Non-fiction Toolkit: Discussion texts

Y1/2	Y3/4	Y5/6
Invest time in structured discussion before attempting to learn a model text. Choose familiar issues close to the children's experience, with clear opposing points e.g. *Should we be allowed to keep animals in the classroom? Should we eat crisps at playtime?* Or choose a story with a simple dilemma e.g. *Should Goldilocks have eaten the porridge?* Discuss and note points on each side of the issue separately; Orally rehearse the arguments on each side separately and list them *We should have crisps at playtime because…* Learn and retell the prepared text on the issue you have been discussing with -a title: *Should we keep animals in the classroom?* -an opening sentence to introduce the issue *We have been discussing whether we should…* -list points in favour *Some of us think we should keep animals in the classroom. Our reasons are…* -use numerical conjunctions *firstly, secondly* -then change viewpoint *On the other hand…*and list points against	**Building on Y1/2 work** Draw on a wider range of topics but still well within the children's interests and experience and from their own concerns e.g. *Should we wear school uniform? Should children have mobile phones?* And from fantasy topics *Do giants exist?* Or from stories *Should Daleks be allowed to live on Earth?* Develop the framework from Y1/2, boxing the text up to create connected paragraphs in place of simple sentences and lists: -opening paragraph to interest the reader in the topic *Since the arrival of the Daleks, there has been much discussion about whether…* -series of points in favour in a connected paragraph -a series of points against in a connected paragraph -a reasoned conclusion which can be justified by the arguments Use complex sentences to combine information, create emphasis and make the text more interesting for the reader -subordinate clauses *While many people think this is a good thing, others believe…First they point to the fact that when Daleks have previously visited, they have always…*	**Building on Y3/4 work** The framework for discussion introduced in Y3/4 should be practised and extended in Y5/6, with increasing emphasis on writing across the curriculum. These are likely to be more abstract and outside the children's immediate experience. Key areas include: -PSHE *Should bullies be punished? Should boys and girls be taught separately?* -History *Should children have been evacuated in World War 2? Was King Alfred a hero or a bully?* Geography *Should we burn wood for electricity? Is recycling a good idea?* -Science *Should we turn off street lights to save electricity?* -From stories – moral dilemmas *Should Danny help his father take the pheasants?* When assembling arguments: -try to support views with reasons, examples and/or evidence - OR Make it clear when you include an opinion *I think…In my opinion…* -OR Try to persuade within the arguments It is important to know the difference between these ways of arguing. Write openings to introduce the reader and explain why you are discussing an issue *Since last summer, people have been arguing about whether or not to build a supermarket next door to our school. We think everyone should be clear about the reasons before a decision is made.* Give examples which move from the general to the specific *Most shoppers would agree that…One lady, who has shopped in the town for many years, told us…* Use indirect, reported speech *It has been said that…the local policeman told us that…* Vary sentence structure, length and type: -complex sentences to combine and compress information *Although the new store will be easier to drive to, it will cause traffic congestion around the school and increase the likelihood of accidents to children* -short sentences for effect *No-one wants this* - Sentence openers Interestingly, From our point of view, Indeed, there could even be - Passive voice to sound more formal (Y6) *It could be said that …Additional disturbance would be created by…* -Conditional and hypothetical sentences If…, then….sentences using the subjunctive 'were' *If that's the best they can offer…, If it were to be approved…*

-An ending *In conclusion, we think that* Use this as a framework for discussion and shared writing of a different issue substituting new reasons. Keep ideas simple and straight forward to focus on balancing the argument. Use simple or compound sentences with correct punctuation. Write mostly in the 1st person (I or We) Focus on a few essential connectives to join ideas and structure the argument: -*whether or not* to set out alternatives -*But, on the other hand* to mark change of viewpoint -*If…, then…* to show consequences *If we keep animals in the classroom, then someone will have to look after them at the weekend.*	Use generalised language to depersonalise and objectify the writing: -generalisers: *some, most, many, everyone* -category nouns e.g. *people, animals, food, vehicles, vegetables* -use a variety of connecting words and phrases to guide the reader through the argument: -to set out alternatives and set the scene *to decide whether or not /if we should/either …or* -to add on and sequence ideas *The first reason, furthermore, moreover, also* - to introduce a different point of view *However, On the other hand, Many people also believe that…* - to conclude *In conclusion, Having considered the arguments, Looking at this from both sides…* Use correct punctuation for sentences, clauses, questions, exclamations	Use persuasive devices to press points – see Toolkit guidance for persuasive texts Address readers from time to time to hold attention and draw them in to the arguments: - inviting them to speculate *You may be wondering why…* -asking questions *How would you like to…?* - Using exclamations *How infuriating! What a nuisance!* Extend the range of connectives given in year ¾ to link sentences and paragraphs interestingly, coherently and effectively, including: -addition *also, furthermore, moreover, additionally,* -change of direction *although, on the other hand, unfortunately, however, despite* - cause and effect *so that, owing to, due to,* -uncertainty *perhaps, it is possible that, another possible reason…* -comparison *equally, similarly, just as, in contrast, whereas* -emphasis *most/least of all, importantly* Make views sound more reasonable through use of modal verbs *might/may/could be*, and words and phrases that leave room for alternative views or contrary facts *often/usually/commonly/mostly/tend to/are likely to…* Use a variety of phrases for drawing conclusions *In conclusion, To sum up, Having considered, In the light of, Given these arguments, On the whole, By and large, In the circumstances, All things considered,* When you have finished, re-read and check you have been fair to both sides.