The four similar paragraphs below discuss the social issue of violence in society and consider the following questions:

- How violent is current society?
- What causes violence in society?
- What do we need to do to evolve into a less violent society?

Read each sample paragraph and the reference list.

- What does each writer do well? (Strengths).
- How could they improve their work? (Weaknesses).

Use concepts from the fact sheet and the checklist to help you.

a) Phillips (2011) suggests that we are in a violent era caused by a decline in family values and a rise in single parent families and she uses the recent riots in Britain as evidence of this. Pinker (2011) by contrast suggests that current society is in fact in an enlightened non-violent era. He considers the issue historically for example and cites a number of ways in which we are today physically safer than in the past, despite the supposed ‘loss of family values’. Furthermore he argues that violence is part of human nature and not a result of social degeneration as promoted by Phillips. He cites some compelling neurological evidence.

b) Society has always had to deal with unwelcome aspects of life, such as crime and anti-social behaviour and so considerable effort has been made to understand and therefore prevent, reduce and manage such behaviour. However, understanding differs wildly on this. The London riots might suggest that society has become more violent. This is perhaps because of recent social trends such as changes in the family unit. However, we could also argue that human society has always been violent and that current society is in fact less violent than other times in history. Recent family trends therefore appear not to be influencing our behaviour as detrimentally as we believe. It seems more likely that human nature drives violent behaviour and if we understand this we are in a better position to control and prevent violent social unrest.

c) Society has always had to deal with unwelcome aspects of life, such as crime and anti-social behaviour, so considerable effort has been made to understand and therefore prevent, reduce and manage violent behaviour. However, understanding differs wildly. Following the London riots last year, for example, Phillips (2011) suggested that we are in a violent era caused by a decline in family values and a rise in single parent families. However, the riots of have now passed and it is difficult to equate the happenings of one week with her explanation of society in general. Pinker (2011) for example suggests that current society is in fact in an enlightened non-violent era. He considers the issue historically and cites a number of ways in which we are today physically safer than in the past, despite the supposed ‘loss of family values’. Furthermore he argues that violence is part of human nature and not a result of ‘social degeneration’ as promoted by Phillips (2011). He cites some compelling neurological evidence. Therefore, if we misread how violent current society is and declare this false evidence a result of social trends we could
slow our progress towards an even more temperate society. As Pinker states, we need to tackle violence and crime as part of human nature, rather than a result of social change so that we can continue evolving as a less violent species.

d) Society has always had to deal with unwelcome aspects of life, crime and anti-social behaviour. Considerable effort to understand and prevent, reduce and manage violent behaviour. Understanding differs wildly. Following the London riots last year Phillips (2011) suggested that we are in a violent era caused by a decline in family values and an rise in single parent families. The riots have now passed, and is difficult to equate the happenings of one week with her explanation of society in general. Pinker (2011) suggests that current society is in fact in an enlightened non-violent era. He considers historically and cites a number of ways in which we are today physically safer than past, despite the supposed ‘loss of family values’. He argues that violence part of human nature and not a result of ‘social degeneration’. He cites some compelling neurological evidence. If we misread how violent current society is and declare this a result of social trends, we could slow our progress towards an even more temperate society. We need to violence and crime as part of human nature, rather than a result of social change. We can continue evolving as a less violent species.

Reference List


Key Skills

For each paragraph, which skill is the key priority for improvement?

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<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
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You can find our responses to these questions on the attached answer sheet.