ESSAY WRITING: Do we really need homework?

The students in class 8MB are discussing whether homework should be abolished[1] or not. Here are some of their ideas:

a) We need time to relax and spend time with our friends and family in the afternoon.

b) You could do more things that interest you in the afternoon – like going to a sports club or learning to play an instrument.

c) You learn to work by yourself without the help of a

d) It's unfair. Some kids get help from their parents, others have to do everything by

e) Three or four hours of English a week really isn't that much. You need to study at home, too, if you want to get good at

f) You learn to be organized and to structure your day. You'll need these skills later in life, too.

g) Sometimes there's way too much homework, or it's too difficult. That's really frustrating. And then our teacher gets angry when we haven't completed our homework. It really ruins your day.

EXERCISE 1 Find the pro and con arguments and sum them up in one word.

ADVANTAGES OF HOMEWORK	DISADVANTAGES OF HOMEWORK
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
	4.

EXERCISE 2 What's your opinion? Take a side (pro, con – or something in between). In your view, what's the strongest argument?

_____

_____

_____

[1] to abolish: abschaffen

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EXERCISE 3 Now write the essay. You can use the useful expressions below and the grid on page 3.

VOCABULARY: Useful expressions

Stating your opinion – Die eigene Meinung ausdrücken	
In my opinion, …	Meiner Meinung nach …
I think that …	Ich denke, dass …
I believe that …	Ich glaube, dass
Connecting your arguments – Argumente verbinden	
firstly … secondly … thirdly …	erstens … zweitens … drittens …
in addition	außerdem
Giving reasons – Begründen	
because	weil
therefore	deswegen
Looking at the other side – Die andere Seite berücksichtigen	
but	aber
however	jedoch
on the one hand … on the other hand …	auf der einen Seite … auf der anderen Seite …
Coming to a conclusion – Zu einem Schluss kommen	
In conclusion, I'd say that …	Zusammenfassend würde ich sagen, dass …

EXERCISE 4 To practice the useful expressions, fill in the right words from the table above:
think – secondly – but – addition – hand – however – because

My opinion on school uniforms

In many countries all over the world, children have to wear school uniforms. In Germany, we can wear our own clothes to school, _____ here, too, many people think that school uniforms are a good idea.

Personally, I _____ it's better not to have school uniforms _____ our own clothes are more comfortable. In _____, you can express your own style, and that's very important to young people.

On the other _____, there are also advantages to school uniforms. Firstly, they can create a sense of community: All the students feel that they belong to the same school. _____, they can be helpful if some students don't have the money for cool, expensive clothes. With school uniforms, everybody looks the same, and you can't see how much money their parents make.

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_____, I still believe that everybody should have the right to wear what they want. After all, the most important thing is to feel good in your clothes!

TITLE	
INTRODUCTION (tell the reader what your essay is about)	
MAIN PART I (present pro arguments)	
MAIN PART II (present con arguments)	
CONCLUSION (sum up what you've said, and give your opinion based on the arguments)	

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Lösung

EXERCISE 3

INTRO-DUCTION	Every day, school kids spend hours behind their desks studying and doing homework. Teachers say that homework is necessary to learn, but many parents and doctors disagree. They are afraid that children have too little time to do sports or to relax with friends, which is bad for their health and for their development.
MAIN PART I	There are lots of arguments against homework. **Firstly**, children have too little time for themselves. They can't go outside and play and they can't spend time with their family and friends because they have to study all day. Stress and lack of exercise can make them sick. **Secondly**, children can't do what interests them. When you're young you should have the chance to try lots of different things – for example, learning to play an instrument, practicing different sports, or joining a youth club. You learn lots of important things outside school, and teachers shouldn't forget that. **Lastly**, homework makes school less fun. Many kids are afraid to come to school because they couldn't complete their homework – maybe because it was too difficult or because there was just too much to do.
MAIN PART II	Of course there are also arguments for homework. **To begin with**, homework teaches you to work by yourself without the help of a teacher. That way, you can see if you've really understood everything. **Next**, you learn to be organized and to structure your day, and that's a very important skill in life. **Lastly**, it makes sense to work at home because there's actually very little time to practice in class. If you want to be really good, you'll have to study outside school, too.
CONCLUSION	We have seen that there are lots of good arguments for and against homework. In my opinion, teachers should be allowed to give homework, but they should be careful not to overdo it. Also, they should not get angry if somebody hasn't understood or failed to complete the assignment. It's not right that children have to spend all day inside, and it's not good for their health, either.

EXERCISE 4 School uniforms

In many countries all over the world, children have to wear school uniforms. In Germany, we can wear our own clothes to school, **but** here, too, many people think that school uniforms are a good idea.

Personally, I **think** it's better not to have school uniforms **because** our own clothes are more comfortable. In **addition,** you can express your own style, and that's very important for young people. On the other **hand,** there are also advantages to school uniforms. Firstly, they can create a sense of community: All the students feel that they belong to the same school. **Secondly,** they can be helpful if some students don't have the money for cool, expensive clothes. With school uniforms, everybody looks the same, and you can't see how much money their parents make.

However, I still believe that everybody should have the right to wear what they want. After all, the most important thing is to feel good in your clothes!

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