

Persuasive Writing Guide



"If you wish to win a man over to your ideas, first make him your friend." (Abraham Lincoln).

Build a bond with your audience to help them get on board with your ideas.

Topic

The topic is always something related to young people/school aged students.

Check out these examples:

- ◆ For young people, does choosing to stay in mean missing out?
- ◆ Is advertising just another source of pressure that teenagers don't need?
- ◆ As students, we all worry too much about what other people think of us.

Purpose: This task is all about choosing the right tone, content and structure to best suit the purpose. In each of the tasks above, you are being asked a question. Your job is to answer it clearly and in a developed manner, persuading your readers to agree with you.

Audience: The audience will be stated clearly. It could be your classmates, readers of your school magazine, your examiner, teenagers, etc. In your answer, you should try to create a bond (rapport) with your readers, so that they trust your opinions and are more likely to agree with you.

Form: The form you need to write in will be clearly stated in the task. For example:

**Write a speech for your classmates persuading them to agree with you on the topic:
"Are celebrities the best role models for teenagers?"**

In this task, you have been asked to write a speech. Other forms that are also used are: a newspaper article, an essay and a magazine article. You should practice structuring these different forms.

Your introduction:

Start by hooking the reader/listener, before outlining your opinion. You could try to:

- ◆ Ask them a question. This makes them feel involved from the start.
- ◆ Use a shocking fact or statistic. This makes listeners pay attention.
- ◆ Make your point of view very clear. This adds clarity.
- ◆ Invite the reader in. This helps the audience maintain their interest.

Check out this example:

Do you have a voice like Taylor Swift? Or a left foot like Lionel Messi? Or a bank account like Kim Kardashian? No? Me either! And yet the celebrity culture all around us offers us these people as role models, aspirational people and influencers. Did you know that Taylor Swift has a net worth of \$740m, making her the second wealthiest woman in music! Yes, you heard me right: \$740 million! Listen, Year 11, you know I love her, but is she a good role model? Does looking up to a wealthy, beautiful and talented singer help me in my humble little life in good ole Northern Ireland? Friends, listen up! Celebrities have no place in the minds of young people, and I am desperate to prove to you why you should forget the rich and famous, and instead focus on real people, living real lives all around us today.



The main paragraphs of your task

- ◆ Start each paragraph with a signpost (Firstly, Secondly, etc)
- ◆ Use a range of points to support your ideas
- ◆ Back up each point with reasons, details, facts, expert opinions, imagery, anecdotes, etc. These different ways of proving your points will appeal to different readers.

Your final paragraph

You have given all of your best ideas, evidence and explanation in the main body of your piece. Now it's time to sum up and finish off. Make your final sentence count. Try using a simile or a joke or a memorable phrase. Finish with a call to action. You could say:

Year 11, you have heard it all already. It's time to stop listening and start doing! Let's put down our phones, unhook the claws of social media from around our necks and break free of the curse of celebrity culture. Find a role model in your community, or better still, be your own role model. Be everything you want to be, just for yourself. You can do it!

PASS ME A FOREST

PASS ME A FOREST is a mnemonic to help you to remember some key language devices to persuade. Writing this on your exam paper and using it as a checklist can help you remember to keep your writing lively.



Personal pronouns

Alliteration

Statistics

Similes

Metaphors

Emotive language

Adverbs and adjectives

Facts

Opinions

Repetition

Expert opinions

Stories about you

Triplets



Top Tips for Success in Persuasive Writing

Use language devices:

- ◆ adjectives to appeal to the sense of sight, sound, touch, taste, smell
- ◆ similes and metaphors to paint a picture
- ◆ personification to make an object seem bigger, scarier, friendlier, etc
- ◆ questions to make the reader think
- ◆ onomatopoeia and alliteration to add lively sound effects

Expand your vocabulary

- ◆ when you practise, use a thesaurus to find better words and try to learn them as you go
- ◆ write with confidence. Say, 'It is obvious that ...' rather than 'I think...'
- ◆ be ambitious with your word choices, even if you aren't 100% sure how to spell it. Better to try it than not to try it.

Vary your sentences

Use the full range of sentence structures, lengths, types and punctuation marks to show off your skills.

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- ◆ Simple sentences have one action: I walked slowly.
- ◆ Compound sentences join clauses with conjunctions:
I walked slowly but I knew I would eventually face my fear.
- ◆ Complex sentences contain ideas that are dependent on each other:
If I walk slowly, I won't have to face my fear straight away.
- ◆ Use long sentences with lots of connected ideas to create flow and detail, and then mix these up with short snappy sentences for impact.
- ◆ Use a mix of all four types of sentences:
 - Commands (e.g. Shut the door.)
 - Questions (e.g. Who shut the door?)
 - Statements (e.g. I will shut the door.)
 - Exclamations (e.g. Ouch!)

And lastly, **proof read** your work! You can make significant improvements to your score by fixing errors, especially by checking your apostrophes, full stops, capital letters and spelling of commonly used words.

