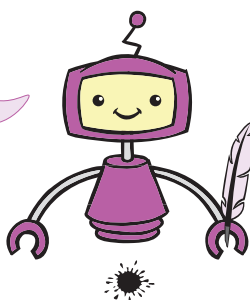


# A balanced view

I know when I'm right. All the time!  
What about you, are you always right? Sometimes it's important to be able to see both sides of an argument or issue. How do you construct a balanced argument about something? Let's find out ...



## LINKS TO:

Stage 3, Module 11  
Learning Object 4: *A healthy routine*

## PRIOR LEARNING:

**Stage 3**  
Module 11 Work Sheet 3: *Harvest day*

## 1 Give and take

In Work Sheet 3, *Harvest day*, you read and analysed two opposing arguments about organic farming and food. Each piece was a deliberately *biased* piece of persuasive writing.

At times, however, it is important to write about an issue in a more balanced way. Good quality research is often reported in a more objective way, drawing on research and opinion from a variety of perspectives and stakeholders, while withholding judgment.

This is true of research in a range of fields, from history and archaeology, to agriculture, government and biological sciences.

How do you construct a balanced article or report?

### Tips for achieving balance

- Do your research. Find out about the latest thinking and research on both sides of the field.
- Avoid emotive language, hyperbole, and other techniques that aim to persuade a reader through emotional manipulation.
- Use clear logic and solid critical-thinking skills to present and explain the evidence and ideas from both sides.
- Provide an equal quota of data and opinion for both sides of the argument.

- Remember that most of the time there are more than two sides to any argument. Try to present a range of perspectives.
- As the writer, take a back seat. Write so that a reader will not be able to tell your personal opinion.

### Research

How do you research contemporary issues? Here are some ideas about places to start, particularly when you are looking for information about other people's opinions.

- Read the newspaper or watch the news. What are politicians, journalists and other commentators saying? What research is being discussed? What are people writing about in their letters to the editor?
- Read some informal sources of information, such as blogs. What opinions do people express, and how do they express them?
- Observe people and places around you, at school, at home and on the street. What inferences can you draw from your observations?
- Conduct interviews. Ask people you for their opinions.
- Use the Internet to access reliable information from sites such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the United Nations research groups and so on.

# Exercises

## Exercise 1

### Preparation

In this work sheet, you will be guided through the process of writing a balanced article about an issue in which you are interested.

**1.1** The first step is to decide on an issue to write about. Below are some ideas for you, but feel free to come up with your own issue if none of these excites your imagination.

- Social networking: Is it good or bad? Should we be worried about issues like cyber-bullying and privacy?
- Digital publishing: Will it mean the end of books, or the start of a brave new world of literature?
- Censorship: When should it be applied, and why?
- Bullying: How bad is it, and what can be done about it?
- Climate change: Is it real? If so, what should we be doing about it?
- Health and wellbeing: What is a healthy lifestyle? Are we too body-conscious, or not body-conscious enough?

**Write down the issue you are going to explore in your article.**

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**1.2** The next step is to do some thinking and some research.

**In the columns below, write some ideas and research notes about two sides of the issue you are going to explore. Use one column for each 'side' of the argument, and be sure to keep your argument balanced by ensuring both columns contain an equal quota of ideas, data and evidence.**

You can do your planning in Indonesian, English, or a combination of both, keeping in mind that your final article will be in Indonesian.

You don't need to fill both columns, but do aim to come up with at least three good ideas to develop further in your article.

For	Against

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For	Against

## Exercise 2

### Planning

Now that you have some ideas to work with, it is time to organise your ideas into a plan.

**Use your ideas and notes to come up with three different perspectives on the issue. Write a paragraph for each perspective. You should begin with an introductory paragraph about the issue.**

Plan your article in Indonesian, because your final piece will need to be written in Indonesian. The planning stage is a great opportunity to consult a dictionary to look up words you may wish to use in your piece.

Introduction	
Perspective 1	

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Perspective 2	
Perspective 3	

### Exercise 3

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#### Writing

How wonderful! You've got some great material to work with in your plan. Now all you need to do is get those creative juices flowing and create an engaging and interesting piece of writing.

**In Indonesian, use your notes and planning to write a balanced article exploring at least two sides of an important issue. This is an extended piece of writing.**

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