Useful phrases for discussion and composition

**1. Introducing a point**

- First of all I’d like to point out... - The main problem is ...

- To start with, (we haven’t enough ) money ... - The question of ...

**2. Stating something as a fact**

- As everyone knows ... - It is generally accepted that ...

- There can be no doubt that ... - It is a fact that ...

- It is common knowledge that ... - Nobody will deny that ...

**3. Expressing a personal opinion**

- In my opinion ... - In my view ...

- It seems to me that ... - I’m of the opinion that ...

- As far as I’m concerned ... - to me

- I think/ assume/ feel/ fear that ... - I personally believe

- I certainly think ... - I am quite sure ...

- I go along with the idea ... - From my point of view ...

- As far as I can see ... - As I see it, ...

- to have/ take/ adopt/ defend the point of view of .../ the viewpoint of ...

- to support/ back/ side with/ sympathize with someone - to hold a view

- to reprove/ blame/ reproach/ criticize someone for

- to be sympathetic/ compassionate/ lenient/ humane/ friendly towards somebody

- to be annoyed/ indignant/ angry/ furious with somebody/ at something

- to feel sympathy for/ against/ antipathy towards/ hostility against/ dislike for/ distaste for/

indignation at/ anger at/ exasperation at (“Erbitterung”)

**4. Expressing pros and cons**

- There are two sides to the question ... - An argument against ... is ...

- On the one hand ..., on the other hand ... - An argument for ... is ...

- Some people think ..., others say ... - An argument in favour of ... is ...

- but/ however/ yet/ still/ on the contrary/ nevertheless/ (al)though/ whereas

**5. Expressing doubt**

- I’m not sure if ... - I’m not convinced that ...

- I doubt that very much. - ... , however, ...

- in spite of the fact - It is not very likely ...

**6. Expressing disagreement**

- I don’t quite agree there. - You have to admit that ...

- That argument just doesn’t stand up/hold. - I can’t accept the view that ...

- If you believe that, you’ll believe anything. - I object to the thought ...

- As far as I can see it is not right ... - I disagree with ...

**7. Expressing support**

- That’s a very good point. - That’s how I feel (about it), too.

- I’m of the same opinion as ... - I agree entirely.

- probably/ possibly/ perhaps/ maybe

# 8. Giving reasons

- The reason for this is ... - This is due to ...

- I base my argument on ... - as/ since/ because

- One reason for this ... - This is why

- This is caused by ...

**9. Drawing conclusions**

- It follows from this that ... - The obvious conclusion is ...

- Last but not least ... - The only alternative left is ...

- The only possible solution is ...

- Thus/ And so/ In that case we are justified in saying that ...

- There is only one conclusion to be drawn from this.

- To conclude/ In conclusion (=”abschließend”) we may say that ...

- All in all/ In short/ In a/one word/ Briefly we may say that ...

- Taking everything into consideration/ account we may say that ...

- so/ therefore/ thus/ as a result/ consequently

**10. Giving a summary**

- Finally, I would like to say ... - Summing up ...

- The gist (“Kernpunkt”) of my argument is ... - To cut a long story short, ...

- To put the whole matter in a nutshell, ... - To sum up, ...

- Briefly/ in brief/ in short/ in other words - in the end

- last of all - my final point

- all in all - lastly

**11. Enumeration**

- First(ly)/ In the first place ... - Secondly/ In the second place ...

- And thirdly ... - Finally/ Lastly ...

- To begin with, ... - For a start/ To start with ...

- One point I want to make is ... - besides/ likewise/ similarly

- also/ again/ too - furthermore

- Then/ Moreover/ In addition to that/ Another point/aspect is ...

**12. Examples**

- Here are some examples of ... - One instance is ...

- This can be clarified/ specified/ demonstrated by an example.

- for instance - such as

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# 13. Particularization

- As to/ As for .../ With regard to ..., ... / Talking of ..., it must be stated that ...

- Technically speaking (“genau genommen”), ... / Generally speaking

**14. Structural summary**

- The text deals with the problems of ... - The theme of the text is ...

- A is the topic/ the theme/ the subject/ the subject-matter of the text/article.

- The theme of ... runs through the text.

- The author is concerned with/ deals with/ speaks about/ discusses A.

- The gist of the text is .../ its main ideas are .../ A is important to him/her.

- The passage is about .../ The general theme of the passage is ...

- The text falls into/ can be divided into three main sections/ parts.

- In line 10 the fourth part/ section of the story is introduced.

- A new aspect is introduced in lines 10 to 20. / ... is described in lines 10-20.

- The conclusion is drawn in line .../ begins in line 10 and ends in line 20.

- The second section (ll. 10-20) deals with ... - Lines 20-30 represent the third section.

- Section two, i.e. ll. 10-20, ... - Section two - that is lines 10-20 - ...

- The next section, which is from line 10 to line 20, ...

- The text opens/ continues/ concludes with ...

- The first/ second/ third/ following/ next paragraph is about ...

- quotation/ example/ comparison/ contrast/ digression/ distinction/ conclusion

- The author passes from A to B by a subtle/ an abrupt transition.

- In the paragraph the author takes up B/ changes the subject/ returns to A.

- He goes into details/ particulars.

- The author wanders away from the main topic/ subject/ theme.

- He then supports his argument by a quotation/ an example/ a comparison/ a contrast.

- The text can be divided into/ is composed of/ contains/ consists of/

is divided into four parts/ four paragraphs/ four sections.

- The author presents/ delivers/ conveys/ points out/ comments on ... / the facts about/

the current situation of/ the different aspects of/ the general ideas on ...

- The author attaches/ attributes importance to sth

- to give/ provide a description of/ an example of sth

- to fill in (the) details/ to go into detail/ to treat a topic in minute detail

- The text concerns/ treats of/ deals with/ is about ... the principal ideas/ the different aspects

of/ the topical problem of/ a political subject/ the condition of ...

- The story/ the action/ the third section/ the next part/ paragraph ...

- comprises the months from early spring to July 4th

- focuses on three separate days in the life of s.o.

- compresses the events of approximately one month

- relates the events that occur some months later - depicts the final days of ...

- covers one month - condenses the events of four months

- starts with a detailed description of ... - opens with the arrival of ...

- stresses s.o.’s age and his problems - dramatizes s.o.’s inner struggle

- traces the conflict in the hearts of s.o. - highlights sth

- consists of flashbacks and retrospective passages - introduces us to ...

**15. Language and style**

- The text is mainly descriptive/ narrative/ expository (“erklärend”)/ argumentative.

- The text is written in colloquial/ formal/ neutral English.

- The text contains a number of slang/ dialect/ technical/ literary/ poetic/ legal/

scientific/ religious ... expressions.

- The style is simple and clear/ abstract.

- The text contains mainly short sentences/ complicated sentences.

- The author makes use of repetitions/ parallelisms/ chiasms.

- It is not clear whether this sentence is meant literally or ironically.

- The writer makes frequent use of metaphors/ symbols/ images/ similes

- “Eros” is a personification of/ personifies/ embodies/ represents love.

- The author gives examples/ illustrations/comparisons/ quotations/ citations/ evidence

- There is a pun (“Wortspiel”)/ an allusion to (“Anspielung auf”) in line ...

- This is a paradox/ an exaggeration/ a hyperbole / an understatement.

- The text contains ironical remarks. - The author resorts to euphemisms.

- The author employs flashbacks/ anticipation.

- The author digresses / wanders away from the main topic.

- The author provides a lengthy digression about ...

- A is a symbol of ... / a metaphor for ... - This is a rhetorical question.

- The sentence is elliptical. - The author uses ellipsis. (pl. = ellips**e**s)

- The paragraph climaxes in ... / leads to a climax.

- A and B form a contrast/ an antithesis (pl. = antises**e**s).

- Mr A’s answer is ambiguous/ equivocal (“doppelsinnig”).

- There is an ambiguity/ equivocation in ...

- styles: plain (“einfach”)/ simple/ sober (“nüchtern”)/ natural / clear/ unaffected

(“ungekünstelt”)

lucid (“klar,deutlich”)/ to the point/ incisive (“prägnant”), matter-of-fact (“sachlich”)/

precise/ concise (“prägnant”)/ vigorous (“kraftvoll”)/ crisp (“treffend”)/ vehement

(“leidenschaftlich”)/ lively / passionate (“leidenschaftlich”)/ fluent (“flüssig”)/

polished (“glänzend”)/ elegant/ artificial (“künstlich”)/ stilted (“geschraubt”)/

ponderous (“schwerfällig”)/ wordy (“langatmig”)/ long-winded (“umständlich”)/ colourless/ trite (“abgedroschen”)/ cliché-ridden (“klischeehaft”)/ banal/ administrative/ ornate

- to use/ employ/ vary a style - to write/ speak in a ... style

- tone: humorous/ playful (“spaßig)/ colloquial/ conciliatory (“versöhnlich”)/

depressive/ detached (“kühl”)/ serious/ earnest/ solemn (“feierlich”)

ironical=ironic/ satirical/ sarcastic/ colloquial/ informal/ spoken/ jargon/ slang

- The style is characterized by direct speech/ reported speech/ subordinate clauses/

extensive use of figures of speech

- The text abounds in technical/ latinized/ political/ biblical/ abstract/ concrete ...

words/ terms/ expressions/ phrases/ images/ pictures

- The expression ... indicates/ refers to/ suggests the idea that/ emphasizes/ illustrates/

takes up the idea of ...

- This word means/ denotes/ describes/ depicts (“darstellen”)/ implies/ suggests/ stands for

sth.

- A word suggests/ implies/ hints that ...

- A word conveys an idea/ evokes/ calls forth/ conjures up images/ impressions.

**16. Influence**

- The author appeals to the reader’s feelings/ emotions.

- He draws/ directs/ focuses the reader’s attention to ...

- He arouses the reader’s interest. - The reader gains insight into ...

- The text affects/ stirs/ catches the reader’s imagination.

- The author tries to change/ shift the reader’s attitude to/ towards ...

- He tries to destroy the reader’s illusions about ...

- He intends to fight the reader’s prejudices against/ in favour of ...

- He drives home a moral. - He teaches us a lesson.

- The reader feels a/ the sting/ prick/ twinge of conscience/ remorse ...

- The article troubles/ alarms his conscience.

- He has a guilty conscience when reading that ...

- The author wants to convince the reader of .../ to inform the reader of .../of .../

to make the reader think - The reader identifies with sth./s.o.

- The text stirs/ arouses/ excites the reader’s interest/ concern/ compassion/ sympathy/

anxiety/ suspicion/ scorn/ disgust/ anger

# 17. Point of view

- The author is not identical with the narrator.

- The author makes use of an outsider’s/ insider’s/ a first-person (peripheral/ central)/

a third person (omniscient/ limited) point of view.

- ... opts for editorial/ neutral/ selective omniscience/ ... for a limited point of view.

- ... employs a shifting point of view/ shifts the angle of vision from time to time

- ... uses an impersonal approach/ adopts an impersonal point of view

- ... pretends not to be there at all/ lets the story tell itself

- ... effaces (“sich zurückhalten”) himself completely

- The subjective author comments on whatever he likes.

- The objective author avoids describing even the characters’ ideas and emotions.

- ... lets the reader infer everything from the facts alone.

- The narrator tells the story from a remote standpoint.

- ... has access to the characters’ thoughts, feelings and motives.

- ... confines himself to what is experienced, thought and felt by a single character

- The narrator presents the story as summary or as scene or as a combination of the two.

- ... uses the dramatic/ panoramic method (mode)/ the stream-of-consciousness technique

- ... relies mainly on the presentation of panorama/scene. - ... presents a summary

- ... shifts the focus from panorama to scene

# 18. Interpreting diagrams

- more/ less/ fewer than - in comparison with/ compared

- to rise/ fall/ grow/ increase/ decrease - percentage/ amount/ number

- majority/ minority - turning point

- as a result of/ cause/ effect/ link/ relation - …leads to/ … reaches a high/low point

- … has dropped/ fallen/ decreased/ increased - compares the size of …

- … has risen slowly/ fast/ rapidly/ steadily/ gradually by … per cent

- … has doubled/ has stayed nearly the same/ at the same level/ has reached a peak

- … the diagram/ pie chart/ line graph/ bar chart/ flow chart/ table tells us/ shows

- … the diagram deals with/ is about…/ contrasts … with …

- … the diagram contains data from - shows the difference in ….

- …the most outstanding development/change…seems to have been/appears to have occured

- There are vast/ big/ surprising differences between ….

- The bars are arranged horizontally/ vertically - statistical analysis

- At the top/ bottom of the ranking comes … - is first/last in rank

- … represents…/ constitutes the majority/ minority

- has the largest/ second largest - statistically significant

- These statistics are misleading/ not very meaningful/ display a definite trend

- These statistics are a clear illustration of - The statistics were received with concern.

- The chart is divided into … segments. - …is twice times/ three times as high as

- There are more than/ nearly twice as many … as there are ….

- reliable/ up to date - according to official statistics/ figures

- An important statistic is that 94 per cent of crime relates to property.

- unemployment/ crime.. statistics/ figures - statistics on unemployment

- Statistics should be treated with caution. - Statistics show that…