

Opinions, Debate and Critical Thinking

Vocabulary Lesson, Examples & Practice Questions

Opinions, Debate and Critical Thinking in English

Being able to express your opinion clearly, argue a point persuasively, and evaluate other people's reasoning are essential skills in English — whether you're taking part in a seminar, writing an essay, listening to a podcast, or simply having a heated discussion with a friend. At B2 level, it's not enough to say "*I think it's good*" — you need the vocabulary to **qualify your claims**, **challenge assumptions**, **concede a point**, and **draw well-reasoned conclusions**.

Imagine this situation: *Two university students, Priya and Marcus, are preparing for a class debate on whether social media does more harm than good. As they discuss their arguments, they use a range of language to express views, push back on each other's ideas, and think critically about the evidence in front of them.* The vocabulary in this lesson will help you do exactly the same.

Key Vocabulary & Meaning Breakdown

1. Expressing and Qualifying Opinions

These words and phrases help you state your view with precision — and with the right level of certainty or caution.

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
contend	<i>verb</i> — to argue or assert that something is true, especially in a debate or formal context	Priya contends that social media has fundamentally changed how young people communicate.	contend that / contend with (a problem) — formal register; common in academic writing
assert	<i>verb</i> — to state something confidently and firmly without necessarily offering proof	Marcus asserted that the negative effects of social media are greatly exaggerated.	assert that / assert oneself — more forceful than "say"; implies confidence
maintain	<i>verb</i> — to continue to hold an opinion, even when challenged	She maintained her position throughout the debate, despite the strong opposition.	maintain that / maintain a position / maintain one's stance
stance	<i>noun</i> — a person's attitude or position on a particular issue	What is the government's stance on free speech online?	take a stance / adopt a stance / firm stance / neutral stance

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
perspective	<i>noun</i> — a particular way of thinking about or viewing something, shaped by experience or context	From a sociological perspective, the rise of influencers is a fascinating phenomenon.	from a ... perspective / broaden one's perspective / offer a new perspective
nuanced	<i>adjective</i> — showing careful awareness of fine distinctions and subtle differences	Her argument was nuanced and took into account a wide range of factors.	a nuanced view / a nuanced argument / nuanced understanding
tentative	<i>adjective</i> — not definite or certain; offered with some hesitation or caution	He offered a tentative suggestion that both sides might have valid points.	tentative conclusion / tentative agreement / tentatively (adverb)
conviction	<i>noun</i> — a strong belief or opinion held with confidence	She spoke with great conviction about the need for stricter data privacy laws.	speak with conviction / hold a conviction / deeply held conviction

2. Debating, Arguing and Challenging

These words are used when you need to push back, respond to an argument, or engage critically with someone else's point of view.

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
counter	<i>verb</i> — to respond to an argument by saying or doing something that opposes it	Marcus countered Priya's point by citing a recent study on digital wellbeing.	counter an argument / counter a claim / counter with evidence
rebut	<i>verb</i> — to prove that a claim or argument is wrong by using evidence or logic	She rebutted the claim with three clear examples from peer-reviewed research.	rebut a claim / rebut an argument — more formal than "counter"; implies evidence
concede	<i>verb</i> — to admit, often reluctantly, that something is true or that an opponent has made a valid point	Marcus conceded that Priya had a point about the mental health risks for teenagers.	concede a point / concede that / concede defeat — shows intellectual honesty
refute	<i>verb</i> — to prove conclusively that something is wrong; stronger than "rebut"	The scientist refuted the theory with overwhelming experimental data.	refute a claim / refute an argument — often misused to mean "deny"; correct use requires evidence

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
dispute	<i>verb / noun</i> — (v) to question whether something is true or correct; (n) a disagreement or argument	Several economists dispute the government's employment figures. / The dispute over the new policy lasted months.	dispute a claim / a heated dispute / beyond dispute / in dispute
advocate	<i>verb / noun</i> — (v) to publicly support or recommend something; (n) a person who supports a cause	Priya advocates for greater regulation of social media platforms. / She is a strong advocate for digital literacy.	advocate for / advocate change — formal register; common in political and academic writing
rebuttal	<i>verb / noun</i> — to express sharp disapproval or criticism of someone	The chairperson rebuked the speaker for making unsupported claims.	receive a rebuke / sharp rebuke — stronger and more negative than "criticise"
opposition	<i>noun</i> — resistance or disagreement towards something	There was considerable opposition to the proposed changes to the curriculum.	face opposition / strong opposition / in opposition to / meet with opposition

3. Critical Thinking and Evaluating Arguments

These words help you assess the quality, validity, and reliability of information and arguments — a key skill in academic and professional English.

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
assumption	<i>noun</i> — something accepted as true without proof or evidence	The argument rests on the assumption that all users are exposed to the same content.	make an assumption / challenge an assumption / underlying assumption / faulty assumption
premise	<i>noun</i> — a statement or idea that forms the basis of an argument	If you accept the premise that privacy is a fundamental right, the conclusion follows logically.	accept a premise / flawed premise / on the premise that — formal; common in logic and philosophy
implication	<i>noun</i> — a likely consequence or conclusion that is not directly stated	The implications of this policy for small businesses could be severe.	the implications of / broader implications / consider the implications / policy implications
validity	<i>noun</i> — the quality of being logically sound or well-grounded	Several experts questioned the validity of the research methods used in the study.	question the validity / doubt the validity / validity of an argument / of evidence

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
bias	<i>noun / verb</i> — an unfair preference for or against something, often resulting in inaccurate judgement	We need to be aware of our own bias when evaluating sources of information.	show bias / inherent bias / media bias / confirmation bias / biased (adj)
fallacy	<i>noun</i> — a mistaken belief or a flaw in reasoning that makes an argument invalid	Claiming that something must be true because it has always been done that way is a common logical fallacy.	logical fallacy / commit a fallacy / the fallacy of — formal; useful in academic writing and debate
scrutinise	<i>verb</i> — to examine or inspect something very carefully and critically	Journalists must scrutinise government claims rather than simply repeating them.	scrutinise evidence / scrutinise a claim / come under scrutiny (noun form)
substantiate	<i>verb</i> — to provide evidence that proves or supports a claim	Can you substantiate that claim with any reliable data?	substantiate a claim / substantiate an argument / unsubstantiated (adj)
objective	<i>adjective</i> — not influenced by personal feelings or opinions; based on facts	A good debate requires objective analysis of the evidence, not emotional reactions.	objective analysis / remain objective / an objective view — opposite: subjective
conjecture	<i>noun / verb</i> — an opinion formed without firm evidence; a guess	At this stage, everything we know about the cause of the problem is pure conjecture.	pure conjecture / mere conjecture / based on conjecture — formal; implies uncertainty

Collocations & Useful Expressions

Understanding how these words combine with others will make your English sound much more natural and fluent. Here are key collocations from the topic of opinions, debate, and critical thinking:

take + a stance

You need to take a clear stance on the issue before the debate begins.

challenge + an assumption

Good critical thinkers are not afraid to challenge the assumptions behind a popular argument.

come under + scrutiny

The company's financial practices came under intense scrutiny after the report was published.

put forward + an argument / a point of view

She put forward a compelling argument in favour of renewable energy subsidies.

hold + a conviction / a view

He holds the firm conviction that freedom of speech must never be restricted.

weigh up + the evidence / the pros and cons

Before forming an opinion, it's important to weigh up all the available evidence.

draw + a conclusion

It's too early to draw any firm conclusions from the initial data.

back up + a claim / an argument

Every claim you make in an essay should be backed up with reliable evidence.

reach + a consensus

After two hours of debate, the committee finally reached a consensus on the proposed policy.

shed light on + an issue

The new documentary sheds light on the hidden consequences of fast fashion.

play devil's advocate

Let me play devil's advocate for a moment — what if the critics are actually right?

(Note: to argue the opposite side, not necessarily because you believe it, in order to test an argument or provoke discussion)

sit on the fence

He tends to sit on the fence rather than commit to a clear position.

(Note: to avoid taking a clear opinion on something; often used critically)

the other side of the coin

Social media can increase awareness, but the other side of the coin is the spread of misinformation.

(Note: used to introduce the opposite or contrasting aspect of a situation)

Important Differences & Confusing Words

Refute vs Rebut vs Deny

These three words all involve responding to a claim, but they are **not** interchangeable:

- **Refute** means to *prove conclusively* that something is wrong, usually with strong evidence. It implies success.
The scientist refuted the theory with data collected over ten years.
- **Rebut** means to *argue against* a claim, though it does not necessarily mean the argument is proven false. The rebuttal may or may not succeed.
He rebutted her point, but the audience was not fully persuaded.
- **Deny** simply means to say something is not true, with no implication of evidence.
The politician denied any involvement in the scandal.

⚠ Many people use *refute* when they mean *deny*. In formal writing, this is considered an error.

Objective vs Subjective

- **Objective** — based on facts, not influenced by personal feelings.
The report provides an objective analysis of the data.
- **Subjective** — based on personal opinions, feelings, or interpretations.
Whether a piece of art is beautiful is entirely subjective.

In critical thinking, distinguishing between objective evidence and subjective opinion is essential.

Implication vs Inference

- **Implication** — something that is *suggested* by a speaker or writer without being directly stated. The speaker implies it.
Her silence had serious implications — we assumed she disagreed.
- **Inference** — a conclusion that the *listener or reader* draws from available information. The reader infers it.
From the data, we can draw the inference that screen time is increasing.

A helpful way to remember: *A speaker implies; a listener infers.*

Assumption vs Premise

- **Assumption** — something taken for granted, often without awareness or examination. Can be faulty.
Your whole argument is built on the assumption that the data is accurate.
- **Premise** — a stated starting point in a logical argument; usually more deliberate and formal than an assumption.
The debate begins from the premise that free healthcare is a basic right.

Common Mistakes

✗ *She rebutted the theory with no evidence at all, so we accepted her point.*

✓ **She denied / disputed the theory** — *She disputed the theory, though she provided no evidence to support her view.*

(Rebutting implies making a counter-argument; if no evidence is given, "dispute" or "deny" is more accurate.)

✗ *In my opinion, I personally think that this is wrong and I believe it's not right.*

✓ **Choose one opinion phrase and be direct:** *In my view, this approach is fundamentally flawed.*

(Stacking multiple opinion phrases sounds repetitive and weakens your argument. One clear phrase is stronger.)

✗ *His argument was very bias.*

✓ **His argument was very biased.**

("Bias" is a noun; "biased" is the adjective. You cannot use "bias" as an adjective.)

✗ *I refute that claim — I simply don't agree with it.*

✓ **I dispute / reject that claim.** *I dispute that claim — I don't believe it reflects the evidence.*

(To refute something, you must prove it is wrong, not simply disagree with it.)

✗ *She advocated the use of stricter laws.*

✓ **She advocated for the use of stricter laws.**

(In British English, "advocate for" is the standard collocation when supporting a cause or change.)

✗ *His point of view is very subjective and based on facts.*

✓ **His argument is objective and based on facts.**

(Subjective means opinion-based, not fact-based. These are opposite concepts.)

✗ *The government made an implication from the statistics that crime was falling.*

✓ **The government drew an inference from the statistics** — *The government drew the inference that crime was falling.*

(The government is the reader/interpreter here, so they infer, not imply.)

Opinions, Debate and Critical Thinking: Quick Summary & Review

In this lesson, you have explored a rich range of vocabulary for expressing, defending, and evaluating opinions in English. Here are the key takeaways:

- Use precise opinion verbs like **contend**, **assert**, and **maintain** to express views with confidence and appropriate formality.
- In debates, use **counter**, **rebut**, and **concede** to engage with opposing arguments respectfully and intelligently.
- Critical thinking language — including **assumption**, **bias**, **fallacy**, and **validity** — allows you to evaluate the quality of arguments rather than just accepting them.
- Know the difference between closely related words: **refute** is not the same as **deny**; **imply** is not the same as **infer**; **objective** is the opposite of **subjective**.
- Register matters: words like **rebuke**, **substantiate**, **conjecture**, and **premise** are formal and suit academic writing and debate; expressions like **sit on the fence** and **play devil's advocate** are more informal and conversational.
- Strong collocations — such as **back up a claim**, **weigh up the evidence**, and **reach a consensus** — make your English sound natural and fluent.

Now practise **Opinions, Debate and Critical Thinking** vocabulary in the exercises below.

Opinions, Debate and Critical Thinking – Practice Test

B2 | Practice Exercises: Multiple Choice, Fill-in-the-Gap, Fill-in-the-Blank, Matrix Matching & Sorting

Part 1: Multiple Choice (Questions 1–10)

- 1** She made a _____ argument that convinced even her most skeptical opponents.
- A** compelling
 - B** sympathetic
 - C** talkative
 - D** suspicious
- 2** The politician's speech was full of _____ statements that sounded impressive but lacked real substance.
- A** rhetoric
 - B** grammar
 - C** dialect
 - D** slang
- 3** Which word best describes a person who questions accepted beliefs and demands clear evidence before forming an opinion?
- A** biased
 - B** gullible
 - C** skeptical
 - D** assertive
- 4** To _____ a point in a debate means to admit that it is valid even if you disagree with the overall argument.
- A** contradict
 - B** concede
 - C** reject
 - D** impose

- 5** Which of the following words means a conclusion reached by reasoning from evidence rather than from direct observation?
- A** assumption
 - B** preference
 - C** inference
 - D** exaggeration

- 6** The report was criticised for being _____, presenting only one side of the issue without acknowledging opposing views.
- A** subjective
 - B** one-sided
 - C** thorough
 - D** coherent

- 7** Choose the correct collocation: During the debate, she _____ a strong case for reforming the education system.
- A** did
 - B** made
 - C** said
 - D** told

- 8** Which word means to look at something from a different perspective or to reconsider a situation?
- A** reframe
 - B** rehearse
 - C** restate
 - D** revise

- 9** His argument was undermined by the fact that he was relying on _____ data from a study conducted over 30 years ago.
- A** outdated
 - B** updated
 - C** partial
 - D** relative

- 10** Which sentence uses the word 'substantiate' correctly?
- A** She substantiated her feelings about the film immediately.
 - B** The researcher provided evidence to substantiate her claims.
 - C** He substantiated the meeting for next Monday.
 - D** They substantiated the audience with interesting facts.

Part 2: Fill in the Gap (Questions 11–20)

- 11** She refused to accept the report's conclusions without first ____ the methodology used to collect the data.
- A** scrutinising
 - B** mentioning
 - C** repeating
- 12** The politician's argument appeared convincing on the surface, but it contained a fundamental logical ____.
- A** fallacy
 - B** concept
 - C** debate
- 13** Rather than taking sides immediately, he preferred to remain ____ until he had heard all the evidence.
- A** impartial
 - B** reluctant
 - C** outspoken
- 14** The documentary was criticised for presenting only one ____ on a highly complex social issue.
- A** perspective
 - B** outcome
 - C** statement
- 15** His speech was powerful, but several panellists argued that his claims lacked sufficient ____ to be taken seriously.
- A** substantiation
 - B** repetition
 - C** expression
- 16** The chairperson asked both teams to ____ their positions before the final vote was taken.
- A** justify
 - B** announce
 - C** consider

17 Critics accused the government of ____ the report's findings by selectively quoting statistics.

- A** distorting
- B** publishing
- C** reviewing

18 Although she agreed with the general proposal, she took ____ to the way the data had been interpreted.

- A** exception
- B** advantage
- C** notice

19 The professor encouraged students to ____ received wisdom rather than simply accepting established theories.

- A** challenge
- B** celebrate
- C** summarise

20 The two sides reached a ____ after several hours of negotiation, agreeing on the key points of the policy.

- A** consensus
- B** contradiction
- C** distinction

Part 3: Fill in the Blank (Questions 21–30)

21 The politician's speech was filled with emotional language, but it lacked solid evidence — a classic example of a _____ technique designed to persuade rather than inform.

22 Before accepting any claim as true, a critical thinker should always look for _____ to support or challenge the argument being made.

23 Her argument was weakened because she based her conclusion on a false _____ — she assumed everyone in the group agreed with her position.

24 The two experts had opposing views, but they agreed to _____ the issue openly so that the audience could hear both sides of the argument.

25 He changed his position after hearing a more convincing argument — this willingness to revise one's views is a sign of intellectual _____ .

26 The report was accused of being _____ because it only presented statistics that supported one side of the environmental debate.

27 When two people cannot reach an agreement, a neutral third party may be asked to _____ and help them find a compromise.

28 Rather than accepting the official explanation without question, she preferred to _____ the data herself before drawing any conclusions.

29 His argument contained a logical _____ — he claimed to support free speech but also argued that certain opinions should be banned entirely.

30 A good debater does not simply attack the opposing speaker personally — this is known as an ad hominem fallacy — but instead challenges the _____ of their argument.

Part 4: Matrix / Match Values (Questions 31–40)

31 Match each word on the left with its correct definition on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

A To prove that a statement or argument is wrong

B To argue against a claim by presenting opposing evidence

C To state something confidently and forcefully

D To admit that something is true, often reluctantly

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Refute	[]
Assert	[]
Concede	[]
Rebut	[]

35 Match each debate strategy on the left with its correct description on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- A** Misrepresenting someone's argument to make it easier to attack
- B** Presenting only two options when more exist
- C** Attacking the person rather than their argument

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Straw man	[]
Ad hominem	[]
False dichotomy	[]

36 Match each word on the left with its closest synonym on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- A** Corroborate
- B** Open to interpretation
- C** Controversial
- D** Unbiased

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Impartial	[]
Contentious	[]
Substantiate	[]
Ambiguous	[]

37 Match each sentence beginning on the left with the most appropriate ending on the right to form natural opinion phrases.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- A** serious concerns about the proposal.
- B** to suggest that the policy has failed.
- C** to dismiss the issue entirely.

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
There is strong evidence	[]
Critics have raised	[]
It would be an oversimplification	[]

38 Match each word on the left with the phrase it most strongly collocates with on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- A** a valid point
C a consensus

- B** an assumption
D a counterargument

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Raise	[]
Acknowledge	[]
Challenge	[]
Reach	[]

39 Match each word on the left with its correct antonym on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- A** Dubious
C Subjective

- B** Irrational

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Objective	[]
Rational	[]
Credible	[]

40 Match each formal linking phrase on the left with its discourse function on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- A** Despite what has been said, introducing a contrasting point
C Rephrasing something to make it clearer

- B** Considering this information when drawing a conclusion
D Introducing a related point that follows logically

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Notwithstanding this	[]
By the same token	[]
In light of this	[]
To put it another way	[]

Part 5: Sort the Values (Questions 41–50)

41 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

otherwise.

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suggests

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42 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

considering

drawbacks.

potential

benefits

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It

is

43 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

compelling,

convincing.

sufficient

empirical

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44 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

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Contrary

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45 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

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46 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

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47 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

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48 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

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49 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

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50 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

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Answer Key & Explanations

Opinions, Debate and Critical Thinking | B2

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. **A** **Correct Answer: compelling**
✓ **Explanation:** **Compelling** means powerfully persuasive or convincing. It collocates naturally with **argument** to describe reasoning that is difficult to ignore or reject. *The lawyer presented a compelling argument that changed the jury's opinion.*
2. **A** **Correct Answer: rhetoric**
✓ **Explanation:** **Rhetoric** refers to language designed to persuade or impress, often criticised for being showy rather than meaningful. *His rhetoric was polished, but the policy details were vague.*
3. **C** **Correct Answer: skeptical**
✓ **Explanation:** A **skeptical** person is doubtful and does not accept claims without sufficient proof. This is a key trait in **critical thinking**. *She was skeptical about the study's conclusions because the sample size was too small.*
4. **B** **Correct Answer: concede**
✓ **Explanation:** To **concede** a point means to acknowledge that the opposing side has made a valid claim, while still maintaining your broader position. *He conceded that the data was accurate, but argued it was being misinterpreted.*
5. **C** **Correct Answer: inference**
✓ **Explanation:** An **inference** is a logical conclusion drawn from available evidence. Unlike an **assumption**, it is based on reasoning. *From the data, we can draw the inference that sales declined due to poor marketing.*
6. **B** **Correct Answer: one-sided**
✓ **Explanation:** **One-sided** describes an argument or report that unfairly favours one perspective, which is the opposite of a **balanced** or **impartial** view. *The documentary was criticised for being one-sided in its portrayal of the conflict.*
7. **B** **Correct Answer: made**
✓ **Explanation:** The correct collocation is **make a case**, meaning to present arguments in support of something. We do not use *do*, *say*, or *tell* with **case** in this context. *She made a strong case for increasing the minimum wage.*
8. **A** **Correct Answer: reframe**
✓ **Explanation:** To **reframe** something means to present or think about it from a new or different angle, which is a common strategy in debate and critical thinking. *Instead of seeing the problem as a threat, she reframed it as an opportunity.*

9. **A** Correct Answer: outdated
✓ Explanation: **Outdated** means no longer current or relevant, and it collocates naturally with **data**, **information**, or **research**. *Using outdated statistics to support a modern argument weakens your credibility.*
10. **B** Correct Answer: The researcher provided evidence to substantiate her claims.
✓ Explanation: To **substantiate** means to provide facts or evidence that prove or support a claim. It collocates with **claims**, **arguments**, or **allegations**. *You must substantiate your argument with reliable sources to be persuasive.*

Part 2: Fill in the Gap

11. **A** Correct Answer: scrutinising
✓ Explanation: To **scrutinise** means to examine something very carefully and critically. *A good researcher scrutinises methodology before accepting conclusions.*
12. **A** Correct Answer: fallacy
✓ Explanation: A **fallacy** is a mistaken belief or a flawed step in reasoning. *Assuming correlation means causation is a common logical fallacy.*
13. **A** Correct Answer: impartial
✓ Explanation: **Impartial** means not favouring one side over another — treating all perspectives fairly. *A good judge must be impartial when evaluating arguments.*
14. **A** Correct Answer: perspective
✓ Explanation: A **perspective** refers to a particular way of thinking about or viewing a topic. *Presenting multiple perspectives leads to a more balanced debate.*
15. **A** Correct Answer: substantiation
✓ Explanation: **Substantiation** means evidence or facts that support a claim. *Without substantiation, even the most confident argument can be dismissed.*
16. **A** Correct Answer: justify
✓ Explanation: To **justify** means to give valid reasons or evidence to support a position or decision. *You must justify your stance with clear reasoning.*
17. **A** Correct Answer: distorting
✓ Explanation: To **distort** information means to present it in a misleading way, changing its true meaning. *Distorting facts is a dishonest debate tactic.*
18. **A** Correct Answer: exception
✓ Explanation: The phrase **take exception to** something means to object to or disagree with it. *She took exception to the way her words had been misrepresented.*
19. **A** Correct Answer: challenge
✓ Explanation: To **challenge** received wisdom means to question ideas that are widely accepted without critical examination. *Critical thinkers challenge assumptions before reaching conclusions.*

20. **A** Correct Answer: consensus
✓ Explanation: A **consensus** is a general agreement reached by a group after discussion. *Reaching a consensus requires all parties to compromise on their positions.*

Part 3: Fill in the Blank

21. **rhetorical** Correct Answer: rhetorical
✓ Explanation: **Rhetorical** describes language or techniques used to **persuade or impress** an audience rather than convey factual information. *A rhetorical question expects no real answer.*
22. **evidence** Correct Answer: evidence
✓ Explanation: **Evidence** refers to **facts, data, or proof** used to support a claim or conclusion. *Without evidence, an argument remains purely speculative.*
23. **assumption** Correct Answer: assumption
✓ Explanation: An **assumption** is something accepted as true **without proof or verification**. *Building an argument on a false assumption leads to flawed conclusions.*
24. **debate** Correct Answer: debate
✓ Explanation: To **debate** means to **discuss opposing viewpoints** formally or publicly. *The candidates will debate on national television before the election.*
25. **humility** Correct Answer: humility
✓ Explanation: **Intellectual humility** is the ability to **acknowledge that one may be wrong** and to remain open to better arguments. *Showing humility in a debate often earns more respect than stubbornness.*
26. **biased** Correct Answer: biased
✓ Explanation: Something **biased** is **unfairly slanted** toward one perspective, ignoring contradictory information. *A biased news source may omit facts that contradict its editorial stance.*
27. **mediate** Correct Answer: mediate
✓ Explanation: To **mediate** means to **act as a neutral intermediary** to help resolve a dispute. *A trained professional was brought in to mediate between the two departments.*
28. **scrutinise|scrutinize** Correct Answer: scrutinise / scrutinize
✓ Explanation: To **scrutinise** means to **examine something very carefully and critically**. *Scientists scrutinise experimental results to ensure accuracy.*
29. **contradiction** Correct Answer: contradiction
✓ Explanation: A **contradiction** occurs when two statements or positions are **logically incompatible** with each other. *Pointing out a contradiction is an effective way to challenge a weak argument.*

30. **validity** Correct Answer: validity
✔ Explanation: **Validity** refers to whether an argument is **logically sound and well-supported**. *Questioning the validity of a claim requires examining its logic and evidence, not the character of the person making it.*

Part 4: Matrix / Match Values

31. **Refute: A • Assert: C • Concede: D • Rebut: B** Correct Matches:
- **Refute** → To prove that a statement or argument is wrong
 - **Assert** → To state something confidently and forcefully
 - **Concede** → To admit that something is true, often reluctantly
 - **Rebut** → To argue against a claim by presenting opposing evidence
- ✔ Explanation: These verbs are all central to debate language. **Refute** implies disproving something entirely, while **rebut** means countering a point with evidence. **Assert** is used when a speaker states a position firmly, as in '*She asserted that the policy was flawed.*' **Concede** is often used in phrases like '*I concede that this may be true, but...*'

32. **In my view: B • It is widely acknowledged that: C • I would argue that: A** Correct Matches:
- **In my view** → From my perspective
 - **It is widely acknowledged that** → It is generally accepted that
 - **I would argue that** → My contention is that
- ✔ Explanation: These are common **hedging and opinion phrases** used in academic and formal debate. '*In my view*' and '*From my perspective*' both signal a personal stance. '**It is widely acknowledged**' and '**It is generally accepted**' both suggest broad consensus. '**I would argue**' and '**My contention is**' introduce a formal argument.

33. Fallacy: D • Bias: B • Inference: A • Premise: C

Correct Matches:

- **Fallacy** → A mistaken belief based on flawed reasoning
- **Bias** → An unfair preference for one side over another
- **Inference** → A conclusion reached through logical reasoning from evidence
- **Premise** → A statement used as a basis for an argument

✓ **Explanation:** These are key **critical thinking vocabulary** terms. A **fallacy** weakens an argument, e.g. *'That's a logical fallacy.'* **Bias** distorts judgement, while an **inference** is drawn from available information. A **premise** is the starting point, as in *'The argument rests on a flawed premise.'*

34. Compelling: B • Sweeping: D • Substantiated: A • Heated: C

Correct Matches:

- **Compelling** → argument
- **Sweeping** → generalisation
- **Substantiated** → claim
- **Heated** → debate

✓ **Explanation:** These are important **collocations** in the language of opinion and debate. A **compelling argument** is one that is persuasive and convincing. A **sweeping generalisation** is an overly broad statement. A **substantiated claim** is supported by evidence. A **heated debate** is one that is intense and passionate, as in *'The panel engaged in a heated debate.'*

35. Straw man: A • Ad hominem: C • False dichotomy: B

Correct Matches:

- **Straw man** → Misrepresenting someone's argument to make it easier to attack
- **Ad hominem** → Attacking the person rather than their argument
- **False dichotomy** → Presenting only two options when more exist

✓ **Explanation:** These are all examples of **logical fallacies** commonly encountered in debate. A **straw man** distorts an opponent's position. **Ad hominem** is Latin for *'to the person'* and shifts focus from ideas to individuals. A **false dichotomy** oversimplifies a situation, e.g. *'You're either with us or against us.'*

36. Impartial: D • Contentious: C • Substantiate: A • Ambiguous: B

Correct Matches:

- **Impartial** → Unbiased
- **Contentious** → Controversial
- **Substantiate** → Corroborate
- **Ambiguous** → Open to interpretation

✅ **Explanation:** **Impartial** and **unbiased** both describe a fair, neutral stance.

Contentious and **controversial** describe topics that cause disagreement, e.g. '*a contentious issue*.' **Substantiate** and **corroborate** both mean to support a claim with evidence. **Ambiguous** means something has more than one possible meaning or interpretation.

37. There is strong evidence: B • Critics have raised: A • It would be an oversimplification: C

Correct Matches:

- **There is strong evidence** → to suggest that the policy has failed.
- **Critics have raised** → serious concerns about the proposal.
- **It would be an oversimplification** → to dismiss the issue entirely.

✅ **Explanation:** These are formal **discourse phrases** used in written and spoken opinion. '*There is strong evidence to suggest*' is a common **hedging structure**. '*Critics have raised concerns*' introduces opposing viewpoints. '*It would be an oversimplification*' acknowledges complexity, which is a key feature of **B2-level critical thinking language**.

38. Raise: A • Acknowledge: D • Challenge: B • Reach: C

Correct Matches:

- **Raise** → a valid point
- **Acknowledge** → a counterargument
- **Challenge** → an assumption
- **Reach** → a consensus

✅ **Explanation:** These are strong **verb-noun collocations** in debate language. You **raise** a point, as in '*She raised a valid point about the cost.*' You **acknowledge** a counterargument to show you understand the opposing side. You **challenge** assumptions to question what is taken for granted. You **reach a consensus** when all parties finally agree.

39. Objective: C • Rational: B • Credible: A

Correct Matches:

- **Objective** → Subjective
- **Rational** → Irrational
- **Credible** → Dubious

✅ **Explanation:** **Objective** means based on facts, while **subjective** means based on personal feelings or opinions. **Rational** means logical and reasonable; **irrational** means not based on logic. **Credible** means trustworthy or believable, while **dubious** suggests doubt or suspicion, e.g. '*The source seemed dubious.*' These antonyms are frequently used when **evaluating arguments**.

40. Notwithstanding this: A • By the same token: D • In light of this: B • To put it another way: C

Correct Matches:

•
Notwithstanding this → Despite what has been said, introducing a contrasting point

• **By the same token** → Introducing a related point that follows logically

• **In light of this** → Considering this information when drawing a conclusion

• **To put it another way** → Rephrasing something to make it clearer

✓ **Explanation:**
These are **formal discourse markers** used in academic debate and critical writing.

'Notwithstanding this' functions like 'however' in a formal register.

'By the same token' draws a parallel between two ideas. *'In light of this'* signals a conclusion based on prior evidence. *'To put it another way'* is used for

clarification and paraphrase.

41. Correct Answer: While I see your point, I would argue that the evidence suggests otherwise.

✓ **Explanation:** This sentence uses a **concessive clause** introduced by *While* to acknowledge an opposing view, followed by the main clause with the formal debating phrase '**I would argue that**'. This structure is typical of B2-level academic and formal debate language.

42. Correct Answer: It is worth considering whether the benefits outweigh the potential drawbacks.

✓ **Explanation:** The structure '**It is worth + gerund**' introduces a balanced evaluation. The embedded **indirect question** using *whether* is a key feature of critical thinking language, used to weigh competing factors objectively.

43. Correct Answer: Her argument was compelling, but it lacked sufficient empirical evidence to be convincing.

✓ **Explanation:** A **coordinating conjunction** (*but*) links two contrasting clauses. The collocation '**empirical evidence**' and the infinitive of purpose '**to be convincing**' reflect B2-level academic critical thinking vocabulary and sentence complexity.

44. Correct Answer: Contrary to popular belief, critical thinking is a skill that can be developed over time.

✓ **Explanation:** The fixed phrase '**Contrary to popular belief**' is a formal discourse marker used to introduce an opposing stance. The **relative clause** '*that can be developed over time*' adds a qualifying detail, a typical B2 sentence construction.

45. Correct Answer: One could make a strong case for banning the use of social media in schools.

✓ **Explanation:** The impersonal pronoun '**One**' creates a formal, distanced register common in academic debate. The collocation '**make a strong case for**' is followed by a **gerund phrase** (*banning the use*), which is standard when expressing a position on a controversial issue.

46. Correct Answer: The data presented fails to take into account several significant counterarguments.

✓ **Explanation:** The **past participle** *presented* functions as a reduced relative clause modifying *data*. The phrasal verb '**take into account**' is a key B2 collocation used in critical analysis to mean 'consider', followed by the object *several significant counterarguments*.

47. Correct Answer: Although both sides raise valid points, a more nuanced approach is clearly needed.

✓ **Explanation:** The **subordinating conjunction** *Although* introduces a concession before the main clause, a hallmark of balanced debate writing. The adjective '**nuanced**' and the passive construction '**is clearly needed**' reflect B2 formal register and opinion language.

48. Correct Answer: I am inclined to agree with the view that stricter regulations would deter unethical behaviour.

✓ **Explanation:** '**I am inclined to agree**' is a formal hedging expression used to signal a cautious, qualified opinion. The **noun phrase + that-clause** structure (*the view that...*) is a sophisticated B2 pattern for reporting or aligning with a particular standpoint.

49. Correct Answer: This line of reasoning relies heavily on assumptions rather than verified facts.

✓ **Explanation:** The noun phrase '**line of reasoning**' is a formal B2 collocation used in critical debate. The adverb **heavily** modifies the verb *relies*, and the structure '**rather than**' creates a direct contrast between *assumptions* and *verified facts*, typical of analytical writing.

50. Correct Answer: Far from being a straightforward issue, this debate involves deeply held values and conflicting interests.

✅ **Explanation:** 'Far from being' is an emphatic B2 discourse opener used to dismiss an oversimplification. The participial phrase acts as a fronted **adverbial**, followed by the main clause. The collocations '**deeply held values**' and '**conflicting interests**' are essential vocabulary for nuanced opinion and debate contexts.

Score Guide

45–50 Correct	Excellent! You have mastered this topic.
38–44 Correct	Very good! Review the rules you missed.
30–37 Correct	Good start. Re-read the lesson and examples.
0–29 Correct	Study the lesson again before retaking the test.