

Zigzag & And
Reasoned Opinions — Guided Practice
Down the Rabbit-Hole

Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

6.1 Separate position from evidence

Directions: A position is a judgement someone could defend. Evidence is a detail the passage directly gives. An explanation connects the evidence to the position. Mark each item **P**, **E**, or **X** for explanation.

Worked example: Position: *Alice has a reason to follow the Rabbit.* Evidence: *The Rabbit takes a watch from its waistcoat-pocket.* Explanation: *This unusual action helps explain her curiosity.*

1. Mark each item P, E, or X.

- (a) *Alice follows the Rabbit without planning an exit.* **E**
- (b) *Following the Rabbit is understandable.* **P**
- (c) *The Rabbit's watch makes the encounter unlike an ordinary afternoon.* **X**
- (d) *The Rabbit says it will be late.* **E**
- (e) *Alice is right to trust the Rabbit.* **P**

2. Write one position about Alice's decision and one direct piece of evidence.

Position:

Solution: Alice's decision is understandable because the Rabbit behaves in an extraordinary way.

Evidence:

Solution: The Rabbit speaks about being late and takes a watch from its waistcoat-pocket.

6.2 Weigh two positions

Directions: To weigh two positions, state what supports each one and notice what each position leaves out. Use the evidence bank: *bored at bank; Rabbit says late; watch; burning curiosity; no thought of exit; sudden dip; deep well.*

Worked example: One position says Alice is understandable because the Rabbit's speech and watch awaken curiosity. Another says she is unwise because she follows without considering how to get out. A fair comparison gives evidence to both before judging.

3. Put each detail under the position it supports.

Supports following:

Solution: bored at bank; Rabbit says late; watch; burning curiosity

Evidence against following:

Solution: no thought of exit; sudden dip; deep well

4. Complete the balanced sentence.

One reading is that

Solution: Alice has a reason to follow because the Rabbit's unusual behaviour awakens her curiosity.

Another reading is that

Solution: Alice acts rashly because she never considers how she will get out and soon falls into a deep well.

5. Which position has the more direct evidence in the bank, or are they equally supported? Give one reason.

Solution: They are both directly supported: the Rabbit's watch supports Alice's curiosity, while the missing exit plan and deep well support caution.

6.3 State a defensible view

Directions: A defensible view is a clear position supported by passage evidence. Use *because* to connect your judgement to a reason. You may acknowledge a limitation.

Worked example: *Although Alice does not plan an exit, following the Rabbit is understandable because its speech and watch make her curiosity reasonable.*

6. Choose a view and complete it: *Alice's decision is ... because ...*

Solution: Alice's decision is understandable because the Rabbit's speech and watch make the encounter extraordinary.

7. Add a qualification beginning with *although*.

Solution: Although Alice never considers how she will get out, her curiosity has a clear cause in the Rabbit's unusual behaviour.

8. State a defensible view about the fall itself.

Solution: The fall is dangerous, but it also gives Alice time to observe the well and keep thinking.

6.4 Plan a reasoned response

Directions: Plan a response to the question *Was Alice wise to follow the Rabbit?* Use the plain labels below. Keep planning notes brief except for the position and closing thought, which should be complete sentences.

Worked example:

Position: *Alice was not wise to follow the Rabbit because she ignored the need for an exit, even though her curiosity was understandable.*

Reason 1: *Alice follows without making an exit plan*

Evidence: *no thought of exit; sudden dip; deep well*

What it shows: *the choice creates serious danger*

Another view: *Rabbit says late; carries watch; burning curiosity*

Response to that view: *curiosity explains the choice, but does not make it wise*

Closing thought: *Alice's curiosity is understandable, but following without an exit plan is not wise.*

9. Complete a plan for the same question.

Position:

Solution: Alice was not wise to follow the Rabbit because she never considers how she will get out, even though its behaviour explains her curiosity.

Reason 1:

Solution: follows without an exit plan

Evidence:

Solution: no thought of exit; sudden dip; deep well

What it shows:

Solution: the decision creates serious danger

Another view:

Solution: Rabbit says late; watch; burning curiosity

Response to that view:

Solution: These signs explain why she followed, but an understandable motive does not make the risky choice wise.

Closing thought:

Solution: Alice's curiosity is understandable, but following without considering an exit was not wise.

6.5 Support the response and address another view

Directions: Write a paragraph that states a position, gives direct evidence, explains it, and addresses another view fairly. Use the word bank if you need it: *extraordinary, curiosity, exit plan, sudden, deep, defensible*.

Worked example paragraph: *Alice's choice to follow the Rabbit is defensible because the encounter gives her several reasons to be curious. The Rabbit speaks about being late and takes a watch from its waistcoat-pocket, actions that do not fit an ordinary rabbit. A reader may object that Alice never considers how she will get out, and the sudden fall into a deep well proves that the choice is risky. Even so, the risk does not remove the unusual evidence that drew her forward.*

10. Complete the supported paragraph. Use complete sentences. **Position:** *Alice's choice is understandable because ...*

Solution: Alice's choice is understandable because the Rabbit's unusual behaviour gives her a reason to investigate.

Evidence: *The Rabbit ...*

Solution: The Rabbit says it will be late and takes a watch from its waistcoat-pocket.

What it shows: *These details ...*

Solution: These details explain why Alice is burning with curiosity.

Another view: *A cautious reader may say ...*

Solution: A cautious reader may say that Alice is unwise because she never considers how she will get out.

Response: *That concern is fair, but ...*

Solution: That concern is fair, but the danger does not erase the extraordinary signs that caused her curiosity.

11. Write a short reasoned paragraph using the completed ideas.

Solution: Alice's choice is understandable because the Rabbit's unusual behaviour gives her a reason to investigate. The Rabbit takes a watch from its waistcoat-pocket, and Alice is burning with curiosity. A cautious reader may say that Alice is unwise because she never considers how she will get out and soon falls into a deep well. That concern is fair, but the danger does not erase the extraordinary signs that caused her curiosity.