

Starting academic writing determiners pairwork guessing game

Student A

Work in pairs with different worksheets, not showing your worksheets to each other. Choose one of the sections below and read example phrases from it with the word in **bold** missing (e.g. "BEEP commonly quoted definition of this is by...") until your partner guesses the missing word. They can **only guess once for each example sentence**, so continue giving examples until they guess correctly, making up your own examples if you run out of examples below before they get the right word. When they guess which word is missing from those examples, read out the ones that they got wrong, then change roles and guess which word is missing from your partner's gapped examples. Take turns doing the same until your teacher stops you. You can use the same section more than once if you haven't used all of the examples.

My

- In **my** own opinion, this depends on the situation of the country in question.
- **My** own experience of this is quite different.

Some

- According to **some** research released early last year,...
- I will give **some** examples of this below.
- It is worth taking **some** time to define these two important terms.
- There has been much debate in the last half a year or so in **some** circles about...

The

- According to **the** vast majority of experts in the field,...
- Although that is generally true, it is also sometimes **the** case that...
- Debates over **the** precise definition have yet to be resolved, but...
- I also surveyed a selection of **the** literature on...
- I will give three reasons for this in **the** paragraphs below.
- I will then look at a few cases in which **the** opposite is true.
- In **the** majority of cases, voters respond to this by...
- More recently, **the** definition has been extended to cover...
- Over **the** last few decades,...
- Perhaps **the** best definition is provided by Smith in...
- **The** acknowledged authority on this area defines it as...
- **The** core meaning of this is...
- **The** origins of the term lie in...
- There are two strongly contrasting points of view on **the** issue of...
- This can have both good and bad effects on **the** countries involved.
- Unlike the everyday English use, **the** technical meaning is...

A

- A commonly quoted definition of this is by...
- A fuller definition is...
- A more accurate definition would be...
- As a general rule,...
- In the two paragraphs below I will look at a few of the arguments on both sides.
- It is a common view in many countries that...
- Many people are of the opinion that it is a good idea to ensure that...
- There has been a certain amount of controversy on social media recently on the topic of...
- There is a feeling among approximately half of Japanese voters that...
- This is a problematic term, but...
- This term has a specialised meaning in this context, being...
- Whether this is a good idea or not really depends on...

This

- I believe that in general **this** approach has a lot of merit.
- I will look at the positive and negative results of **this** policy in turn.
- In **this** essay I will attempt to evaluate...
- It is impossible to fully comprehend **this** topic without first understanding...
- The most widely recognised authority on **this** matter is W.H.Brown, who says...
- There is also a lot of resistance to **this** idea.
- **This** paper draws primarily on the work of Hatton (2008).
- We can improve on **this** somewhat vague definition by...

- (= nothing)

- - More recent definitions emphasize...
- A majority of people in - newly industrialised countries experience...
- Almost all - young children in the modern world...
- I will discuss – both points of view in that order below.
- It is perhaps thought by - politicians that...

Ask about any examples which you don't understand, think could have a different word in bold, etc.

Switch sheets and do the same again, this time making sure that you start with the most difficult examples (as your partner has already seen that sheet).

Student B

Work in pairs with different worksheets, not showing your worksheets to each other. Choose one of the sections below and read example phrases from it with the word in **bold** missing (e.g. "BEEP commonly quoted definition of this is by...") until your partner guesses the missing word. They can **only guess once for each example sentence**, so continue giving examples until they guess correctly, making up your own examples if you run out of examples below before they get the right word. When they guess which word is missing from those examples, read out the ones that they got wrong, then change roles and guess which word is missing from your partner's gapped examples. Take turns doing the same until your teacher stops you. You can use the same section more than once if you haven't used all of the examples.

A

- **A** considerable body of literature exists on the effects of...
- **A** definition which is perhaps easier to understand is...
- **A** more precise definition is...
- For **a** significant number of people growing up nowadays,...
- However, there is also **a** lot of resistance to this idea.
- I believe that in general it is probably **a** good thing.
- I will then use the data to come to **a** conclusion on how welcome this might be.
- There are **a** number of possible definitions of...
- There is **a** widespread belief that...
- This has been **a** somewhat controversial topic among online commentators since...
- This paper begins with **a** review of the recent literature on...
- Understanding of the concept depends upon **a** clear definition of...

The

- As Smith noted in his recent paper on **the** same topic,...
- Before moving on, it is worth defining **the** fundamental terms involved in this field.
- However, opposition parties argue against **the** government's policy by quoting...
- I believe that the positive aspects easily outweigh **the** negative ones.
- I will then conclude by selecting **the** most crucial of those aspects.
- In **the** author's experience, such feedback works best if...
- In **the** paragraphs below I will look at both sides of the argument in turn, then...
- Perhaps a majority of families in **the** world have to deal with the issue of...
- Probably **the** most relevant of those definitions is...
- Since the turn of the millennium, there has been lots of news coverage on **the** topic of...
- **The** arguments in this paper rely on a definition of...
- **The** fundamental meaning of this is...
- **The** latter policy will obviously have both good and bad effects in short and long term.
- **The** two leading experts in this field use the term in slightly different ways.
- There is no consensus about what **the** term covers, but...

An

- I will make **an** attempt to justify this opinion below by looking at three main reasons for my view.
- Many societies have **an** unwritten rule that...
- Smith gives **an** alternative definition,...
- There is **an** assumption among many politicians that...

Its

- This essay takes most of **its** data from...
- The use of the term has drifted away from **its** origins in...

This

- A good primary source on **this** topic is...
- However, others argue against **this** philosophy.
- I am quite a strong supporter of **this** idea in the majority of cases.
- I will give three reasons for **this** opinion below.
- In **this** paper, the term is used to mean...
- There are both pros and cons to **this** course of action, which I will examine in that order below.
- **This** essay makes extensive reference to the works of..

- (= nothing)

- For - people growing up nowadays,...
- In developed countries most – children...
- It is often said by - newspaper columnists that...
- This can have both good and bad effects on – society.
- This paper will follow - most recent papers on the topic in taking this to mean...

Ask about any examples which you don't understand, think could have a different word in bold, etc.

Switch sheets and do the same again, this time making sure that you start with the most difficult examples (as your partner has already seen that sheet).

Brainstorming useful phrases for starting academic essays/ papers

Without looking above for now, try to remember or think of at least three phrases for each of the functions below. Some phrases above can go in more than one place below, and many other phrases not above are also okay.

Setting the scene (= explaining the situation under which you are researching/ writing)

Setting out your position on the topic (= limited summary of the views expressed in the essay/ paper)

Explaining the structure of the essay/ paper (= how the information in it is organised)

Defining your terms (= explaining what important terms which you will use mean)

Quoting/ Mentioning sources

Look back at the first worksheets for more of each of the things above, brainstorm more, then compare your answers as a class or with the answer key.

Suggested answers

Phrases which match more than one category below are put in all relevant places. Many more sentences are possible, so ask your teacher to check any others that you came up with.

Setting the scene (= explaining the situation under which you are researching/writing)

- A considerable body of literature exists on the effects of...
- A majority of people in - newly industrialised countries experience...
- According to **some** research released early last year,...
- According to **the** vast majority of experts in the field,...
- Almost all - young children in the modern world...
- For - people growing up nowadays,...
- For **a** significant number of people growing up nowadays,...
- However, opposition parties argue against **the** government's policy by quoting...
- However, others argue against **this** philosophy.
- However, there is also **a** lot of resistance to this idea.
- In developed countries most – children...
- In **the** majority of cases, voters respond to this by...
- It is **a** common view in many countries that...
- It is often said by - newspaper columnists that...
- It is perhaps thought by - politicians that...
- Many people are of the opinion that it is **a** good idea to ensure that...
- Many societies have **an** unwritten rule that...
- Over **the** last few decades,...
- Perhaps a majority of families in **the** world have to deal with the issue of...
- Since the turn of the millennium, there has been lots of news coverage on **the** topic of...
- **The** latter policy will obviously have both good and bad effects in short and long term.
- There are two strongly contrasting points of view on **the** issue of...
- There has been **a** certain amount of controversy on social media recently on the topic of...
- There has been much debate in the last half a year or so in **some** circles about...
- There is **a** feeling among approximately half of Japanese voters that...
- There is **a** widespread belief that...
- There is also a lot of resistance to **this** idea.
- There is **an** assumption among many politicians that...
- This can have both good and bad effects on – society.
- This can have both good and bad effects on **the** countries involved.
- This has been **a** somewhat controversial topic among online commentators since...

Setting out your position on the topic (= limited summary of the views expressed in the essay/ paper)

- Although that is generally true, it is also sometimes **the** case that...
- As **a** general rule,...
- I am quite a strong supporter of **this** idea in the majority of cases.

- I believe that in general it is probably **a** good thing.
- I believe that in general **this** approach has a lot of merit.
- I believe that the positive aspects easily outweigh **the** negative ones.
- In **my** own opinion, this depends on the situation of the country in question.
- In **the** author's experience, such feedback works best if...
- **My** own experience of this is quite different.
- Whether this is **a** good idea or not really depends on...

Explaining the structure of the essay/ paper (= how the information in it is organised)

- I will discuss – both points of view in that order below.
- I will give **some** examples of this below.
- I will give three reasons for this in **the** paragraphs below.
- I will give three reasons for **this** opinion below.
- I will look at the positive and negative results of **this** policy in turn.
- I will make **an** attempt to justify this opinion below by looking at three main reasons for my view.
- I will then conclude by selecting **the** most crucial of those aspects.
- I will then look at a few cases in which **the** opposite is true.
- I will then use the data to come to **a** conclusion on how welcome this might be.
- In **the** paragraphs below I will look at both sides of the argument in turn, then...
- In the two paragraphs below I will look at **a** few of the arguments on both sides.
- In **this** essay I will attempt to evaluate...
- There are both pros and cons to **this** course of action, which I will examine in that order below.
- This paper begins with **a** review of the recent literature on...

Defining your terms (= explaining what important terms which you will use mean)

- - More recent definitions emphasize...
- **A** commonly quoted definition of this is by...
- **A** definition which is perhaps easier to understand is...
- **A** fuller definition is...
- **A** more accurate definition would be...
- **A** more precise definition is...
- Before moving on, it is worth defining **the** fundamental terms involved in this field.
- Debates over **the** precise definition have yet to be resolved, but...
- In **this** paper, the term is used to mean...
- It is impossible to fully comprehend **this** topic without first understanding...
- It is worth taking **some** time to define these two important terms.
- More recently, **the** definition has been extended to cover...
- Perhaps **the** best definition is provided by Smith in...
- Probably **the** most relevant of those definitions is...
- Smith gives **an** alternative definition,...
- **The** acknowledged authority on this area defines it as...
- **The** arguments in this paper rely on a definition of...
- **The** core meaning of this is...
- **The** fundamental meaning of this is...

- **The** origins of the term lie in...
- **The** two leading experts in this field use the term in slightly different ways.
- The use of the term has drifted away from **its** origins in...
- There are **a** number of possible definitions of...
- There is no consensus about what **the** term covers, but...
- This is **a** problematic term, but...
- This paper will follow - most recent papers on the topic in taking this to mean...
- This term has **a** specialised meaning in this context, being...
- Understanding of the concept depends upon **a** clear definition of...
- Unlike the everyday English use, **the** technical meaning is...
- We can improve on **this** somewhat vague definition by...

Quoting/ Mentioning sources

- - More recent definitions emphasize...
- **A** commonly quoted definition of this is by...
- **A** considerable body of literature exists on the effects of...
- According to **some** research released early last year,...
- According to **the** vast majority of experts **in** the field,...
- As Smith noted in his recent paper on **the** same topic,...
- However, others argue against **this** philosophy.
- I also surveyed a selection of **the** literature on...
- It is often said by - newspaper columnists that...
- Perhaps **the** best definition is provided by Smith in...
- **The** acknowledged authority on this area defines it as...
- The most widely recognised authority on **this** matter is W.H.Brown, who says...
- **The** two leading experts in this field use the term in slightly different ways.
- There is **a** widespread belief that...
- **This** essay makes extensive reference to the works of...
- This essay takes most of **its** data from...
- **This** paper draws primarily on the work of Hatton (2008).
- This paper will follow - most recent papers on the topic in taking this to mean...