

**Some Structures that Students Can Use to Communicate Contrasting Ideas:**

- People who favor \_\_\_\_\_ suggest that \_\_\_\_\_. However, the truth of the matter is that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Proponents of \_\_\_\_\_ claim that \_\_\_\_\_. However, a more accurate view of this issue is that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Opponents of \_\_\_\_\_ argue that \_\_\_\_\_, but more realistically, \_\_\_\_\_.
- Those who are in favor of \_\_\_\_\_, but clearly, the more rational perspective is that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Well-meaning but misguided voters believe that \_\_\_\_\_. In contrast, those who have thought deeply about this issue believe that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Those who oppose \_\_\_\_\_, but a more pragmatic approach is to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Exercises: Express two contrasting ideas about the given issue. Take a position and state it clearly.**

1. Amnesty for illegal aliens (or undocumented immigrants – depending on your viewpoint)
  - **Favors undocumented immigrants:** People who favor mass deportations of undocumented immigrants claim that they steal jobs for native-born Americans and pose a serious crime problem. However, the truth of the matter is that undocumented immigrants provide low-skilled labor that most native-born Americans simply will not do and that they contribute to the economy by paying consumption taxes.
  - **Against illegal immigrants:** People who favor granting amnesty of any sort to illegal immigrants claim that these illegals provide low-skilled labor that most native-born Americans won't do and that they contribute to the economy. However, the truth of the matter is that illegal immigrants steal jobs from Americans and pose a serious crime problem.

**Teaching Tip:** Stress to students how their diction (the words they use) can help to support a position while arguing against the opponent. The term **undocumented immigrants** or **migrants** has a different connotation than **illegal immigrant** or **illegals**.

The key is that students cannot blindly fill in the content with anything. The information that they use in the sentences must make sense. It may be useful to discuss the issues before doing this exercise, or at least have the students read about the topic so that they know something.

2. Parental consent for underage women or girls having abortions (or terminating a pregnancy)

- **Favors requiring parental consent:** Proponents of allowing underage women and girls to obtain an abortion with the consent of their parents or guardians contend that requiring permission would encourage dangerous, illegal abortions in underage women. However, a more accurate view of this issue is that requiring young women to have the consent of their parents before obtaining an abortion may expand her choices and prevent the young woman from making a choice she may later regret.
- **Against requiring parental consent:** Proponents of requiring young women to have the consent of their parents before obtaining an abortion argue that this requirement may expand the woman's choices and prevent her from making a choice she may later regret. However, a more accurate view of this issue is that such a requirement would encourage dangerous, illegal abortions in underage women.

3. Marriage equality (or same-sex marriage)

- **Favors marriage equality:** Those who argue against marriage equality contend that allowing two people of the same gender to marry goes against most religious practices and contributes to the breakdown of family values. In contrast, those who have reasoned clearly about the issue argue persuasively that marriage equality simply recognizes existing practices and breaks down arbitrary legal hurdles to civil unions.
- **Against same-sex marriage:** Those who favor same-sex marriage argue that same same-sex marriage simply recognizes existing practices and breaks down arbitrary hurdles to civil unions. However, a more rational and pragmatic perspective is that allowing same-sex marriage goes against most religious practices and contributes to the breakdown of family values.

**Teaching Tip:** Again, it's important for students to realize that the words they use to describe their debatable topic matters. The term **marriage equality** casts a positive connotation to their argument without making it overly heavy handed. Using **same-sex marriage**, while technically neutral, does tinge the issue with some negativity, possible because of the word **sex**.

4. Cell phones as educational tools

- **Favors cell phones as educational tools:** Those who are against the use of cell phones as educational tools in the class room believe that cell phones enable student cheating and create a distraction with the temptation of social media apps. However, a more pragmatic view is that cell phones give students easy access to information on current events, research tools, and online dictionaries.
- **Against cell phones as educational tools:** Those who favor the use of cell phones as educational tools believe that cell phones give students easy access to information on current events, research tools, and online dictionaries. However, a more pragmatic and realistic view is that cell phones enable student cheating and create a distraction with the temptation of social media apps.

## 5. Use of uniforms in middle schools

- **Favors uniforms in middle schools:** Well-meaning but misguided opponents of requiring uniforms in middle school contend that uniforms place an undue financial burden on parents and prevent children the right to express themselves through the clothes they wear. In contrast, those who have thought deeply about this issue believe that requiring uniforms in middle schools actually reduces the cost of clothing to parents and provides an easy security protocol.
- **Against uniforms in middle schools:** Well-meaning but misguided proponents of requiring uniforms in middle school contend that uniforms in middle schools would reduce the cost of clothing to parents and provide an easy security protocol. In contrast, those who have thought deeply about this issue suggest that requiring uniforms in middle school places an undue financial burden on parents and prevents children the right to express themselves through the clothes they wear.