

**WRITING** a discursive essay

**10A** Look at statements 1–3. Write one reason for and one reason against each statement. Give examples.

- The media should be free to examine the private lives of public figures.
- Positive images of celebrities in the media have a good effect on people.
- The internet is the most reliable source of news and information.

**B** Work in groups and compare your ideas.

**11A** Read the essay and answer the questions.

- Which of the topics in Exercise 10A is it about?
- Do you agree with the writer's point of view?
- Can you think of a good title for the essay?

These days the media is full of stories of celebrities' private lives: their relationships, rows, problems with weight and so on. In fact, the public seems to have a never-ending appetite for this type of gossip.

It could be argued that celebrities invite publicity, for instance by giving interviews or welcoming the media into their homes, despite knowing this will leave them open to public attention. Therefore, it is hypocritical for them to complain when the media shows interest in other aspects of their lives. Also, celebrities are influential role models to many people and because of this, their private lives should be open to public examination. Additionally, the public have the right to know about the rich and famous since it is our money that supports them, through sales of tickets, DVDs and music downloads.

However, there are several reasons why celebrities deserve a certain level of privacy. Firstly, while some people actively seek fame, others do not. For example, a person might want to be a great tennis player but not wish to suffer media intrusion into their or their family's private lives. Secondly, although reporters might claim an item is 'in the public interest' often, in fact, they are more interested in selling a sensational story than in investigating something of genuine importance. Lastly, the unwelcome attentions of reporters and photographers can put celebrities under great stress or sometimes even in danger. Just think of Michael Jackson or Princess Diana.

On balance, I believe that celebrities have the right to the same kind of privacy as anyone else. Just because, on some occasions, they invite interest, often in order to publicise their work or please their fans, this does not mean that, on other occasions, they should not be able to say 'no'.

**B** Read the essay again and underline the correct alternative.

- The introductory paragraph explains why the topic is of interest / gives the writer's opinion about the topic.
- Paragraph two gives points for / for and against the idea.
- Paragraph three gives points against / for and against the idea.
- The conclusion asks the reader's / gives the writer's opinion.

**LEARN TO** use linkers of contrast

**12A** Look at sentences 1–4. Circle the linker which is used to show a contrasting idea.

- Celebrities invite publicity despite knowing this will leave them open to public attention.
- While some people seek fame, others never want or plan for it.
- Although a reporter might claim that a story is 'in the public interest', often they are more interested in selling a sensational story.
- However, there are a number of reasons why celebrities deserve our sympathy.

**B** Work in pairs and answer the questions.

- What punctuation follows *However*?
- Which form follows *despite*?
- In sentences 1, 2 and 3, which is the main clause?
- Do the linkers in 1, 2 and 3 introduce the main clause or the subordinate clause?

**C** Use the linkers in brackets to connect the ideas in two different ways.

- some celebrities are good role models for young people / others set a negative example (however, although)
- anonymously published internet news is unreliable / many people rely on it as a main source of information (despite, while)
- false reports of celebrity deaths are common / some people still believe them (while, however)
- the scandal damaged his reputation / he still has millions of fans (although, despite)

**13A** Write notes for the four sections of a discursive essay on one of the other topics in Exercise 10A.

**4 speakout**

A discursive (or 'for and against') essay is different from an opinion essay. In an opinion essay, the writer starts out by stating his/her opinion; in a discursive essay, the writer gives a balanced view and in the conclusion can either state his/her opinion or give a summary of both sides of the argument. Check the notes you have made to see that your introduction and conclusion are appropriate.

**B** Write the essay (250–300 words).