

How to Write a Comment – Methodentraining Teil 3 (Klasse 10–12)

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M 1 How to write a comment in four steps

In a written test, you are often asked to express your personal opinion on a topic in the form of a comment. So, you need to show that you can discuss the pros and cons of an issue in a well-structured way. To do this, use the following four steps to create the three major parts of the text, the introduction, the main part and the conclusion:

Steps	Parts of the text	What you do ...
1.		collect ideas/take notes
2.	Introduction	present the question/issue
3.	Main part	a) present arguments in favour of + examples or explanations b) present arguments against + examples or explanations
4.	Conclusion	briefly sum up your personal opinion and give a final comment

Now let's take a closer look at the four steps.

Step 1: Take notes about the topic.

- ✓ This helps you to **structure** your arguments in a logical order, e.g. first the advantages (pros), then the disadvantages (cons).
- ✓ Think about examples and explanations you could give to support your arguments.

Step 2: Start by writing the introduction to the topic.

- ✓ To **get your reader curious and interested** in the topic, you could refer to a recent event, for example, a personal experience or a famous person talking about the problem.
- ✓ Make it clear **why it is important** to discuss the issue.

Step 3: In the main part of your text, you state your opinion in detail.

- ✓ Your ideas should be grouped together in **paragraphs**.
- ✓ Each paragraph should develop **a single argument only**. So start a new paragraph whenever you begin a new idea.
- ✓ Usually the first sentence in a paragraph is **the topic sentence** which clearly states what the whole paragraph is about.
- ✓ The other sentences in the paragraph add additional information such as **details** and **examples**.

If you are arguing in favour of the topic, start with the disadvantages. If you are arguing against the topic, start with the advantages. The reader will best remember the arguments that are closest to the conclusion.

Step 4: In the conclusion, you clearly state your final point of view.

- ✓ **Do not repeat your arguments**. Sum up the pros or cons and their consequences in your own words.
- ✓ Make your ending personal: Think about possible consequences and effects of your opinion or position.

M 2 Structuring a comment

Discuss the following quotation: "Globalization is a fact of life. But I believe we have underestimated its fragility." (Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General)

Tasks: 1. Read the draft written by a student in response to the task above. The sentences are not in the right order. Underline the expressions which may help you to structure the text correctly. 2. Reorganise the comment by writing the correct numbers in front of the sentences.

Introduction

A	1	The former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan holds that globalization is a fact of life but believes we have underestimated its fragility.
B		Whether globalization makes the world stronger or weaker will be discussed in the following.
C		With this statement, the politician refers to the overall picture of global interdependencies in every field of life.

Main Part 1: Advantages

D		A further argument I would like to present is the increased access to international developments for the individual thanks to media like the Internet.
E		Thus, everyone can profit from better learning opportunities, gain an understanding about culture elsewhere, and make contact with people from all over the world.
F		In addition, the number of good jobs has increased if you are prepared to go abroad.
G		One enormous advantage is the stronger cooperation in international politics.
H		Some examples of this are the UN, the WTO and the European Union.
I		When discussing the issue of globalization, you must bear in mind how many areas of our everyday life are positively influenced by it.

Main Part 2: Disadvantages

J		A lot of people around the world have suffered from the financial crisis – they have lost their money, their homes, their jobs.
K		A second argument that shows a negative consequence of globalization is the spread of international terrorism.
L		However, as Kofi Annan points out, many areas of life can be easily affected due to global interdependence.
M		One reason for criticizing globalization can be seen in the disastrous effects of the financial crisis in recent years.
N		The main reason for these catastrophes seems to be global warming.
O		Thirdly, one point that cannot be ignored is the number of natural disasters that have affected people all over the world.
P		This idea can be best illustrated by the after-effects of 9/11, the high number of deaths in the war on terrorism and restrictions in everyday life due to increased security, for example at airports.

Conclusion

Q		Finally, I wish to point out that a lot of these problems could be solved if we continue to improve global cooperation.
R		Taking everything into account, I agree with the statement that globalization is fragile because there are a lot of dangers we need to consider.

M 5 Discussing advantages and disadvantages

Many students dream of spending a school year abroad while others are quite sceptical and fear culture shock. What is your view on a school year abroad?



What should you take with you if you go a year abroad?

Tasks

Comment on the advantages and disadvantages of going to school in another country for a year and give your personal opinion.

1. Write an **introduction** (see the worksheet "Introductions and conclusions").
2. Now discuss the advantages and disadvantages.

To help you write the **main part** of the comment, you can use the help sheet "How to write the main part". There you will also find some topic sentences for the main argument together with notes containing more ideas.

Use these notes to turn the topic sentences into full paragraphs with several sentences.

3. Write a **personal conclusion** (see the worksheet "Introductions and conclusions").

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