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## Scenario One – Misunderstood the Question

Going through the guide for steps one and two in relation to the question, someone who misunderstands the question would have their points as follows:

- 
1. Key words: school uniform, wearing school uniform, school student.

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  2.
    - a. Does it require me to make a decision? Yes – do I agree or not.
    - b. What is that decision? Whether every school student must wear a school uniform.
    - c. What themes or issues does it touch upon? Choice, school uniform, schools
- 

If this person had read the question properly, they would have circled that a key word would have been 'compulsory' which implies that uniforms must be worn i.e. there is no choice. If they went onto step three and re-read the question to link their thoughts in point 2, they would have realised that choice doesn't factor in. It's whether Victorian school students should be made to wear school uniforms. This is different to the question of whether school uniforms are good or bad.

Let's now move on to seeing how this question is correctly understood.

## Scenario Two – Understood the Question

Going through the guide for steps one and two in relation to the question, someone who understands the question would have their points as follows:

- 
1. Key words: compulsory, school uniform, Victorian school student.

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  2.
    - a. Does it require me to make a decision? Yes – do I agree or not.
    - b. What is that decision? Whether school uniforms should be made compulsory, that is, that every Victorian school student must wear a school uniform.
    - c. What themes or issues does it touch upon? Compulsory school uniforms.
- 

In scenario two, if the person went onto step 3, they would be able to link their thoughts back to the exam question.

Can you see how easy it is for the person who has misunderstood the question to plan and then write their essay even though they are not answering the question? That's why reading and understanding the question is so important to get right!

There are largely three main groups which most arguments fall under and they are: social, economic or health related. As an added dimension, you can argue at an individual level and/or community level which would add more depth to your argument. Furthermore, you can consider **short term and/or long term consequences** or implications for your arguments.

Now... let's see how you could go about using the Dimensions of Argument to help you come up with some arguments (NB: You won't have this matrix in the exam, it is just provided here to assist you in how you can think about arguments) for the following question:

**Dangerous dogs should be put down. Argue your case.**

**If you are arguing for this statement, possible arguments are: If you are arguing against this statement, possible are:**

	Individual Level	Community Level	Individual Level	Community Level
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives individuals more safety to freely move e.g. going for a jog (Short term &amp; Long term implications)</li> <li>Doesn't really apply for this question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps preserve community safety e.g. school children (Short term &amp; Long term implications)</li> <li>Doesn't really apply for this question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog owners have a right to keep their dogs. Putting down dangerous dogs takes away dog owners' rights.</li> <li>Cost to dog owners to replace their destroyed dogs and find another dog.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't really apply for this question</li> <li>Cost to taxpayers of finding dangerous dogs and then putting them down is a large exercise. (Short term &amp; Long term implications)</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>				
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in the people being attacked fatally/seriously injured by dogs (Short term &amp; Long term implications)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less people in hospitals for dog attack related injuries and therefore doctors can focus on other things (Short term &amp; Long term implications)</li> </ul>		

See how with the matrix, for this question, one would be able to come up with four arguments 'for' the statement and three arguments 'against' the statement. Furthermore, when you add long term and short term implications, you essentially have double the amount of arguments. Again, **the trick with using the matrix is to apply it to the question, not all dimensions will be relevant and you will need to customise.**

## 2.3 Social Networking

### The Question

**Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter allow individuals to share photos, information and thoughts with one another almost instantaneously. On such sites, people usually have hundreds of ‘friends’ or ‘followers’ who they can talk to. Do you believe that social networking has improved young people’s social lives? Argue your case.**

Let’s see from start to finish how to write this piece given the question above, following the approach as per section 1.2...

### 1. Preparation

**When:** In the periods prior to the exam.

**How:** Read through newspapers to familiarise yourself with issues that could possibly be presented. It is a very good idea to read the opinion articles in newspapers because they serve as a model for excellent argumentative writing. Furthermore, as you continue reading in preparation you will start to get a feel for what a good argumentative piece requires and reading articles will assist you in building up vocabulary (if you look up words you don’t understand).

### 2. Read and Understand the Question

**When:** 30 seconds.

**How:** Read the question. An example of this process is shown below.

Ask yourself the following:

(1) What is the question asking me to do?

(2) What issues are being raised by the question?

pressured to show on their Facebook page that they are having a wonderful time when in reality, they're extremely lonely and sad. This doesn't improve their social life as it isolates the individual to their own reality as opposed to sharing a less glamorous, but true life with others.

**A, O & Q: Development & Support**

See how the argument is illustrated with the example of the young person who has moved overseas. The reader is taken through step by step on how they are isolated through social networking and this is then linked back to how social networking sites do not benefit a young person's social life.

Secondly, social networking sites facilitate anti-social behaviour such as bullying and harassment which doesn't improve young people's social lives. Experts have said that this is because on a computer, a person can call you names without having to see your reaction. This makes it easier for people who would not generally harass in person to then start easily bullying others online.

**O: Argument 2**

It is ideal and good practice that the first sentence of the paragraph matches that of what you had signposted.

**A & O: Development & Support**

See how the argument is then further developed through the use of an expert opinion. An expert's opinion adds more weight to your argument. This has also been combined with an explanation of why social networking sites facilitate anti-social behaviour.

Those for social networking would argue that it does improve young people's social lives as people can keep in touch with those from overseas which otherwise they would have lost contact with. Although this may be the case, what a person reveals on social networking sites does not always represent the reality and even

**O, A & T: Counter Argument**

See the marked transition 'those for social networking would argue ...' to the opposing position. The argument is short and to the point. There is no need to elaborate on it greatly. Having the counter-argument adds balance to your piece.

**O, A & T: Re-Orientation**

Now, it is clear to the reader that we are reverting back to our original position ('although this may be the case') and have addressed the counter argument directly by having a re-orientation that considers the 'keeping in touch' counter argument. See how the re-orientation breaks down this argument by saying that a person really isn't keeping in touch when what is being said on social networking sites isn't a person's 'real' life.

# 3 Practice Tasks

## 3.1 Requirement for all questions

Use the questions below as a basis for a writing piece. You will be judged on how well you argue your case and how well your arguments are backed up. You also need to remember to address any objections or counter-arguments to your argument! These practice tasks will also test your ability to structure your writing properly and clearly.

The questions below are purposely designed to be difficult. Do not be dismayed – you should still be able to develop a good argumentative piece when you think about the issues at hand and the possible arguments.

For the purposes of this practice task, please complete the task on a separate writing pad/book from this book.

**Tip:** Remember to consider possible counter-arguments to the one you have chosen. The best argued position will leave the reader with no more “why?” questions.

## Practice Task One

Recently the website Wikileaks.org has released hundreds of classified military documents revealing disturbing facts about the ground war in Afghanistan, including civilian casualties. The US government has criticised Wikileaks for revealing confidential information, but many have praised Wikileaks for its commitment to transparency and truth. Do you agree that Wikileaks has done the right thing by revealing these documents? Argue your case

## Practice Task Two

There is a lot of debate about whether Victoria's new electronic transport ticketing system, Myki, is really necessary and whether it is worth its enormous cost, given the great number of technical setbacks. However, some would say that this new ticketing system has a lot of positive points, such as reduced paper or cheaper fares. Argue whether you think Myki is a positive or a negative change to our ticketing system.

## Practice Task Three

The two major supermarket chains in Australia, Coles and Woolworths, draw in some of the biggest profits of any companies in Australia. Recently there has been a lot of competition between the two companies. They are both trying to reduce prices to attract more customers. However, because of this, farmers are now not getting paid as much for their produce (milk, beef, vegetables etc). Do you think that it is right for supermarkets to lower prices for the consumers, given the effect on farmers?