Unit 8 — Opinion Essay Writing — Teacher copy

Track E · Klasse 11 · Niveau E (Basisfach / Leistungsfach)

Niveau E

1. Reading

Read the text and use it for the activities below.

Reading — *Opinion at three lengths*

The 300-word op-ed forces the writer to choose a single best sentence and arrange the rest as a ramp toward and away from it. The 700-word column permits one well-developed counter, but only one. The 1,400-word essay can afford to lose two sentences and still land its argument; it can also support a fully-articulated counter, a partial concession, and a more subtle conclusion. Length, in this regard, is not merely cosmetic. It determines what kinds of arguments the form can carry.

Cohesion devices

Lexical chain: repeating the topic with varied vocabulary (*the policy, the cap, the regulation, the measure*).

Anaphoric reference: *this argument, that concession, such a structure*.

Conjunctive adverbs: *however, nevertheless, moreover, accordingly, in this regard, by contrast*.

2. Practise

Niveau E — controlled

1. Build a 4-link lexical chain for *the four-day school week*: ___ → ___ → ___ → ___ .
2. Match: *however / accordingly / by contrast / moreover* → contrast / consequence / contrast / addition.

Niveau E — productive

3. Build 4 sentences using 4 different cohesion devices on a single topic.

3. Your turn

Opinion essay, 350 words. Five paragraphs: intro / 2 body / counter / conclusion. Use lexical chain (3+ links) + 4 conjunctive adverbs + 1 anaphoric reference + 2 hedges.

Sample

The four-day school week is a tempting policy import. The Belgian trial of 2025-2027 reported unchanged test scores, higher pupil well-being, and modest cost savings — a finding the policy was always likely to produce. However, the trial also reported one limitation that the discussion has tended to underplay: many lower-income families struggled to arrange childcare for the extra Friday. This is the argument I want to develop. ***The trial*** *is encouraging on its own terms.* ***The policy****, transferred to a different national context, is a different object. By contrast with Belgium, my home district has neither publicly-funded Friday childcare nor a tradition of Wednesday-afternoon-style half-days.* ***The schedule*** *we would actually face on import day is therefore not the schedule the trial measured.* ***Such a structure*** *would shift the burden of the well-being gain onto the families least able to absorb it. Accordingly, my position is conditional rather than oppositional: I would support a four-day school week here only if a publicly-funded Friday childcare option were funded first. Critics will argue, fairly, that this conditions the reform out of existence. In response, I would say that the well-being gain in Belgium is partly a product of the conditions Belgium already had; transplanting the policy without those conditions risks reproducing the headline without the result. Moreover, the public-administration literature is consistent on this point: well-being interventions fail when their structural pre-conditions are not in place. In this regard, the right question is not should we adopt the policy?* but *what would have to be true for it to deliver here?*. That is, in my view, the more useful conversation.

4. Further reading / listening

- The Atlantic, The Guardian Long Reads, The New Yorker — opinion archives.
- George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language* (1946) — short, accessible.

5. Teacher answer key

Controlled. 1. *the four-day school week / the trial / the policy / the schedule.*

2. all true.

Productive. 3. Open.