



EXAMPLE OF A SPEECH (or SHORT TALK)

WRITE A SPEECH IN WHICH YOU ARGUE FOR OR AGAINST A POPULAR PASTIME.

The content of this composition deals with the student's strongly held views on the sport of boxing. Watch out for the thread of the argument. See how the first and last paragraph complement and mirror each other. Note the use of evidence to back up an argument. See how natural is the use of persuasive language because the writer is convinced by his own arguments and is relating well to the reader.

Please read the composition in full before you read any of the comments (in italics).

"What I think about Boxing..."



1. **Ladies And gentlemen**, today I want to address that abuse of sport, called boxing. **Yes, they call it the noble sport**. But what is noble about two men **slugging away a each other** until one of them is unconscious on the canvas while hundreds of people, safe in their seats, **roar and shriek for blood**, and a few others, without lifting a fist, pour money into their bank accounts?

2. If you have ever seen a boxer after a bout, you would never call boxing noble. You must have seen the those close-ups on television – **those bleary half shut eyes, those bruised thickened lips, that puffy battered flesh, the blood pouring from cuts around the eyes**. It is degrading to think that a man has been prepared to put up with that kind of punishment in the name of sport and as a means of making a living. It is degrading to think that it was another man who inflicted that pain and punishment on him for the same reason.

*(Notice the opening sentence: **A clear address to the audience**. The writer begins by almost picking a fight with the supporters of boxing. "They call..." is almost an accusation. This gives immediate energy to the speech. Then we are struck by **images**; "Slugging away attach other" and "roar and shriek for blood." Strong, vigorous opening paragraphs grab the reader's attention. Note the use of **repetition**; "It is degrading to think...." The writer is actively trying to persuade from the start.)*

3. **Of Course**, you may argue that people die in motor racing and climbing mountains. This is true. **However, there is a central difference**. In those sports people are pitting themselves against speed or natural hazards. They are not being pounded to death by their fellow man for the entertainment of the masses.

4 **Anyway**, it's not simply a case of deaths. **How many boxers have had to retire into premature senile old age because of brain damage?** Recently I saw Mohammed Ali on television and I was deeply shocked. **Someone who had once been a vital quip-a-minute young man has become silent, bewildered, and senile**. **Ladies and gentlemen**, constantly being bludgeoned about the head by a



man determined to knock you out cold is bound to have an adverse effect. **What kind of sport is it that ends in a man's serious disability or death?**

*(Counter argument of death in "motor racing and climbing mountains" used in order to disagree with it. This is a good **debating tactic** - setting up a dialogue within a speech. The next paragraph develops the notion of death into that of brain damage. The **example** of Mohammad Ali makes the argument focused and real. Note the two questions (**Rhetorical Questions**) in paragraph 4. Rhetorical questions give energy to a paragraph involving the audience. Note the connecting phrases: "Of course,..", "Anyway." **Connective phrases** give a sense of purpose and logical development to an essay.)*

5. Indeed, there is strong evidence to prove that boxing is dangerous. The British Medical Association (BMA) has stated that brain scanning shows beyond doubt that permanent brain damage occurs in 100% of men who box. Now that women's boxing is legal, is the same terrible fate to be inflicted on them? No doubt, boxing promoters will disagree but the fact that the BMA has this kind of evidence and is campaigning to have boxing banned must help to convince the unprejudiced.

(The writer cites evidence to back up his/her stance and persuade the audience.)

7. Besides the obvious dangers of boxing there is another concern that should rank almost equally. This is the cruel and brutal atmosphere that surrounds this so-called sport. That crowds of people – men and women – can cheer and get excited at the sight of two men doing vicious things to each other is sickening. It is uncivilised. **It is little better than the Roman gladiatorial fights to the death which history and society condemned long ago as barbaric.**

(Further persuasive argument in these paragraphs. The reader likes to see an argument flowing clearly.)

8 Some have argued in favour of boxing that it is one of the few ways in which a working-class boy can achieve fame and fortune. But for how many is this true? One in a million? More typical is the case of Randy Turpin, once a world champion, who ended up a drunk and practically destitute and finally committed suicide.

9. No, it's not the boxers who make the money, it's the promoters with their betting, their big deals and often their Mafia connections. They're the ones who go laughing all the way to the bank. **And when one of their boxers is finished, his brains smashed to a pulp, they drop him without a backward glance and seize on some other young man to exploit.**

*(Further development of the argument this time concentrating on the economic arguments in favour of boxing and dismissing them. Note how definite is the writer's tone at this stage of the essay. **He is assertive without being arrogant**)*

10. "What a piece of work is a man!", says Shakespeare in Hamlet. "How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form, in moving, how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!"



11. **Noble? Admirable? Like a god? The next time you see a boxing match on television with two exhausted men, faces bruised and bloodied, hanging onto each other because their legs are giving way, being jeered at by the crowd and urged on to show some action, think!** Do boxers live up to this view of what man is or ought to be?

Let me tell you that there is more dignity to be had in sweeping the roads. Thank you!

(FULL CIRCLE - The writer returns to the idea expressed in the first paragraph; “They call it the noble art” The Shakespearean reference to nobility is quoted in order to clinch the argument. The idea of nobility and human dignity now comes into focus as the key idea in the essay. The conclusion of the essay brings us back to the opening violent images but with a more cogent logic and a cooler head.)