
UNIT 4 ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- identify an argumentative text;
- comprehend the purpose and characteristics of an argumentative text;
- understand the organisation of an argumentative text;
- identify the main points of an argumentative text;
- infer, analyse, interpret and evaluate the ideas in an argumentative text;
- and
- answer the questions after reading the comprehension passage.

4.1 WARM UP

Before we start discussing argumentative essay, think about anytime that you have had an argument with someone. Usually you have an opinion or a point of view in support of which you present your ideas. What do you understand by the word ‘argument’?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it means “a reason or set of reasons given with the aim of convincing others that an action or idea is right or wrong.” An argument is based on logic. In an argument one has to provide reasons in support or against opinion, expressed in the form of a statement.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

An argumentative essay, thus, refers to a text where the author presents an argument either for or against the topic with an aim to convince the reader with his own point of view. This text is formal and academic. Hence, all the arguments

given in the text are solidly backed by hard evidences like facts, statistics, surveys, reports etc. which entail an in-depth knowledge and research regarding the topic. It may include quotes from experts as well. The writer researches on the topic and takes a side and then tries to get the reader to recognize the validity of his argument. An argumentative text offers facts, reasons and evidence to support the author's argument. It is strictly based on a certain logic provided by the author. However, the author presents both pros and cons on the particular topic and then based on his judgement tries to establish his side as the logical one. It acknowledges the opposing claims and compares the multiple perspectives to establish its stand. The evidences that the author posits in these types of texts makes the stand of the author very clear. Though the aim of the author is to show his side as the plausible one but the overall tone of an argumentative text is calmer as the purpose of the author is just to present worthy reasons and compelling data for consideration of the chosen side.

4.3 STRUCTURE OF ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS

It is very important for you to understand the structure of an essay in order to grasp the meaning of the essay. It is essential, thus, that you are able to clearly see the organisation of the paragraphs and understand the progression of thought. Generally, five-paragraph rule is followed by the writers in different types of essays. Argumentative essays, which require research sources and empirical research data, usually exceed five paragraphs to present a comprehensive view on the issue.

The argumentative essay begins with the first paragraph which is the introductory paragraph; it is followed by three-five evidentiary paragraphs forming the body of the essay. This part consists of the evidences and also the discussion of opposing views. The body of the essay comprises of the arguments and the counter arguments by the writer and finally reasons and data to support his side of the argument. Finally, comes your conclusion which is the summing up of the main idea behind the essay. Also, keep in mind that you carefully look at the transition between these paragraphs. Transition from one paragraph to another or from one idea to another act as a mortar that holds the foundation of the entire essay together. It is important for you to understand the logical progression of the argument given by the writer. Now, let us look at the structure of these essays in detail to further understand how these essays are framed.

- 1) In the first paragraph, a clear, concise and defined thesis statement occurs. A review of the topic is given where the context of the topic is set. It is followed by the author talking about the need of discussing the topic. This is called exigence where the importance of the topic in today's world is laid out for the readers. Lastly, the last line or two of this paragraph gives the thesis statement which narrows down the main idea behind the essay. It essentially focuses on the position that the writer takes regarding the topic.
- 2) Body paragraphs comprise of the topic sentence making a claim followed by the explanation and an example in support of the claim. The topic sentence is a claim or an assertion. It is a declaration which states the main idea. After the declaration, the writer presents reasons through examples or facts to justify his claim. Each paragraph of the body of the essay

discusses one point which results in a focused and clear argument to be presented in the essay. This also allows the reader to easily read and comprehend the flow of the essay. It is important for the reader to use the logical connection of all these ideas presented in different paragraphs and analyse how they refer to the thesis statement (given in the opening paragraph) while they take the argument forward. As a reader, you need to understand how these paragraphs support the claim of the thesis statement; you need to be clear about the evidences used by the writer to support the argument. This is also known as warrant, points of view which give legitimacy to the writer's argument.

However, in argumentative essay, the writer presents points from the other perspective as well. He will give you counter argument as well. These will be the differing points of view regarding the topic. These conflicting or contrasting ideas are also very important to an argumentative essay because they will inform the readers about how outdated these opinions or viewpoints are. Of course, in presenting these ideas the aim of the author is only to make the readers understand why the writer has a particular point of view and that it is logical and backed up by a series of consistent coherent reasons which make his claim valid.

Now let's look at how the evidences are used in an argumentative essay to support the opinion of the writer. Evidences used in these essays can be factual, statistical, logical or anecdotal. Argumentative essays, as already mentioned are well-researched essays which are detailed and use accurate and current data or information to support the point of view of the writer. However, the evidences which do not align to the thesis statement are also presented in the essay so that you have all the perspectives to consider but definitely the writer is trying to present them as not better than the ones that support his argument. The reason why the writer gives you all the perspectives is to create a well-balanced essay and so that as readers you follow his logic to understand his point of view. The writer does not outrightly point to any position and call it wrong but gives you information so that you derive his desired point.

- 3) Conclusion of the argumentative essay is NOT the restating of the thesis statement presented in the first paragraph, but it revisits the thesis statement in light of the evidences provided in the body paragraphs. It also takes into account the counter arguments used in the body paragraphs and the concluding paragraph comes across as a logical opinion to emerge after considering all the provided data. It readdresses the claims of the introductory paragraph. This paragraph is important because it will give you the ultimate impression that the writer wishes to leave onto the minds of his readers. Thus, this paragraph is most effective and logically derived. There is no new information that you are given in this last paragraph, rather it is a synthesis of the body of the essay. This will again give you an insight into why this essay is important and will review the main points of the writer. After you finish reading the essay, there should be no room for any doubt or confusion as to what is the writer's position regarding the debate. It should come across as a complete coherent argument. If you are not sure about this, then you need to reread and try to understand what is the intent of the writer, what is his opinion regarding the topic at hand.

4.4 ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT SAMPLE

Performance Enhancement through Biotechnology Has No Place in Sports

By Jamal Hammond

The debate over athletes' use of performance-enhancing substances is getting more complicated as biotechnologies such as gene therapy become a reality. The availability of these new methods of boosting performance will force us to decide what we value most in sports—displays of physical excellence developed through hard work or victory at all costs. For centuries, spectators and athletes have cherished the tradition of fairness in sports. While sports competition is, of course, largely about winning, it is also about the means by which a player or team wins. Athletes who use any type of biotechnology give themselves an unfair advantage and disrupt the sense of fair play, and they should be banned from competition.

Researchers are experimenting with techniques that could manipulate an athlete's genetic code to build stronger muscles or increase endurance. Searching for cures for diseases like Parkinson's and muscular dystrophy, scientists at the University of Pennsylvania have created "Schwarzenegger mice," rodents that grew larger than-normal muscles after receiving injections with a gene that stimulates growth protein. The researchers also found that a combination of gene manipulation and exercise led to a 35% increase in the strength of rats' leg muscles (Lamb 13). Such therapies are breakthroughs for humans suffering from muscular diseases; for healthy athletes, they could mean new world records in sports involving speed and endurance—but at what cost to the integrity of athletic competition? The International Olympic Committee's World Anti-Doping Agency has become so alarmed about the possible effects of new gene technology on athletic competition that it has banned the use of gene therapies and urged researchers to devise a test for detecting genetic modification (Lamb 13).

Some bioethicists argue that this next wave of performance enhancement is an acceptable and unavoidable feature of competition. As Dr. Andy Miah, who supports the regulated use of gene therapies in sports, claims, "The idea of the naturally perfect athlete is romantic nonsense.... An athlete achieves what he or she achieves through all sorts of means—technology, sponsorship, support and so on" (qtd. in Rudebeck). Miah, in fact, sees athletes' imminent turn to genetic modification as "merely a continuation of the way sport works; it allows us to create more extraordinary performances" (Rudebeck). Miah's approval of "extraordinary performances" as the goal of competition reflects our culture's tendency to demand and reward new heights of athletic achievement. The problem is that achievement nowadays increasingly results from biological and high-tech intervention rather than strictly from hard work.

Better equipment, such as aerodynamic bicycles and fiberglass poles for pole vaulting, have made it possible for athletes to record achievements unthinkable a generation ago. But athletes themselves must put forth the physical effort of training and practice—they must still build their skills—even in the murky area of legal and illegal drug use (Jenkins D11). There is a difference between the use of state-of-the-art equipment and drugs and the modification of the body itself. Athletes who use medical technology to alter their bodies can bypass the hard

work of training by taking on the powers of a machine. If they set new records this way, we lose the opportunity to witness sports as a spectacle of human effort and are left marveling at scientific advances, which have little relation to the athletic tradition of fair play.

Such a tradition has long defined athletic competition. Sports rely on equal conditions to ensure fair play, from regulations that demand similar equipment to referees who even handedly apply the rules to all participants. If the rules that guarantee an even playing field are violated, competitors and spectators alike are deprived of a sound basis of comparison on which to judge athletic effort and accomplishment. When major league baseball rules call for solid-wood bats, the player who uses a corked bat enhances his hitting statistics at the expense of players who use regulation equipment. When Ben Johnson tested positive for steroids after setting a world record in the 100-meter dash in the 1988 Olympics, his “achievement” devalued the intense training that his competitors had undergone to prepare for the event—and the International Olympic Committee responded by stripping Johnson of his medal and his world record. Likewise, athletes who use gene therapy to alter their bodies and enhance their performance will create an uneven playing field.

If we let athletes alter their bodies through biotechnology, we might as well dispense with the human element altogether. Instead of watching the 100-meter dash to see who the fastest runner in the world is, we might just as well watch the sprinters mount motorcycles and race across the finish line. The absurdity of such an example, however, points to the damage that we will do to sports if we allow these therapies. Thomas Murray, chair of the ethics advisory panel for the World Anti-Doping Agency, says he hopes, not too optimistically, for an “alternative future...where we still find meaning in great performances as an alchemy of two factors, natural talents...and virtues” (qtd. in Jenkins D11).

Unless we are willing to organize separate sporting events and leagues—an Olympics, say, for athletes who have opted for a boost from the test tube and another for athletes who have chosen to keep their bodies natural—we should ask from our athletes that they dazzle us less with extraordinary performance and more with the fruits of their hard work.

4.4.1 Explanation

The above essay is an argumentative piece by Jamal Hammond who is arguing whether sportsmen should use performance-enhancing substances. Let us try to understand the structure of the above passage according to the structure of an argumentative text which we have already discussed in section 4.3.

Look at the first few lines of the essay, how they provide background for Hammond’s essay. The opening sentence tells you about what Hammond is going to talk about in the essay and immediately after this he says why this topic is important. He relates it to the current scenario where the availability of these new methods is a reality of today’s world. So, what he does is, he (a) gives you the topic sentence, and (b) establishes its importance in the contemporary world. Now, take a look at the last line of this paragraph. Hammond here very clearly posits his view on the topic that he presented in the first sentence. His stance is clear that all such athletes using performance-enhancing substances should be

banned from the competition as it leads to unfair advantage and disrupts a sense of fair play. This is the thesis statement of this essay.

Now, take a look at the second paragraph which is the body of the essay. In this first body paragraph, Hammond gives you the reason why researchers are experimenting with such gene altering techniques. Because we have read how important it is for the writer to give anecdotes, reasons for his stance which validates his view point, Hammond here uses a medical research to establish his credibility. The second body paragraph in this essay furthers the thesis statement presented in the first paragraph and talks about the integrity of the athletic competition. For this purpose, he uses a specific evidence to support his view point. He talks about the steps taken by the International Olympic Committee towards this cause. He validates his stance by using this credible committee which has devised ways to detect the substance use in athletes.

The third body paragraph of the essay, he gives you the opposing views. Dear students, you must remember that this is a very important part of an argumentative essay. The writer, here, necessarily gives you the contrasting views from his own. Notice how he tries to establish it as an alternative accepted view. However, it is not to be missed how the writer counter argues this view in the ending lines of this same paragraph. He brings out the problem with this opposing view. The next paragraph is devoted towards furthering Hammond's own thesis statement. In the fifth body paragraph, look at how Hammond uses specific example of Ben Johnson who was stripped off his Olympic medal and world record in 1988. He uses this instance to support his point of view that how unfair the competition would be if some of the athletes enhance their performance by using substances. From the fourth to the fifth body paragraph, there is a transition, generally developing on his thesis statement to giving particular reasons in favour of his argument. Even in the sixth body paragraph, he uses the argument of virtuous games and natural talents and supports this idea with a quotation from an authority figure (Thomas Murray, chair of advisory committee of World Anti-doping Agency). Murray's statement comes right after Hammond's own view of preserving the integrity of the sports and how these therapies would endanger the spirit of the sports. Murray's statement is then used to give a substance and approval to Hammond's perspective.

The concluding paragraph of the essay sums up the argument for you without adding any new information. He echoes his stance in the ending, reiterates what he already expressed in this thesis statement that too without unduly repeating the thesis statement in exact words. This is how a conclusion should be. It reaffirms the thesis statement, does not burden the reader with new information or statistics but gives a clear end with the writer's view which is logically derived from all the examples and evidences that the writer has used in the body paragraphs.

Check Your Progress 1

Now, that you are clear on the explanation part of the essay; take a look at some of the probable questions. Based on your understanding of the essay and the argument presented, answer these questions:

- 1) What is the essay about?

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Reading Comprehension:
Types of Texts

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2) What is the central argument of Jamal Hammond in the essay?

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3) How does the writer balance the argument?

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4) Explain the use of evidences in the essay.

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5) Find a word from the passage having similar meaning to:

- a) Improvement
- b) Positively
- c) Persistence

6) Find a word from the passage having opposite meaning to:

- a) Arrange
- b) Common
- c) Dishonesty

4.5 READING STRATEGIES

Before, we move on to some practice essays and questions, let us once go through some of the reading strategies that you may adopt for a coherent reading and clear understanding of the comprehension passages. We will discuss two of these important reading strategies: **Skimming** and **Scanning**. Speed reading plays a very important role in reading long passages under a limited time, in understanding the aim of the passage and in attempting any questions related to those passages. Skimming and Scanning are thus two very effective ways to speed read any passage. Both these strategies use rapid eye movement and identification of keywords for a quick understanding. However, these techniques are different from each other and serve a different purpose towards the comprehension of the meaning of the passage. The aim is to reduce the amount of time used in understanding the passage and gain maximum knowledge out of it. Let us look at these one by one.

4.5.1 Skimming

The process of skimming refers to the technique of reading only the main ideas within the passage. The aim is to get an overall idea of the argument within the passage. While skim reading, you are looking for the central idea of the passage along with the details. There is a structure that is followed in order to effectively skim read.

Remember: *Selective Reading is necessary. What you read and what you decide to leave out is important.*

So, the next question is how do you decide what to read and what to leave? For instance, if you are reading an essay and after reading the first few paragraphs in detail, you will get a fair idea of what the essay is about and where the argument is headed. Once you know this, you can begin to skim read. You then, read only the first sentence of each subsequent paragraph. These, as we have already discussed section 2.2, are also known as Topic Sentences. These give you the central idea of the paragraph. Then, after understanding the basic idea of the paragraph, you need to move your eyes through the rest of the paragraph and look for more information in the form of names, dates or events. You will not read every word; you will pay special attention to typographical cues-headings, boldface and italic type, indenting, bulleted and numbered lists. You will be alert for key words and phrases, the names of people and places, dates, nouns, and unfamiliar words. Read the entire body of the essay through this technique until you reach the end of the essay. The last few paragraphs may contain a conclusion where you need to stop skimming and read in detail. The technique of skimming will enable you to recognise and stop at the important points and read carefully. One way to know if you are doing this correctly is to figure out if you are able to grasp the main ideas and the tone of the essay. If you are able to understand this, you are on the right track!

Here are some pointers that you may follow when skimming through a passage:

- a) Read the title carefully to understand what the debate in the essay is about.
- b) Read the entire first paragraph which is your introductory paragraph. This will tell you the topic of discussion and the writer's stand. Repeat the same for the concluding paragraph.

- c) Then, read the first and the last sentence only of all the subsequent paragraphs. Try and locate the main idea from certain words in a sentence.
- d) Read any headings or sub-headings in the passage.
- e) Read the sentences with keywords, italics, bold, dates, names etc.
- f) Read the entire sentence when you find important information.
- g) Read the charts, tables, graphs or any other statistical data, if given.

Remember: *If you carefully choose what to skim read and what to skip, you will be pleasantly surprised how much information you can get in a very short period of time.*

4.5.2 Scanning

The process of scanning refers to the reading technique where you look for specific information. You scan read when you have a question in mind and you are looking for its answer while ignoring the rest of the irrelevant information in relation to your question. Even in this technique you do not read everything, but only a particular piece of information. You use this technique a lot of times without realising, for instance, when you look for show timings of your favourite movie in a newspaper or when you look for the sports scores on the website, you do not go through the entire article but just look for what you want to know. Skimming is reading rapidly in order to get a general overview of the material. Scanning is reading rapidly in order to find specific facts. While skimming tells you what general information is within a section, scanning helps you locate a particular fact. Skimming is like snorkelling, and scanning is more like pearl diving. Use skimming in previewing (reading before you read), reviewing (reading after you read), determining the main idea from a long essay. Use scanning in research to find particular facts, to study fact-heavy topics, and to answer questions requiring factual support. Scanning, too, uses keywords and organizational cues. But while the goal of skimming is a bird's-eye view of the material, the goal of scanning is to locate and swoop down on particular facts.

What is important in scanning is to know how to locate the specific information. Understanding the structure of an argumentative essay will help you in locating this information that you need. Keep the following things in mind before you scan read a passage:

- a) You need to know your questions. May be a few keywords or phrases from the question itself. In order to locate any information from a passage, you need to know what information you are looking for. What is the purpose of reading the passage?
- b) Next, you anticipate where you may find the answer to your question. Keep in mind how an argumentative essay is written and how it is usually structured. This will help you in looking at the right places for the desired information.
- c) Be mindful of the headings or sub-headings that will help you locate your answers.
- d) Use your fingers to scan a passage or a paragraph. It helps you focus on specific information that you are looking for.

Remember: *Scanning requires concentration. The more you practice, the more effective a scanner you will become. Train yourself to not let your attention wander.*

4.6 PRACTICE TEXTS

Read the following text:

India's economy is doing well and we have a right to celebrate that. But what we do not like to acknowledge, let alone address, is another fact: our economy and society, is still extremely biased against women. Perhaps paying attention to such inconvenient truths would distract us as we march towards superpower status. In the latest gender gap index report released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), India keeps company with the worst in the world. Among the 128 countries that have been evaluated by the WEF, India is ranked 114, followed among others by Yemen, Chad, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Even China, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Botswana fare much better than us.

The survey considers the proportion of resources and opportunities made available to women on educational, economic, political and health fronts. It is only in the realm of political empowerment that we seem to have done somewhat OK, ranking 21st. That's also thanks to a long spell of Prime Ministership by Indira Gandhi. It raises the question why women are so badly off in our country if they are politically empowered.

To begin with, we are still largely a feudal and patriarchal society. In many parts of our country – especially in UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab – women are often treated as if they were a piece of property. In these parts, the sex ratio is most skewed because families often snuff out the lives of girl children before, or immediately after, they are born. In many parts of India, women are viewed as an economic liability despite contributing in several ways to our society and economy.

The state has not covered itself with glory either in bridging the gender divides. Its policies and projects for women are woefully inadequate. For instance, the literacy rate for females is a mere 48 per cent against 73 per cent for males. Unless we put more of our girl children in school and equip them with quality education – as opposed to making them merely literate – we can forget about sustainable progress. Public health is another area of failure. Hundreds of women in rural India die every year during childbirth for want of medical attention. There are thousands more who do not even have access to a primary health centre. Importantly, reforming property laws more rigorously so that gender parity becomes a reality must rank among the government's priorities. While these changes are necessary, they will amount to nothing if we, as a society, continue to deny our women the dignity, liberty and opportunities that are rightfully theirs. No society will ever prosper as a whole as long as half of it is constantly treated as somehow less than the other half.

(Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/TODAYS-ARTICLE-Mind-The-Gap/articleshow/2539088.cms>)

Check Your Progress 2

1) On the basis of your understanding of this passage answer the following questions with the help of the given options:

- a) Write out the correct option:
 - i) India’s economy is unbiased.
 - ii) India’s economy is doing poorly
 - iii) India’s economy is biased against human species
 - iv) India’s economy is biased against women.
- b) The most important rights of women are
 - i) dignity and society
 - ii) dignity and literacy
 - iii) dignity and liberty
 - iv) dignity and health
- c) A society can prosper only if
 - i) half of it is given its special rights
 - ii) it recognizes the importance of women
 - iii) it treats men and women differently
 - iv) it constantly treats women no less than its other half
- d) Hundreds of women in rural India die every year during childbirth
 - i) due to lack of finances.
 - ii) due to lack of literacy.
 - iii) for want of awareness.
 - iv) for want of medical attention.

2) Answer the following questions briefly:

a) Why is India ranked 114 by the World Economic Forum?

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b) In which fields are the women in India empowered?

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c) What has killing of girl children before or after birth affected the most?

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d) What is the reason behind the failure of public health?

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3) Find a word from the passage having opposite meaning to “asset”. (Para-3)

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4) Find a word from the passage having similar meaning to “continuously”. (Para -4)

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Read the following text:

1) In 1798, Thomas Malthus wrote an essay on population. He believed that God, as a method of punishment, strikes lazy humans with famine. In 1838, Charles Darwin read Malthus’ essay. He decided it was partially correct, but with natural causes only, such as inadequate food supplies.

In the two centuries, since, the world’s population has increased dramatically, scenes of hunger in Biafra and elsewhere galvanized many people. By the 1970s, books such as *The Population Bomb* were predicting massive starvation, plus dire shortages of virtually every resource—in the

1980s. Zero Population Growth became a popular cause. That alarmist mindset has since fallen afoul of 'political correctness' and 'multiculturalism'. The concern remains, largely unspoken, in the background of many sociopolitical debates.

- 2) The American government is always debating whether to fund birth control programs in poor nations. In fact, prosperity is the surest brake on population growth. Where children have an excellent chance of reaching healthy adulthood, couples will plan their family, and provide their kids with the best upbringing possible. Including college, each American child requires almost half a million dollars; a huge investment, but well worth it.
- 3) In the poorest countries, most women bear numerous children. In part, this is because her kids will cost relatively little to raise. Typically, she'll consider herself lucky if half of them survive, and grow up to labor in nearby fields. Is the world overpopulated, or even close? Anyone who's flown across the United States knows just how vast, and largely empty, this nation really is. Some areas of the Great Plains are actually depopulating, as farming towns decline, and the land reverts to prairie.
- 4) Parts of Asia are far more crowded. Still, the Green Revolution has enabled China and India to feed themselves. Ocean farming is opening up a new source of food, and genetic engineering another. How much further can humanity increase? There are limits. Roughly, the Earth has fifty eight million square miles of land area, and seven billion people. That comes to about five acres per person. But this includes Antarctica and Greenland, mountain crags, sand dunes, Arctic tundra, and other inhospitable areas. On an average, then, each family of four "has" about ten livable acres.
- 5) To a family with a miniscule city dwelling, ten acres may sound big. However, that includes parkland, industries, and the farms which provide their food. Modern agriculture, not to mention timber and mining, requires large tracts.
- 6) The family is central to human existence. Every traditional faith holds the marriage vow sacred, and honors mother and child as the closest bond of all. Most faiths encourage large families. There are many reasons for this. At best, every person is seen as a unique expression of God's nature, and each new child brings that much more beauty and joy into the world. At worst, organized religions are beset by rivals, and thus, seek to out populate them.
- 7) But there's more to it than just having babies. True Lord says it's unhealthy, physically and spiritually, for children to grow up in cities. He teaches that kids should come of age surrounded by nature, on a farm or in a small village. The Internet can facilitate a good education, and sophisticated careers, for even the most remote family. There is one problem there. If every family headed into the countryside, then rural areas would vanish, blanketed by a sea of humanity. 'Empty stretches' only remain *because of* the crowding in urban areas. Thus, the Earth is already too small. How would a Heavenly government deal with this issue?

- 8) A famous scientist once said, “The Earth is our cradle, but humanity cannot remain in the cradle forever.” There are many reasons to spread out. Deadly plagues have swept the world. The dinosaurs were wiped out by a gigantic asteroid. Tsunamis, and other natural disasters, affect entire regions. These can happen again.
- 9) Mars is relatively close, but no one could live on its surface without substantial protection. The twin Mars Rovers have found that water once flowed there. Microbial life may yet survive, deep underground. Buck Rogers and Captain Kirk have been “visiting alien worlds” for a long time, but only in the past decade have astronomers confirmed the existence of planets around other stars. Gradually they’re refining their methods, and spotting smaller planets. When better telescopes are developed (and funded), scientists will be able to observe Earth-sized worlds. If liquid water and oxygen are detected, we can be fairly certain that life exists there also.

(Source: <http://www.cuebon.com/HomePage/PSarticle.html>)

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Answer each of the questions given below by choosing the most appropriate option:
- What became the major cause in 1970s?
 - starvation
 - Zero Population Growth
 - every resource
 - food supply
 - The best way to stop population growth is
 - Sociopolitical debates
 - birth control
 - huge investments
 - prosperity
 - Ocean farming and are opening up new sources of food
 - genetic engineering
 - prairies
 - forests
 - mountains
 - Central to human existence is
 - family
 - Earth
 - agriculture
 - oceans
 - The twin Mars Rover found that

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- a) Mars is relatively close
- b) no one could survive on Mars
- c) water once flowed there
- d) planets exist around other stars

2) Answer the following questions briefly:

i) Which theory did Charles Darwin add to Malthus' essay on God's method of punishment?

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ii) What has the alarmist mindset fallen afoul of?

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iii) Why do women in poor countries bear numerous children?

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iv) Give reason for some areas of Great Plains getting depopulating.

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v) According to the True Lord, which is the ideal place for a kid to grow up in?

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vi) According to the scientists, what are the reasons for human beings to spread out in outer world?

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3) Answer any three of the following questions in 25-30 words:

i) Elaborate upon the reflectors of prosperity in a country.

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ii) Why do most faiths encourage large families?

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iii) How will the scientists be able to ascertain that life exists away from Earth also?

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iv) How does the essayist come to the conclusion that each family of four has about ten livable acres?

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4) Pick out the words/phrases from the passage which are similar in meaning to the following:

i) returns to (para 3)

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ii) make easy (para 7)

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iii) of considerable importance (para 9)

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have dealt with comprehending Argumentative type of essay. Argumentative essay is a type of formal writing in which the writer expresses his opinion with the support of arguments and statistical data. Here are some tips that would help you in reading an argumentative essay.

While-Reading Tips

- Predicting the information in subsequent paragraphs
- Selecting certain parts of the essay to read effectively
- Skipping irrelevant information.
- Breaking the essay into logical progression of the debate and comprehending the idea at hand.
- Re-reading ensures that you have not missed any important information.
- Integrating the information as you read and anticipating what may come next.
- Monitoring and Evaluating the information gathered from the essay to ensure that the purpose of reading the essay is achieved.

Post- Reading Tips

Your reading and comprehension are effective if you are able to:

- Identify and recognise the topic and what the writer's opinions are.
- Summarise what the writer has written and comprehend the progression of the idea.
- Interpret the information that the writer uses in the essay.
- Analyse the writer's point of view with that of the information/data provided by the writer and also using your own knowledge related to the topic.
- After you are clear about the writer's stand, you can take a stand yourself.

4.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

If you would like to learn more about Argumentative Texts, you may consult:

F. H. van Eemeren et al., *Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse* (University of Alabama Press, 1993)

Frans H. van Eemeren & Bart Garssen (eds.), *Exploring Argumentative Contexts* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012)

F. H. van Eemeren, *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discourse* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010)

4.9 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The essay is about whether sportsmen should use performance-enhancing substances, if such practices are acceptable or not.
- 2) It is wrong for the athletes to use any type of biotechnology which can give them an unfair advantage and disrupt the sense of fair play. The writer argues that the performance enhancing steroids are against the integrity of any sports.

**Reading Comprehension:
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- 3) The writer balances the argument by giving oppositional view point as well. He says that such gene therapies build and hone sportsmen's skills further and make it possible for them to achieve unthinkable records.
- 4) The writer uses medical research and the authority of International Olympics Association which banned the use of substances by the sportsmen.
- 5) a. Enhancement, b. Optimistically, c. Endurance
- 6) a. Disrupt, b. Extraordinary, c. Integrity

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) (a). iv, (b). iii, (c). iv, (d). iv
- 2) a) In the gender gap index report, WEF is ranked 114 in the world. The sex ratio is wide and unstable.
b) political empowerment
c) People do not accept birth of a girl child in their families
d) They do not have any access to primary health centres.
- 3) Liability
- 4) Constantly

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) (i). b, (ii). b, (iii). a, (iv). a, (v). c
- 2) i) Charles Darwin believed that Thomas Malthus theory was partially correct and talked about inadequate food supplies.
ii) The alarmist mindset has since fallen afoul of 'political correctness' and 'multiculturalism'. The concern remains, largely unspoken, in the background of many socio-political debates.
iii) Taking care of so many kids, costs relatively little and more number of kids mean more number of hands to labour in the nearby fields when they grow up.
iv) because farming towns have declined and the land has reverted to prairie, i.e., predominantly to grass.
v) According to True Lord, kids should grow up surrounded by nature, on a farm or in a small village instead of growing up in cities which is unhealthy physically and spiritually.
vi) Deadly plagues, Tsunamis and other natural disasters are the reasons due to which human beings are spreading out of Earth.
- 3) i) Factors such as population growth, chances of reaching healthy adulthood, family planning, being able to provide higher education opportunities such as college reflects the prosperity of the nation.
ii) Many faiths encourage large families because every person is seen as an expression of God's nature and each new child brings that much more beauty and joy into the world. It is also possible that organised religions have rivals and they wish to out populate others.

- iii) With refined methods, spotting smaller planets and when better telescopes are made and funded, scientists will be able to observe earth sized worlds. If liquid and oxygen are detected we can be fairly certain that life exists there too.
 - iv) The essayist mentions the following calculations: Earth has fifty eight million square miles of land area, and seven billion people. That comes to about five acres per person. But this includes Antarctica and Greenland, mountain crags, sand dunes, Arctic tundra, and other inhospitable areas. On an average, then, each family of four “has” about ten livable acres.
- 4) (i) revert (ii) facilitate (iii) substantial



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