Legal English supporting your arguments in different ways practice

Choose one of the topics below and share your ideas, using as many different kinds of support for them as you can. Your partner will ask you to support your opinions using questions like those on the next page, and then give their own views.

- Solving the problem of *bribery* by domestic companies abroad
- Solving the problem of politicians and public officials *accepting bribes*
- What to do about false *forced confessions*
- Getting rid of *tax evasion*
- What to do about people whose reputation is ruined by being *taken in for questioning* by the police but who are not *prosecuted* or are *found innocent*
- Dealing with *street crime (bag snatching, mugging, pickpocketing*, etc)
- Dealing with (genuine and fake) *asylum seekers*
- Dealing with *bullying/ cyber-bullying*
- A sensible government policy on *soft drugs* like marihuana
- The correct use of *capital punishment*
- Physical punishments (= *corporal punishments*) at home and school
- Dealing with people who have *served their time in prison (= released prisoners/ ex-prisoners)*
- Cutting down on online *piracy*
- Punishing *fraudsters/ scammers/ conmen*
- How much of a problem *human trafficking* is
- Conditions in *prisons*
- *Rehabilitation* of criminals
- The *self-defence defence*
- How to deal with *persistent reoffenders*
- How to control *prostitution*
- How to deal with *whistleblowers*
- Dealing with *labour disputes* such as *wrongful dismissal cases*
- Tackling *monopolistic practises*/ More effective *competition rules* (stopping *price fixing* etc)
- Alternatives to *prison sentences*
- A more up-to-date *copyright law*
- Ensuring proper *data protection*
- Tackling *discrimination*
- Dealing with *offshore shell companies*

Suggested questions to get (more) support for your partner's arguments

Advantages
Why would… be a **good** thing?   What would be the **advantage(s)** of…?
I can't see any **merit** in...

Certainty/Strong opinions
Are you **sure** about…?   You don't **sound** very certain about...
How confident are you that…?

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends
Do you **expect**… to continue?   How might… **change**?
What are your **predictions** for the next…?

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating
Can you **explain** what you mean (by…)?   Is there another **way** to say…?
What does… **mean**?   So, **overall**, are you saying…?
(I understand what you are saying, but) I don't get your **point**.

Comparing/ Contrasting
Isn't that basically the **same** as…?   How is that **different** to…?
I can't understand the **difference** between… and…   How **similar** is… to…?

Conceding points/ Considering possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides
But isn't it also **true** that…?   But don't you **accept** that…?
But if you **look** at it another way,…   But don't **some** people also believe that…?

Consequences/ Effects/ Results
What could be the **effects** of…?   Does… **matter** (much)?
How do you think… would **affect**…?

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics
How **big** a… is that?   Can you give me a **rough** idea of…?/ Roughly,…?
Can you put any **figures** on…?   How **common** is…?

Examples
Can you **give** me an example (of…)?   For **instance**?

Expert opinion/ Other people's experience/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources
What do the **experts** think about…?   Does anyone **else** think the same way?
Where did you get the **idea** that… from?   Do most **academics** agree on…?
What is your **source** for…?

Personal experiences
What is your **own** experience of…?   Have you **experienced**… yourself?
Do you generally **find** that…?   Have you personally **found** that…?

What phrases can you use to support your arguments in these ways? Brainstorm at least three phrases for each. It might help to look at the questions above to give you ideas.

Advantages

Certainty/ Emphasising/ Importance/ Strong opinions

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating

Comparing/ Contrasting

Conceding points/ Considering possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides

Consequences/ Effects/ Results

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics

Examples

Expert opinion/ Other people's experience/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources

Personal experiences

Use the key words on the next page to help check and expand your ideas.

Key words
Use these words to help you with the brainstorming task above.
Advantages
positive   main   great

Certainty/ Emphasising/ Importance/ Strong opinions
doubt   denied   obvious   clear

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends
up   de-   pl-   out
re-   -ly

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating
another   other   brief

Comparing/ Contrasting
completely   almost   very
fairly   a little
rather   totally   a lot
much   far

Conceding points/ Destroying possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides
also   can   accept   both

Consequences/ Effects/ Results
leads   result   because   consequence

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics
adds   total   precise

Examples
best   good   illustrate
give   instance

Expert opinion/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources/ Other people's experiences
according   said

Personal experiences
limited   generally   personal

Check your phrases as a class or with the suggested answers.

Suggested answers
Many other phrases are possible, so please check if you wrote something different.
Advantages
A **positive** aspect of this is…The **main** selling point of this is… A **great** benefit of this is…

Certainty/ Emphasising/ Importance/ Strong opinions
There is no **doubt** that…   It cannot be **denied** that…
It should be **obvious** that…   It seems **clear** to me that…

Changes/ Predictions/ Trends
go **up**/ grow/ increase/ climb/ rise   shoot **up**/ boom/ accelerate/ rocket/ explode
decline/ **de**crease/ shrink/ drop/ fall   **pl**ummet/ **pl**unge/ crash/ dive
flatten **out**/ bottom **out**/ plateau/ level off   **re**bound/ **re**cover/ bounce **back**/ pick **up**
will definite**ly**/ will almost certain**ly**/ will probab**ly**/ could possib**ly**
rapid**ly**/ dramatical**ly**/ slow**ly**/ considerab**ly**/ slight**ly**

Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating
To put that **another** way,…   In **other** words,…/ That is to say,…   In **brief**,…

Comparing/ Contrasting
completely identical/ **almost** identical   **almost** the same
very similar/ **fairly** similar   quite **a lot**/ a little … er than…
a little different/ **rather** different/ **very** different/ **almost totally** different/ **completely**
different   **much** more… than…   **far** less… than…

Conceding points/ Destroying possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides
It is **also** true that… Nevertheless,…   Although you **can** argue that…
I **accept** that…, but…   While there are **both** pros and cons,…

Consequences/ Effects/ Results
…**leads** to…   As a **result** of,…   **Because** of…,…   A **consequence** of… is…

Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics
which **adds** up to…   In **total**,…   To be **precise**,…

Examples
The **best** example of this is…   A **good** illustration of this is…
I can **illustrate** this with an example.   To **give** an example of what I'm talking about…
For **instance**,…

Expert opinion/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources/ Other people's experiences
According to most experts…
… (once) **said** that…/ As… **said**,…./ I read something which **said** that…

Personal experiences
In my **limited** experience,…I have **generally** found that…I have **personal** experience of
this.

Freer speaking: Legal topics debates
Choose one line below and take opposite sides of the argument. Use as many different ways of supporting your argument in the box as you can, using different language if you use the same kind of support again. Use the key words above to help with the first debate, then try to do the other debates with just the list of kinds of support below to help.

Suggested kinds of support for your arguments
➢ Advantages
➢ Certainty/ Emphasising/ Importance/ Strong opinions
➢ Changes/ Predictions/ Trends
➢ Clarifying/ Paraphrasing/ Restating
➢ Comparing/ Contrasting
➢ Conceding points/ Destroying possible arguments against/ Looking at both sides
➢ Consequences/ Effects/ Results
➢ Data/ Figures/ Generalising/ Statistics
➢ Examples
➢ Expert opinion/ Other people's experience/ Quoting/ Things read or heard/ Sources
➢ Personal experiences

- Arguments for longer *jail sentences*/ Arguments for shorter jail sentences
- Decriminalising *prostitution*/ Harsher punishments for prostitution
- Punishing *prostitutes*/ Punishing people who pay for sexual services
- Advantages of a *jury system*/ Disadvantages of a jury system
- Arguments for making it easier to *sue* people for *libel* and *slander*/ Arguments for making it more difficult to sue people for libel and slander
- Making *bankruptcy* easier and less serious/ Making bankruptcy more difficult and serious
- More emphasis on *punishing* criminals/ More emphasis on *rehabilitating* prisoners
- Taking *legal precedent* more into account/ Taking legal precedent less into account (or even completely ignoring it)
- *Legal immunity* for serving politicians/ No legal immunity
- *Positive discrimination* (= *affirmative action*)/ Treating all people completely equally (however disadvantaged they are)
- More controls on the rental sector/ Letting market forces control *landlords*
- More international law/ More freedom for countries to decide their own laws
- Raising basic taxes for the rich/ Only closing tax *loopholes*
- Making it easier to set up a *law firm*/ More controls on law firms
- Arguments for a *statute of limitations*/ Arguments against a statute of limitations
- Emphasising people's *right to privacy*/ Emphasising people's right to free speech and freedom of information
- Making starting *litigation* easier/ Making starting litigation more difficult
- Encouraging official *graffiti*/ Discouraging all graffiti
- Making *mutually agreed divorce* easier/ Making all divorce more difficult
- More controls on gambling/ The *legalisation* of other forms of gambling such as casinos
- *Prosecuting* teachers for bullying by students in their classes/ Prosecuting parents for bullying by their children