

I can **illustrate** this with an example.

To **give** an example of what I'm talking about...

For **instance**,...

Expert opinion/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources/ Other people's experiences

According to most experts...

... (once) **said** that.../ As... **said**,.../ I read something which **said** that...

Personal experiences

In my **limited** experience,...

I have **generally** found that...

I have **personal** experience of this.

Legal English supporting your arguments

Part three: Legal English different ways of supporting your arguments

Choose one of the topics below and share your ideas, using as many different kinds of support for them as you can. Your partner will ask you to support your opinions and give their own views.

Suggested kinds of support

Advantages

Certainty/ Emphasising/ Importance/ Strong opinions

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating

Comparing/ Contrasting

Conceding points/ Destroying possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides

Consequences/ Effects/ Results

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics

Examples

Expert opinion/ Other people's experience/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources

Personal experiences

- A more up-to-date *copyright law*
- A sensible government policy on *soft drugs* like marihuana
- Alternatives to *prison sentences*
- Conditions in *prisons*
- Cutting down on online *piracy*
- Dealing with (genuine and fake) *asylum seekers*
- Dealing with *bullying/ cyber-bullying*
- Dealing with *labour disputes* such as *wrongful dismissal cases*
- Dealing with *offshore shell companies*
- Dealing with people who have *served their time in prison* (= released prisoners)
- Dealing with *street crime* (*bag snatching, mugging, pickpocketing*, etc)
- Ensuring proper *data protection*
- Getting rid of *tax evasion*
- How much of a problem *human trafficking* is
- How to control *prostitution*
- How to deal with *persistent reoffenders*
- How to deal with *whistle-blowers*
- Physical punishments (= *corporal punishments*) at home and school
- Punishing *fraudsters/ scammers/ conmen*
- *Rehabilitation* of criminals
- Solving the problem of *bribery* by domestic companies abroad
- Solving the problem of politicians and public officials *accepting bribes*
- Tackling *discrimination*
- Tackling *monopolistic practises/ Effective competition rules* (stopping *price fixing* etc)
- The correct use of *capital punishment*
- The *self-defence defence*
- What to do about false *forced confessions*

Do the same, but this time as a game where you tick off each kind of support above when you use it. Your partner must argue against you. You can both only use the kinds of support which are left on the list.

Do the same, but with two people in your group taking the two sides of the arguments below:

Suggested kinds of support

Advantages

Certainty/ Emphasising/ Importance/ Strong opinions

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating

Comparing/ Contrasting

Conceding points/ Destroying possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides

Consequences/ Effects/ Results

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics

Examples

Expert opinion/ Other people's experience/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources

Personal experiences

- Advantages of a *jury system*/ Disadvantages of a jury system
- Arguments for a *statute of limitations*/ Arguments against a statute of limitations
- Arguments for longer *jail sentences*/ Arguments for shorter jail sentences
- Arguments for making it easier to *sue* people for *libel* and *slander*/ Arguments for making it more difficult to sue people for libel and slander
- Decriminalising *prostitution*/ Harsher punishments for prostitution
- Emphasising people's *right to privacy*/ Emphasising people's right to free speech and freedom of information
- Encouraging official *graffiti*/ Discouraging all graffiti
- *Legal immunity* for serving politicians/ No legal immunity
- Making *bankruptcy* easier and less serious/ Making bankruptcy less difficult and more serious
- Making it easier to set up a *law firm*/ More controls on law firms
- Making *mutually agreed divorce* easier/ Making all divorce more difficult
- Making starting *litigation* easier/ Making starting litigation more difficult
- More controls on gambling/ The *legalisation* of other forms of gambling such as casinos
- More controls on the rental sector/ Letting market forces control landlords

- More emphasis on punishing criminals/ More emphasis on rehabilitating prisoners
- More international law/ More freedom for countries to decide their own laws
- Positive discrimination (= affirmative action)/ Treating all people completely equally (however disadvantaged they are)
- Prosecuting teachers for bullying by students in their classes/ Prosecuting parents for bullying by their children
- Punishing prostitutes/ Punishing people who pay for sexual services
- Raising basic taxes for the rich/ Only closing tax loopholes
- Taking legal precedent more into account/ Taking legal precedent less into account (or even completely ignoring it)