
ENGLISH STUDENTS' ALMANAC

PART E - LANGUAGE ANALYSIS ESSAY: PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

ONE: RESPONDING TO ONLY ONE TEXT

Some writing is created purely to present information, but many texts are designed to persuade the reader of a point of view. It is difficult to get people to change their beliefs, and the writer will use many strategies and techniques in his or her attempt to this.

Our job in this task is to explain how the writer has tried to persuade the reader.

Ideally, you will identify and explain five or six different ways that the writer tried to persuade in the text.

PREPARATION: PLANNING

- 1. Before you start writing, carefully read the text.**
- 2. Write down -**
 - a. the issue
 - b. the writer's view (which side of the issue is her or she on)
 - c. the type of text (speech, article, editorial, and so forth)
 - d. the audience (age, education level, location, and so forth)
 - e. Where the text is from (publication or source)
- 3. Re-read the text.**
- 4. Highlight words, phrases and sentences that seem powerful or persuasive.**
- 5. Now, label the highlighted sections with the name of the technique being used.**
 - a. Sometimes there is no label that you know, but the words are still persuasive. Highlight them first, and then work out how to describe the techniques.
 - b. Remember, there is no official list of techniques. Just find things that are effective and describe what they are and how they work to persuade.
- 6. Decide the tone of each piece.**
 - a. It's not enough to just label tone. Highlight examples of this tone in the text so that you can refer to them in your essay.
 - b. It might be defensive, outraged, mocking, humorous, sarcastic, despondent, ardent, passionate, cynical, disappointed, patriotic, balanced, logical, or reasonable. There are dozens of possible tones.
- 7. Group together similar examples from the text.**
 - a. This grouping of techniques will be especially valuable when you write your essay.

YOUR ESSAY, STEP BY STEP

INTRODUCTION

- 1. Introduce and briefly explain the issue being discussed in the text, and how this issue arose or why it has been in the discussed recently.**
- 2. Introduce the text being discussed.**
 - a. Name it by title, author, publication and publication date.
 - i. The publication and publication date should go in brackets.
 - b. Mention the contention of the text. Remember, the contention is the point that the writer is trying to make.
 - c. This should all be done in a single sentence, where possible

eg. Bolt's opinion piece "All Rabbits Must Die" (Herald Sun, 5th November 2010) advances the argument that the culling of wild rabbits is necessary and moral.

- 3. State what the tone is in this text.**

eg. Bolt employs a sarcastic tone, "those poor little vermin" which is likely to anger the reader. As a result...

BODY PARAGRAPHS (THREE OR MORE OF THESE)

- 1. State which technique you are talking about in this paragraph.**
 - a. Refer to the text either by the writer's surname or the name of the text, but be consistent in your usage.
- 2. Identify and explain this technique (or group of techniques).**
 - a. This is written in sentences, with quotations embedded in the flow.
 - b. Provide one or more quotations from the text that demonstrate this particular technique
 - i. For a short quotation, use quotation marks
 - ii. For a longer quotation, put the text in its own paragraph and indent this paragraph
 - c. Clearly explain what technique is being used.
 - d. Clearly explain the impact and purpose of this technique.
- 3. Link forward to the next paragraph.**
 - a. Mention the next persuasive technique that you will discuss.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Restate the issue being discussed and the name of the text.**
- 2. Briefly repeat the techniques used by the writer and the purpose of these techniques.**
- 3. Make a statement about how effective this text is as persuasive writing.**
 - a. What type of readers would be persuaded by this text?
- 4. Coda: a closing statement about this issue in general.**
 - a. Leave the reader with something to think about.
 - b. Make a statement about whether the issue is likely to be resolved.

TWO: RESPONDING TO MULTIPLE TEXTS

The writers of the presented texts have a point of view and are writing to make you adopt this point of view, too. The writers are using many techniques to do this, and our job is to explain these techniques, along with their purpose and impact on the audience.

You should identify and explain five or six techniques for each text.

PREPARATION: PLANNING

- 1. Before you start writing, carefully read the texts.**
- 2. For each text, write down the key information-**
 - a. the issue
 - b. the writer's view (which side of the issue is he or she on)
 - c. the type of text (speech, article, editorial, and so forth)
 - d. the audience (age, education level, location, and so forth)
 - e. Where the text is from (publication or source)
- 3. Re-read each text.**
- 4. In each text, highlight words, phrases and sentences that seem powerful or persuasive.**
- 5. Now, label each marked section with the name of the techniques being used.**
 - a. Sometimes there is no label that you know, but the words are still persuasive. Highlight them first, and then work out how to describe the technique.
 - b. Remember, there is no official list of techniques. Just find things that are effective and describe what they are and how they work to persuade.
- 6. Decide the tone of each piece.**
 - a. It's not enough to just label tone. Highlight examples of this tone in the text so that you can refer to them in your essay.
 - b. It might be defensive, outraged, mocking, humorous, sarcastic, despondent, ardent, passionate, cynical, disappointed, patriotic, balanced, logical, or reasonable. There are dozens of possible tones.

This process will allow you to arrange your thoughts, and group together similar examples from the texts when you write your essay.

YOUR ESSAY, STEP BY STEP

INTRODUCTION

1. **Introduce and briefly explain the issue being discussed in the text, and how this issue arose or why it has been in the discussed recently.**
2. **Introduce the texts being discussed.**
 - a. Name them by title, author, publication and publication date.
 - i. The publication and publication date should go in brackets.
 - ii. Mention the contention of each piece. Remember, the contention is the point that the writer is trying to make.
 - iii. This should all be done in a single sentence for each text.

eg. Bolt's opinion piece "All Rabbits Must Die" (Herald Sun, 5th November 2010) advances the argument that the culling of wild rabbits is necessary and moral. Likewise the editorial "Protect Our Crops" (The Age, 6th November 2010) hold a similar view that rabbits need to be culled. Whereas Smith's letter to the editor "Poor Bunnies" (The Australian, 9th November 2010) seeks to persuade the reader than all animals have the right to survive)

BODY PARAGRAPHS (THREE OR MORE OF THESE)

1. **State which text you are talking about in this paragraph.**
 - a. Decide if you are going to consistently refer to texts by writer or by the title of the text.
 - b. State what the tone is in this text.

eg. Bolt employs a sarcastic tone, "those poor little vermin" which angers the reader. As a result...
2. **State what the contention is of this text.**
3. **Identify and explain techniques used in this text.**
 - a. This is written in sentences, with quotations embedded in the flow. Within your sentences you should -
 - i. provide one or more quotations from the text that demonstrate a particular technique
 - ii. For a short quotation, use quotation marks
 - iii. For a longer quotation, put the text in its own paragraph and indent this paragraph
 - b. Clearly explain what technique is being used
 - c. Clearly explain the impact and purpose of this technique.
 - d. Repeat for each technique you are discussing. You should identify and explain five or six techniques for each text.
4. **Make a statement about how effective this text is as persuasive writing.**

CONCLUSION

1. **Restate the issue being discussed and the names of the texts.**
2. **Briefly repeat the techniques used by each writer and the purpose of these techniques.**
3. **Explain to the reader if you think each article is effective in persuading readers.**
 - a. State which text is more persuasive than the others.
 - b. What type of readers would be persuaded by this text?
4. **Coda: a closing statement about this issue in general.**
 - a. Leave the reader with something to think about.
 - b. Make a statement about whether the issue is likely to be resolved.



THREE: PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

Here are some of the techniques that you can use to bring people to agree with your argument or point. You can also use the **rhetorical techniques**, which follow, to make your writing easier to remember and more persuasive.

- **Provide evidence.**
 - Percentages
 - *86% of English teachers recommend the English Students' Almanac.*
 - Specific figures or statistics
 - *The English Students' Almanac: 10,00 copies sold*
 - Names
 - Places
 - Expert opinions
 - These are more powerful with then come from a recognised and impartial person
- **Language to include**
 - *We have had enough of this situation.*
- **Language to exclude**
 - *They are responsible for this dreadful act.*
- **Analogy, recasting arguments**
 - Compare the situation to another situation, making the reader see things differently.
 - It's a bit like re-writing the pages in the book of their opinions.
- **Redefining terms**
 - Explain how key terms can have a different meaning, a meaning in line with what you want your reader to believe.
- **Hyperbole or overstatement**
 - Describe things as a bit larger than life. A simple message will convince some people more effectively.
- **Stories: real is better.**
 - Include stories with heroes and villains, related to your topic.
- **Alliteration**
 - *Wonderful, winning words can do the trick*
- **Emotive language, positive and negative.**
 - *Our brave, selfless family men will never give up in this noble fight.*
 - *Their cowardly, lying, mongrels are just waiting to butcher innocent woman and children*
- **Appeal to decency, morality, faith, common sense.**
 - *This is the right thing to do.*
 - *God knows, we need this change now.*
 - *Anyone can see, we have to make this change now.*
- **Appeal to country, state, group**
 - *Proud Australians everywhere are demanding this common-sense change.*
- **Rhetorical question**
 - Ask a question that your reader can only answer one way.
 - *How much longer are we prepared to wait before we do the right thing?*

FOUR: RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES

There are a large number of techniques that writers can use to make their words more memorable or catchy. You can observe these techniques in great literature, in pop music, in advertising: all over the place.

When used effectively, these techniques can make your writing more memorable and effective.

Here are some of the more popular and effective techniques.

Repetition

- Repeat words and phrases
- *Help. I need somebody. Help. Not just anybody. Help. You know, I need someone. Help (The Beatles)*

Rhyme

- Phrases of words end with the same sound
- *Gonna have fun in the city*
- *Be with my girl, she's so pretty (The Easybeats)*

Assonance

- Vowel sounds are repeated. Works a lot like rhymes
- *Help me if you can, I'm feeling **down***
- *And I do appreciate you being **round** (The Beatles)*

Alliteration

- The same consonant sounds at the start of a series of words
- *You'll never put a better bit of butter on your knife (Ad for Country Life butter)*

Anaphora

- Starting a series of lines with the same phrase
- *There is freedom within*
- *There is freedom without (Crowded House)*

Antithesis

- Juxtaposition of ideas in one or subsequent phrases
- *It was the best of times. It was the worst of times (Charles Dickens)*

Antimetabole

- A phrase is repeated and inverted to change the meaning
- *We didn't land on Plymouth Rock; Plymouth Rock landed on us (Malcolm X)*

Simile

- Compare two things to add meaning
- *The water was like glass*

Metaphor

- Say on things IS another to add meaning
- *The water was glass*

Hyperbole

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- Exaggeration for emphasis
- *I've told you a million times...*

Understatement

- Emphasis by making something sound smaller
- *It's just a flesh wound (The Black Knight, Monty Python)*

Apostrophe

- Talking to an inanimate object as though it can understand you.
- *Blue moon, you saw me standing alone (Lorenz Hart)*

Pun

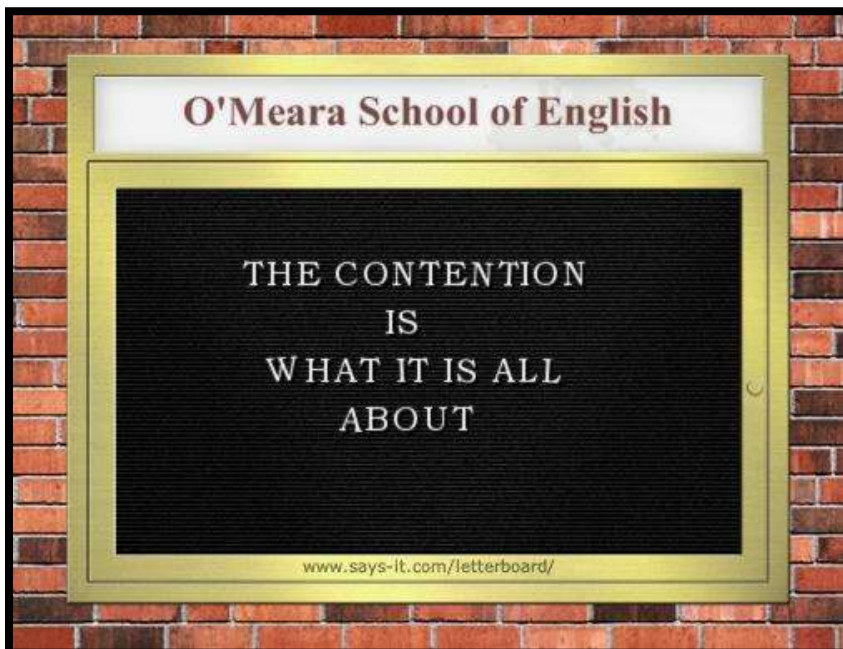
- A play on difference senses of the same word or different senses of similar sounding words
- *You can't handle the tooth (Ad for The Tooth Fairy)*

Onomatopoeia

- Words that sound like what they describe
- *Snap, Crackle, Pop (Rice Bubbles slogan)*

Irony

- Very hard to define. I sometimes say it is where good planning meets bad luck
- *I threw my umbrella away and it rained for a week*



FIVE: ANALYSING AN IMAGE

The images that go with a text, such as a newspaper story or magazine piece, contribute to the meaning and shape your understanding. Here are some factors for you to consider in a photo or other art.

- **Framing**
 - If we are close to the subject, we might be more sympathetic to them.
- **Colours**
 - Are the colours particularly masculine or feminine?
 - Do the colours create a particular mood?
- **Facial expressions and gaze**
 - If the subject looks at the camera, they might seem more honest or likable.
 - If the subject doesn't look at the camera, they might look untrustworthy.
 - People in the subjects looking at each other, or at the same thing, might make them look connected.
- **Light and shadows**
 - A figure in the shadows or darkness can look either oppressed or untrustworthy.
- **Angle**
 - When the camera is pointing up at someone, they can look powerful and perhaps arrogant.
 - When the camera is pointing down at someone, they can look weak and perhaps like a victim.
- **Relationships within the frame**
 - Are people close to each other or alone?
 - Do they look at each other or something in common?
 - What is the body language of the people in the image?
 - Is anyone holding a puppy, kitten or child? If so, they are unquestionably good.
- **Candid or posed**
 - Photos taken in real-life situations seem more genuine and might appeal more real and convincing than a posed image.

Thanks

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