

WRITING a discursive essay

7A Look at the photo. What do you think are the main reasons for homelessness? What is the best way to reduce the problem?

B Read the essay. Does the writer share your ideas?

Are we doing enough to help the homeless?

Homelessness is a major problem in any big city. There are regular attempts by authorities to clear the streets of the homeless, typically in cities hosting events like the Olympics. Homelessness doesn't look good and it makes politicians feel uncomfortable. Is enough being done to resolve the problem, **however**?

Many people assume that homeless people live on the streets as a result of drug or alcohol misuse.

Consequently, they assume we can do little to help as drugs will continue to be a problem.

Additionally, charitable organisations already help the homeless, **so** this may be sufficient. In my opinion, this approach ignores the bigger picture.

There is no doubt that drug abuse is a major contributing factor leading to homelessness. **On the other hand**, there are increasing numbers of people who are homeless because of the lack of affordable housing. **In addition to this**, as unemployment increases, more people struggle to keep up with payments on their homes.

A frightening number of the homeless are families with children. They are, **in fact**, the fastest growing part of the homeless population. **Furthermore**, it's not only the unemployed who cannot afford housing. According to a recent survey, more than a quarter of homeless people (25–40 percent) actually work. **Nevertheless**, they still cannot afford to pay for accommodation.

In today's society, it is unacceptable that working people cannot afford to pay for a house to live in. **For this reason**, it's essential that governments ensure people are paid sufficient wages. **Likewise**, since housing prices are so high, governments should focus on providing accommodation for low-income families. **In conclusion**, the responsibility for homelessness should not just be left to charities, but as a society we need to help people before they find themselves on the streets.

8 Look at the guidelines for writing a discursive essay. How far does the essay in Exercise 7B follow the guidelines?

- 1 Include an introductory paragraph.
- 2 Divide your essay into for and against sections.
- 3 Use linking words and phrases.
- 4 Write a concluding paragraph.

**LEARN TO** use linking devices

9A Complete the table with phrases in bold from the essay.

introduce additional information (meaning 'and')	what is more, another (problem/issue/point, etc.), _____, _____, _____
indicate a contrast with what has come before (meaning 'but')	in contrast, on the contrary, conversely, _____, _____, _____
follow a logical argument (meaning 'therefore')	thus, hence, accordingly, as a result, _____, _____, _____
prove your point	evidently, obviously, indeed, to conclude/ _____, _____

speakout TIP

Most linking words come at the beginning of a sentence (followed by a comma), or in the middle of the sentence (usually with a comma before and after the linker). Some linkers can be used at the end of clauses. Underline an example in the essay of where the linker appears at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of a sentence.

B Delete the incorrect alternative in each sentence.

- 1 Most computer users have, *in conclusion/evidently/in fact*, never received any formal keyboard training. *As a result,/However,/So* their keyboard skills are inefficient.
- 2 He is old and unpopular. *On the contrary/Furthermore/In addition to this*, he has at best only two more years of political life left.
- 3 Some of the laws were contradictory. Measures were taken to clarify them, *accordingly/as a result/hence*.
- 4 What he said was true. It was, *nevertheless/thus/however*, unkind.
- 5 I don't mind at all. *Indeed/In fact/To conclude*, I was pleased.
- 6 Many employees enjoy music in the workplace. *However/Conversely/In addition to this*, some people find it distracting or, *indeed/in fact/obviously*, annoying.

10A Work in groups. Choose a statement from Exercise 6A and discuss the arguments for and against it.

B Plan an essay about your statement. Write a few key sentences using linking words.

C Write a discursive essay (250–300 words).