



TOP 30 BROADLY DISCURSIVE MOTIF IDEAS



The following ideas can be adapted for persuasive or argumentative writing.

Remember: your motif should change meaning as your argument develops.

1. 🤖 AI IN EDUCATION

Question: is AI improving education or weakening independent thought?

Motif: a cursor.

Journey: helpful guide → tempting shortcut → tool under human control.

Colours: electric blue and charcoal.

2. 📱 PHONES IN SCHOOLS

Question: should smartphones be banned during the school day?

Motif: a notification ping.

Journey: connection → interruption → control or balance.

Colours: neon green and black.

3. 🧠 SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH

Question: does social media do more harm than good?

Motif: a battery symbol.

Journey: connection and energy → emotional drain → healthier limits.

Colours: lime green, amber and red.

4. 🚫 SOCIAL-MEDIA AGE LIMITS

Question: should children under 16 be banned from social media?

Motif: a locked door.

Journey: protection → exclusion → safer, controlled access.

Colours: warning red and steel grey.



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5. INFLUENCERS AND BODY IMAGE

Question: do influencers inspire young people or damage their confidence?

Motif: a mirror.

Journey: self-expression → distortion → self-acceptance.

Colours: silver and bruised purple.

6. ONLINE MISINFORMATION

Question: should social-media companies decide what information users can post?

Motif: a cracked lens.

Journey: open access → distorted truth → careful scrutiny.

Colours: ink blue and alert yellow.

7. CYBERBULLYING

Question: are social-media companies doing enough to prevent online abuse?

Motif: a speech bubble.

Journey: a voice → a weapon → a space reclaimed for communication.

Colours: ice blue and dark red.

8. ONLINE PRIVACY

Question: have we surrendered too much privacy to technology companies?

Motif: an eye.

Journey: convenience → surveillance → informed control.

Colours: teal and black.

9. LOOT BOXES AND ONLINE GAMING

Question: should loot boxes in games be treated as gambling?

Motif: a spinning wheel.

Journey: excitement → compulsion → regulation.

Colours: arcade purple and gold.



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10. 🎰 GAMBLING ADVERTISING

Question: should gambling advertisements be banned from sport?

Motif: a betting slip.

Journey: harmless prediction → financial trap → torn-up influence.

Colours: racing green and warning red.

11. 🚬 TEENAGE VAPING

Question: should disposable vapes be completely banned?

Motif: A cloud.

Journey: relaxation → concealment → pollution and disappearing freedom.

Colours: misty grey and toxic green.

12. ⚡ ENERGY DRINKS

Question: should energy drinks be banned for children?

Motif: a lightning bolt.

Journey: energy → dependence → an eventual crash.

Colours: acid yellow and black.

13. 🍲 FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Question: should every secondary pupil receive free school meals?

Motif: an empty plate.

Journey: hunger → inequality → dignity and opportunity.

Colours: deep navy and warm gold.

14. 🎒 SCHOOL UNIFORM

Question: does school uniform create equality or suppress individuality?

Motif: a school tie.

Journey: belonging → restriction → shared identity or loosened control.

Colours: burgundy and navy.



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15. 📄 HOMEWORK

Question: is homework still valuable?

Motif: a schoolbag.

Journey: responsibility → growing weight → useful preparation or unnecessary burden.

Colours: mustard yellow and dark blue.

16. 🕒 EXAMINATIONS

Question: are traditional examinations a fair way to measure ability?

Motif: a ticking clock.

Journey: motivation → pressure → a demand for fairer assessment.

Colours: black, white and urgent red.

17. 📅 THE FOUR-DAY SCHOOL WEEK

Question: would a four-day school week benefit pupils?

Motif: a calendar square.

Journey: freedom → practical difficulty → a redesigned week.

Colours: fresh green and slate grey.

18. 🎓 UNIVERSITY TUITION

Question: should university education remain free in Scotland?

Motif: a key.

Journey: opportunity → unequal access → an open or closing door.

Colours: academic navy and gold.

19. 💰 THE COST OF LIVING

Question: are young people being priced out of a secure future?

Motif: an empty wallet.

Journey: independence → insecurity → demand for change.

Colours: forest green and burnt orange.



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20. 🚌 FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Question: should public transport be free for everyone?

Motif: a bus ticket.

Journey: access → financial cost → shared social and environmental benefit.

Colours: turquoise and yellow.

21. 🌍 CLIMATE RESPONSIBILITY

Question: should individuals or large companies carry more responsibility for climate change?

Motif: a melting ice cube.

Journey: distant warning → ticking clock → possibility of change.

Colours: ice blue and burnt orange.

22. 👗 FAST FASHION

Question: is cheap fashion ever truly affordable?

Motif: a price tag.

Journey: bargain → hidden human and environmental cost → responsibility.

Colours: hot pink and landfill brown.

23. 🥩 MEAT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Question: should people be encouraged to eat less meat?

Motif: A dinner plate.

Journey: tradition → environmental cost → conscious choice.

Colours: earth green and rust red.

24. 🗑️ SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

Question: should single-use plastics be completely banned?

Motif: a plastic bottle.

Journey: convenience → lasting pollution → reuse and responsibility.

Colours: ocean blue and polluted grey.



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25. ✈️ TOURISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Question: does mass tourism cause more harm than good?

Motif: a suitcase.

Journey: adventure → overcrowding and damage → responsible travel.

Colours: sky blue and sandy beige.

26. 🦋 ZOOS AND ANIMAL CAPTIVITY

Question: do modern zoos protect animals or imprison them?

Motif: a cage.

Journey: protection → confinement → conservation or freedom.

Colours: jungle green and iron grey.

27. ⚽ EQUALITY IN SPORT

Question: should male and female athletes receive equal pay and coverage?

Motif: a scoreboard.

Journey: competition → inequality → fair recognition.

Colours: grass green and bright gold.

28. 🗳️ VOTING AT 16

Question: should 16-year-olds be allowed to vote in every UK election?

Motif: a ballot paper.

Journey: unheard voice → questioned maturity → meaningful participation.

Colours: democratic purple and white.

29. 🗣️ PROTEST AND DISRUPTION

Question: is disruptive protest justified when governments refuse to act?

Motif: a megaphone.

Journey: necessary voice → public disturbance → catalyst for change.

Colours: protest red and black.



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30. 🚀 SPACE EXPLORATION

Question: should governments spend money exploring space while problems remain on Earth?

Motif: a rocket.

Journey: human ambition → expensive escape → discovery that benefits Earth.

Colours: midnight blue and silver.

****THE MOTIF RULE****

- ✓ Introduce it → reframe it → challenge it → transform it.
- ✓ In persuasive writing, move the motif firmly towards your chosen position.
- ✓ In argumentative writing, allow it to represent competing viewpoints before reaching a thoughtful judgement.
- ✓ A motif should support the argument—not wander repeatedly through the essay wearing a tiny decorative hat.

